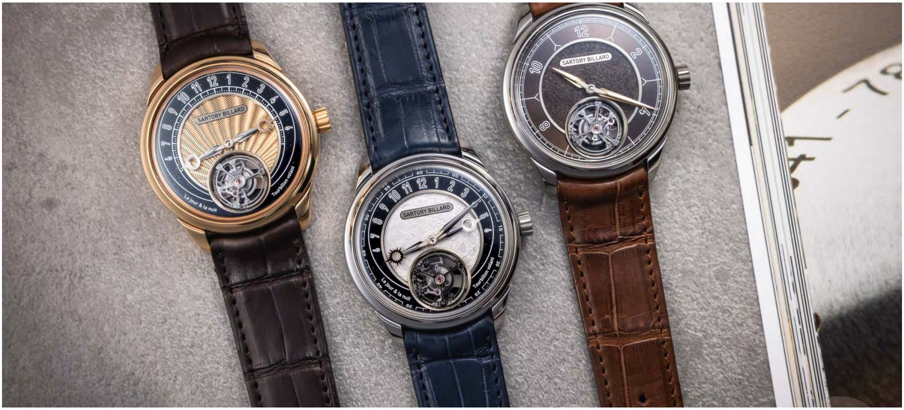

Hands-On With The Bespoke Sartory Billard SB06-12 And SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon Watches

Both housing the made-to-measure SBTV01 caliber developed and crafted by Comblémine

LEX STOLK
DECEMBER 02, 2023

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Since its founding in 2015, Sartory Billard has specialized in bespoke, customized watches. The company started by Ludovic Sartory and Armand Billard has been letting clients tweak the dials in its models to their hearts' content. The results have been stunning, but there have been some limitations, especially on the mechanical front. For instance, if you wanted a tourbillon, you had to go look elsewhere — until now. With the arrival of the Sartory Billard SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches, you can now, together with the brand, compose a unique watch outfitted with a propriety SBTV01 caliber developed and crafted by Comblémine.

While looking at the Sartory Billard SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches, I noticed that I found it hard to grasp what I was looking at. Yes, I noticed the flying tourbillon, the traditional case proportions, the delicate decorations, and the finishing, but that's not what I mean. What I experienced was a confused perception of luxury. A traditional definition of luxury includes elements like exclusivity, the highest quality, and status. But the times, they are a-changin', and the perception and definition of luxury are not timeless or carved in stone.

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Bespoke Sartory Billard SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches: do they fit in the current luxury market?

On *Forbes*, I read about a futurist named Jared Weiner of The Future Hunters. The article mentioned *"the 'Three T's' and a new, expanded definition of luxury."* According to Weiner, luxury is now all about Time, Truth, and Trust. Time is an element that's not necessarily new. Time is priceless and something no one has enough of, so shopping for luxury items should be efficient, convenient, and pleasant. Truth and Trust are probably not new aspects either, but according to Weiner, they have become more important to current consumers of luxury products.

The truth factor relates to a brand being relevant and how it fits the personal values of clients and how they want to present themselves. Trust is all about authenticity. People trust brands that present themselves as genuine, while they perceive pretending and shifty storytelling as a smokescreen. In the case of luxury watchmaking, trust is also about the future; will the brand that sold someone a watch for a large sum of money still be around in the foreseeable future?

Imagine this: the annual Tourbillon Club meeting is about to start, and members are meeting for a cocktail before the festivities. If you show up with a €100K tourbillon from a brand that just went belly up and start talking to your peers wearing creations from longstanding brands that will not only continue to exist but also keep building trust by telling/building the truth, you might find yourself not considered a peer anymore.

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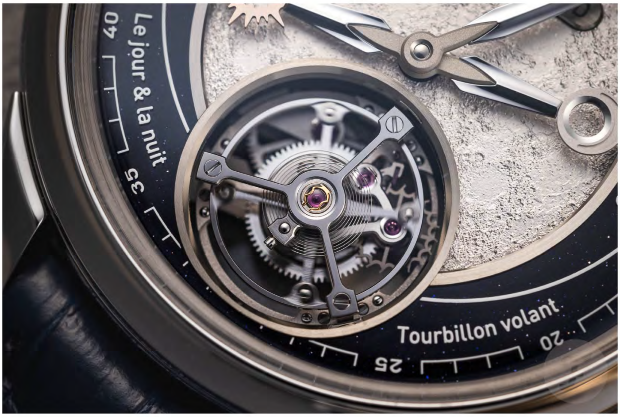
Le jour & la nuit
SARTORY BILLARD
Tourbillon volant

Customer-driven Sartory Billard and its partners

With all that in mind, I started my hands-on experience with the SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches. I also dove a little deeper into the brand's history and found out that industrial designer Armand Billard and his colleague and friend Ludovic Sartory started it in 2015. What began as an experiment and a side job soon became a full business. The philosophy of Sartory Billard is to create watches as unique as their wearers through bespoke craftsmanship and personalization. The brand uses traditional watchmaking techniques and combines them with modern, customer-driven designs.

