

Dutch Dead Beat

BY IAN SKELLERN

With the first independent dead beat seconds, Grönefeld's One Hertz prepares for action

Dutch brothers Bart and Tim Grönefeld announced their new One Hertz watch in the middle of 2010. The One Hertz features the world's first independent deadbeat seconds, in which the second hand, driven by its own separate gear train, steps full second intervals like a quartz watch. Another interesting feature of the movement, and another first in a production wristwatch, is that all of the movement bridges are in stainless steel. While much harder to machine and finish than more typical brass bridges, the Grönefelds found the stainless steel could be bevelled and polished to a high level and offers, especially when frosted by laser, a very distinctive look.

Their first model with a steel case was called the 'One Hertz 1912', 1912 being the year the Grönefeld's grandfather qualified as a watchmaker. I was keen to learn if the One Hertz watch felt as good on the wrist as it looked in the photos. However, the 1912 was a limited edition of just 12 pieces that sold out fairly quickly and, as the new 'One Hertz Dune' in red gold isn't available as yet, it looked like my hands-on review would have to wait until next year. But as luck would have it, I recently met up with Bart and Tim in Switzerland and managed to borrow their 'One Hertz 1912' prototype for a few weeks.

My first impression of the One Hertz was that, despite its 43mm case and my small wrist, the watch wore very comfortably thanks to the shape of the lugs and its slim profile. Although the large deadbeating second hand dominates the dial, the time is very easy to read on the hour/minute sub dial. A 60-hour power reserve indicator is neatly placed at the top of the seconds dial and a crown function indicator sits beside the crown. The former is necessary because unlike the majority of wristwatches, the crown is not pulled out to change functions but pushed in. Push once for S (setting the time), push again for W (winding). When time setting, the movement hacks (stops) to allow more precision.

The One Hertz reflects the skills that Bart and Tim forged during their years at Renaud & Papi. Quality is assured by the fact that the movement components are manufactured by Renaud & Papi, though the brothers developed the movement and assemble, regulate and finish each timepiece by hand at their atelier in Oldenzaal, Netherlands.

My final verdict after two weeks on the wrist: Well, I've ordered one! So stay tuned for an owner's report soon.



The Grönefeld One Hertz is both the world's first wristwatch with independent dead seconds, and is the only watch with all bridges made from stainless steel.

