



The Art and Style of Bovet's Récital 22 Grand Récital

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Purists that they are, Maison BOVET are without question, one of haute horlogerie's finest brands. Fusing a respect for heritage and tradition with virtuosic, highly evocative design language and exceptional movement, the watchmaker is world renown for turning watchmaking orthodoxy on its proverbial head. So it is only fitting that what BOVET reveals with the Récital 22 Grand Récital Tourbillon Ref. R220001, is not only the manufacturer's most complicated timepiece to date, but a visual continuum of superior artisanal and artistic craftsmanship.

To appreciate the complexity of its architecture, some context is needed: Récital 22 is the third stanza of Pascal Raffy's homage to the poetics of mechanical movement. Recall the revolutionary import of the 2016 Récital 18 Shooting Star Tourbillon with its groundbreaking asymmetrical case and astronomical indications. Followed by the 2017 Récital 20 Astérium, complete with the angular casing of the Récital 18, but an original, patented double-faced 10-day flying tourbillon with night sky annual calendar, astronomical indications, sapphire rear dial, and blue quartz dome. Cue Pascal Raffy, Owner of Bovet 1822.

"BOVET has always been about uniqueness", he trumpets. "Its mechanical skills and sensitivity to the fine arts remain nearly two centuries after the House was born. BOVET is very much attached to true watchmaking values; the artisan is the key contributor to expressing our sense of time in the most beautiful way. Our fundamentals are deeply linked to bringing more collectors to the necessity of preserving and strengthening virtuosi skills in a globalized world."

But this has always been a constant in the narrative of original, fine watchmaking—from the Bovet brothers' nineteenth century Silk Road odyssey to the founding of Palais chinois in





Fleurier, Switzerland. Having assumed leadership of the brand in 2001, Raffy has continued garner somewhat of a cult-like following among collectors. When asked how he would characterize his contribution to the growth the brand, the one-time pharmaceutical executive was very clear.

“BOVET heritage is based on tradition, a deep concern for detail, and a sense of taste for the most beautiful expression of time and watchmaking skills. BOVET innovations and the 15 patents filed since 2001 illustrate my constant quest for perfection. This is what guarantees both the prosperity and long-term future of the House. Let me give you one historical and one contemporary example.”

“First, the patent of a chronograph dating back to 1889 indicating hours, minutes and seconds or, on demand, the time of a second-time-zone. To create this double functionality, a true fly-back mechanism was invented 14 years before the inaugural flight of the Wright brothers. Second, the six patents of the Braveheart Tourbillon also come from this philosophy. To respect the soul of the pocket watches, I wished to display the second at 6 o'clock on both faces of the timepieces. To succeed, three patents were filed for the sole tourbillon, and one exclusively for the co-axial seconds' display mechanism. The spherical differential gear on the stem of the winding system enabling the gear ratio to be doubled, and the number of crown rotations required to obtain the 22 days of power reserve, were also halved.”

This makes the Récital 22, a combination tourbillon, perpetual calendar, and tellurium, all the more impressive. The astronomical theater is presented in a Tellurium-Orrery. The sun represented by the flying tourbillon, whose carriage bridge evokes fiery rays. While the hemispherical earth rotates on an axis entirely its own, displaying the hours on a natural 24-hour cycle, a spherical moon orbits the earth according to the exact length of its synodic period: 29.53 days.

Were that not enough, the beauty of the sun is heightened only by the tourbillon carriage that has been raised above the surface of the movement. Its original patented construction, characterized by its central attachment, endows the piece with a parallel arithmetic of exquisite chronometry and unrivalled transparency. The five arms of the titanium carriage bridge surrounding the regulating organ is a three-dimensional representation of the sun that showcases the finish of the bridge's five arms. Rotating once every sixty seconds allows the tourbillon to indicate the seconds by a hand—affixed directly to the carriage wheel—and travels over a scaled twenty-second sector.

What is more, the surface of the earth, represented by a hemisphere, is engraved with delicately-wrought, meticulously executed hand-painted maps of oceans, mountains, deserts, and forests. Récital 22's standout feature, however, comes in the form of a 2017 technique introduced by BOVET in which artisans began to incorporate luminescent substances into miniature paintings, thereby making the earth radiant in the dark. Successive layers of trans-

parent lacquer are then applied to the globe before finishing.

But it's not just the artistic detailing that makes Récital 22 a complex mechanical marvel. A patented double-sided flying tourbillon regulates its manual 17DMO3-TEL caliber; sprung balance and escapement enhances are place on either side of the central attachment to enhance the timepiece's overall mechanical and aesthetics, making the tourbillon's attachment to the movement practically invisible; and an in-house manufactured variable-inertia balance wheel ensures the accuracy of the movement oscillating at 18,000 vibrations per hour with a minimum of 472 parts.

Available in 18K pink gold or 950 platinum, the 5-grade titanium case's design was inspired by the shape of a writing slope. Turn the watch over, and you can peer through its large sapphire crystal. The viewer is also entreated to a vast bridge decorated with Côtes de Genève, around the tourbillon's axis. The Récital 22 Grand Récital is a 60-piece a limited edition with alligator or leather strap, 46.30 mm in diameter and 19.60mm in height.

If Raffy is right, that true luxury means “uniqueness of design, clear identity, and ultimate finishing limited quantity”, then, the overall architecture of the Récital 22 timepiece delivers on impeccable hand-crafted quality and exclusivity. Not only is it virtuosic and elevatory, it opens a new window to three-dimensional interpretations of time displays. A true modern, mechanical marvel. ■