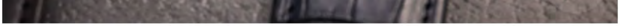
SARTORY BILLARD

The Sartory-Billard SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches feature the SBTV01 caliber developed and crafted by Comblémine upon the brand's request. By the way, in the pictures, the watches still have the old name of the movement (SBT01) engraved. Anyway, Comblémine is an independent Swiss company, the majority of which is owned by Kari Voutilainen. Yes, Comblémine is known for the elaborate dials it produces for many independent watchmakers, but the company does more than that. Creating flying tourbillon movements is one of its extra skills. And CronotempVs, a private, invitation-only watch collectors' club founded in 2009, played a role in the creation of these new tourbillon watches. It's not the first time that CronotempVs has worked as a bridge between a watchmaker and collectors. Since 2010, the club has participated in numerous brand collaborations.

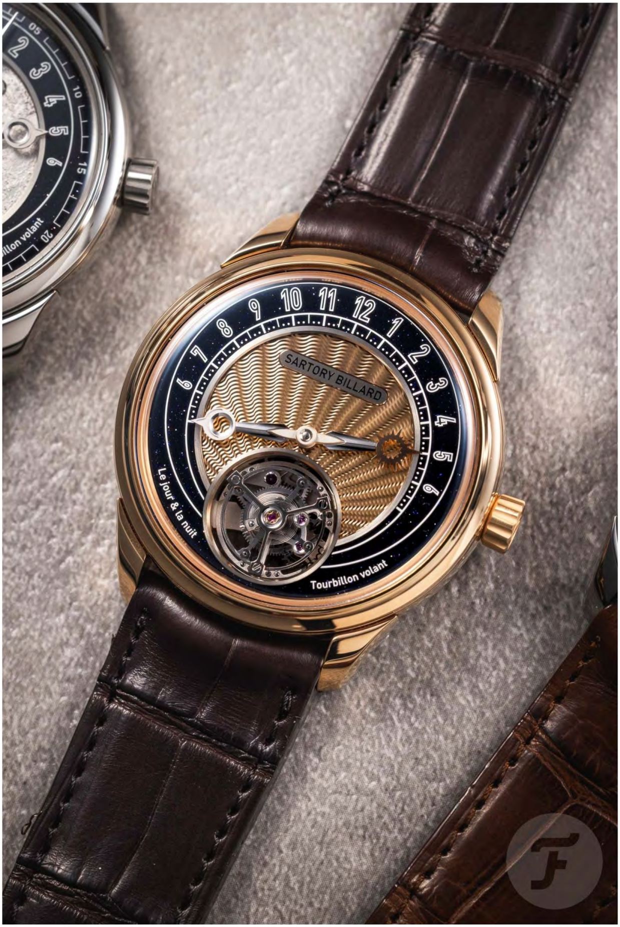


CronotempVs planted the seed

In the summer of 2021, CronotempVs approached Sartory Billard with the request for a flying tourbillon watch that would capture the distinctive spirit of the brand. Two and a half years later, there's the proprietary SBTV01 movement, featuring a 96-hour (four-day) power reserve, 3Hz (21,600vph) frequency, 19 jewels, and 209 components. The movement has a 32.6mm diameter, and it shows intricate details and a very high level of finishing. That is thanks not just to Comblémine but also to numerous suppliers and part makers. The process led to the delivery of a limited subscription series of 30 SB06-12 Flying Tourbillon watches to CronotempVs collectors on December 2nd this year.



