REFERENCES

11.6000/101
Palladium
11.6000/201
Black
11.6000/401
Blue

OCTOPOD

TIME WITH LEGS... AND MYSTERY

Octopod is our exploration of aquatic themes with an eight-leg, eight-day clock inspired by cephalopods, marine chronometers and The Deep – blending contemporary design with kinetic sculpture and a polycarbonate bubble filled with precision horology.

Octopod stands or crouches thanks to its eight articulated legs. Each leg can be individually adjusted to varying heights, enabling Octopod to rest securely on the most uneven of surfaces, just like a real octopus.

However, the real horological magic and mystery take place in Octopod's completely transparent spherical "head".

The first thing to notice is that Octopod's transparent sphere is gimballed in a similar way to how traditional ship chronometers were gimballed – although on one axis rather than two – so that they remained flat despite the pitching and rolling of the ship. In Octopod's case, the gimbal ensures that no matter what angle or height it sits, it is easy to rotate the bubble so that the time display inside is at the ideal plane for maximum legibility. The second thing the attentive eye will notice is that Octopod's pulsating escapement, which regulates the clock's precision, is located on its minute hand rather than the more usual (and mechanically simpler) position attached to stationary movement plates.

And thirdly there's the mystery of how Octopod's clockwork is suspended inside its sphere, so that it appears to be floating in space (or water). The baseplate of the movement is a transparent glass plate that has been treated with a film of anti-reflective coating on both sides so that it is virtually invisible. Like an octopus concealing parts of itself with camouflage, Octopod conceals parts of itself with visual tricks of its own. Octopod's eight-day movement is an entirely new development by L'Epée 1839, with both the glass baseplate and counterbalanced regulator posing particular challenges.

Along with its octopus and marine chronometer connections to the sea, Octopod also brings to mind the then futuristic glass bathysphere of James Cameron's 1977 film, The Deep. While the viewer may be outside looking in at the transparent bubble, it's easy to imagine sinking below the waves and looking out at the astonishing iridescent creatures of the deep oceans. However, you may well rest assured that despite its aquatic inspirations, Octopod is perfectly at home on dry land.

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OCTOPOD IN DETAILS

INSPIRATION

Octopod's idiosyncratic design derives from three aquatic sources: the highly intelligent octopus with its 'eight legs' provided the inspiration for the eight articulated legs, while the gimballed traditional marine chronometer inspired the partially gimballed sphere housing the clockwork and time display. And then there is the transparent bubble evoking memories of the bathysphere in James Cameron's 1977 sci-fi classic The Deep.

The original sketch MB&F gave to L'Epée 1839 showed the movement 'floating' inside the bubble, but this was more to allow the manufacture more latitude in developing the support structure for the clockwork, than an expectation that a 'floating' movement was actually possible. Not for the first time (nor hopefully the last), L'Epée 1839 went far and beyond the brief to create something even more exceptional than planned.

REALISATION

While MB&F came up with the design of the Octopod, it was L'Epée 1839 that developed the movement as well as the unusual transparent spherical case and articulated legs. L'Epée produces most of the components, puts them all together and regulates the high precision, eight-day clockwork.

While nothing about this atypical project was easy, L'Epée faced two major challenges. The first was in finding a supplier for the glass baseplate able to work to the tight tolerances required by horology. The complete movement is mounted on the glass baseplate, so the position of the diamond-drilled holes was of critical importance.

The second significant challenge was in having to adjust the counterweight for the regulator-bearing minute hand in three dimensions. Originally two counterweight screws were thought to suffice, but it was quickly discovered that five minuscule adjusters were necessary to ensure that the minute hand was perfectly balanced for optimal timekeeping precision.

OCTOPOD IS AVAILABLE IN 3 LIMITED EDITIONS OF 50 PIECES EACH IN BLACK PVD, BLUE PVD, AND PALLADIUM (SILVER).

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

LIMITED EDITION

50 pieces per configuration
Available in Black PVD,
Blue PVD or Palladium (Silver)

DISPLAY

Hours and minutes

Finely counter-balanced regulator mounted on minute hand

Sphere : 360° rotation in both vertical and horizontal planes

Legs : 8 legs, each Articulation released by a button, can be locked in two positions (standing or extended)

MATERIALS AND FINISHINGS

Palladium-plated brass, stainless steel and nickel-plated stainless steel,

Two polycarbonate hemisphere dome

Mineral glass plate with anti-reflective coating both sides

MOVEMENT

L'Epée new in-house movement

Cal. 175

19 Jewels

POWER RESERVE

8 days

WINDING

Manual winding : double ended key to set time and wind movement

DIMENSIONS

28 cm long x 28 cm high (standing)
45 cm long x 22 cm high (crouching)

WEIGHT

4.2 kgs