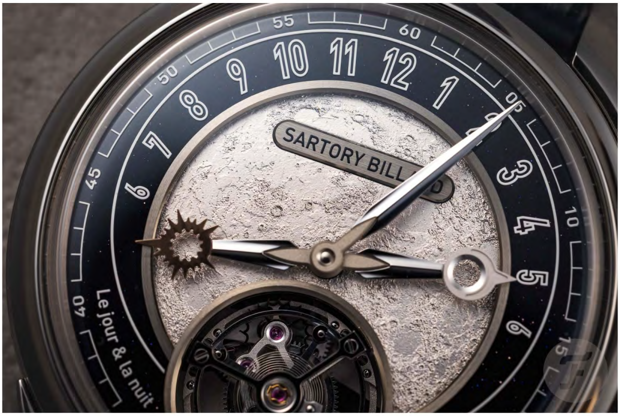
Thanks to the challenge provided by CronotempVs, Sartory Billard can now offer a flying tourbillon to non-club members too. The SB06-12 and SB06-24 are watches displaying the time in either a 12-hour or 24-hour format. Three prototypes arrived at Fratello HQ for closer inspection. There's the titanium SB06-12 version with a Havana-brown color scheme, Arabic numerals, a *tremblage*-engraved central dial, and rose gold hour and minute hands. These leaf-like, two-part hands are beautifully shaped, decorated, and finished. Just look at their matte-finished bases that look like little frosted leaves.



Slowing down time

The SB06-24 Le Jour in rose gold — the one here is a steel, rose-gold-colored PVD prototype — shows a guilloché central dial surrounded by an aventurine outer dial. The caliber SBTV01 matches this case because it's also executed in rose gold and shows the same guilloché pattern as the dial. The large, five-part single hand turns once every 24 hours. Thanks to its sun- and moon-shaped tips, though, it tells you the difference between 2:00 AM and 2:00 PM very cleverly.

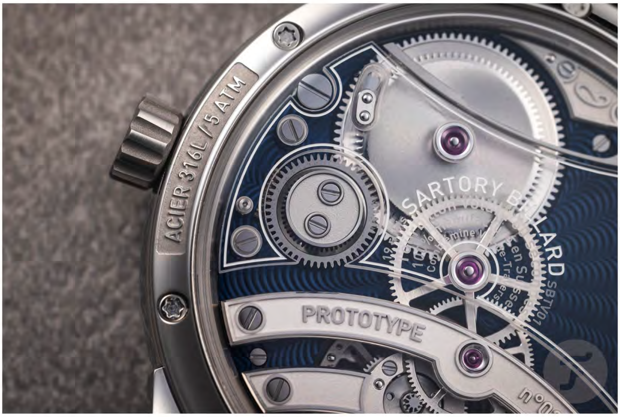
It also does so beautifully because these celestial symbols for nighttime and daytime are delicate and stunningly finished, just like the rest of the hand. The sun is made of solid gold, and the moon has a luminous treatment to ensure legibility in dark conditions.



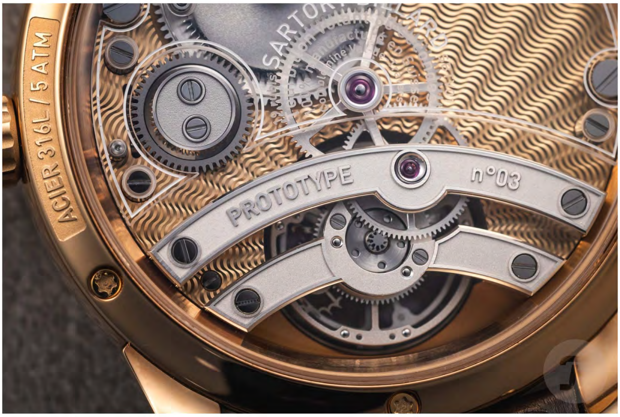
The SB06-24 La Nuit uses the same large hand with day- and night indicators, but it also features a minute hand for a more accurate time display. In addition, this watch has an aventurine outer dial and an engraved central dial that mimics the surface of the Moon. The color of the aventurine matches the dark blue guilloché plate of the movement rather nicely. The prototype comes in a steel case, but in grayish tantalum, this combination would be heavy — and I mean that both literally and in the 1970s way. To accomplish the 24-hour time display, Comblémine fitted the caliber SBTV01 with an additional gear module, making the hour hand turn at half speed.

Inspecting the caliber SBTV01

At this point, it probably seems obvious, but the hand-wound caliber SBTV01 is quite a sight to behold. The flying tourbillon at 6 o'clock is a turning and pulsating thing of beauty. Through the aperture, we see its three polished arms and rubies in white gold chatons. More of the latter can be found on the back of the watch. The largest bridge is made from nearly invisible sapphire, and the choice of this hard-to-work-with material "opens" the movement. Beneath it, the guilloché base plate, which can be adapted to customers' tastes, shines radiantly. The sapphire bridge also lets you see a lot of what's going on beneath it, making the watch technically more interesting and visually more dynamic.



The two arched bridges at the bottom are on two different planes, and they look spectacular. The combination of the shape and finishing is ace. And if you want/pay for it, the upper bridge can have a special engraving. What about your name, words of wisdom, or a specific date that carries meaning? Hey, you name it; it's a bespoke job.

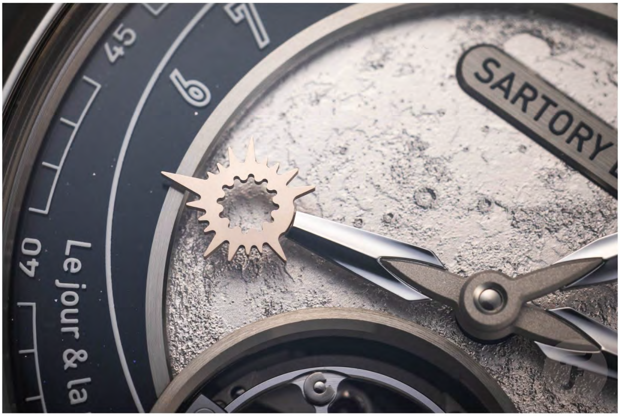


These three Sartory Billard pieces are veritable Haute Horlogerie creations. That's because every component, even those unseen without disassembly, underwent meticulous finishing work. There are black-polished screws, polished chatons, sunken holes, and columns. For those who know their way around in the world of high horology, the name Philippe Narbel might ring a bell. This man is responsible for the beveling and inward angles on the arched bridges and tourbillon cage. Another Haute Horlogerie aspect is that every SBTV01 is assembled, regulated, and tested by one watchmaker.

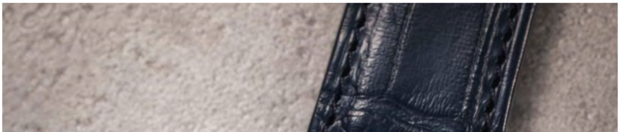
SARTORY BILLARD

Who else helped create the Sartory Billard SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches?

The dials with either a tremblage or guilloché pattern are the work of Comblémine. It's this company that created the dial of the La Nuit model, which showcases a unique lunar surface. The scaled-down engraving is based on altimeter measurements from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter. And what it shows is an incredible level of detail and dedication to authenticity.



Any stone-related work, enamels, and craft arts like maki-e are courtesy of Groh & Ripp. And the handmade straps are from Scarlett Paris. They are, of course, completely bespoke. Customers choose the type of leather, color, and length.



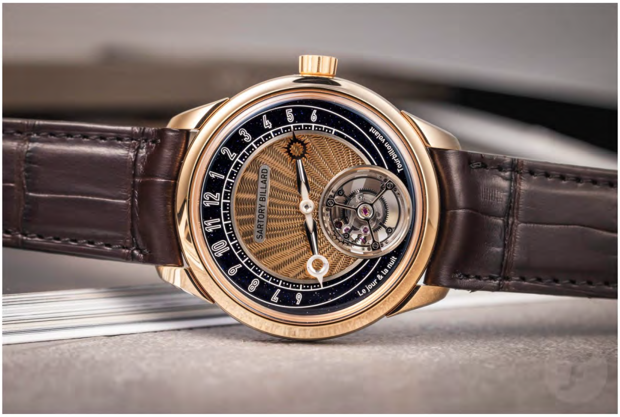
SARTORY BILLARD
Le jour & la nuit
Tourbillon volant

Final facts on the Sartory Billard SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches

Let's look at the foundations of the SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon watches. And while we're at it, let's also put some prices on these pieces. The case of both models is made by Voutilainen & Cattin, and it is available in steel, titanium, gold, platinum, and tantalum. It measures 41mm wide, 47mm long, 9.5mm thick, and 21mm between the lugs. It's also water resistant to 5 ATM, and it has a domed sapphire crystal with antireflective treatment on both the dial and movement side. The SB06-12 in titanium or steel will cost **€88,000** before taxes, while the SB06-24 in steel, titanium, gold, platinum, or tantalum will be **€96,000**, also excluding taxes.

SARTORY BILLARD

Sartory Billard will limit production of the SB06-12 and SB06-24 to 24 pieces in total per year. After a customer finalizes the custom aspects of the watch, the shortest delivery time is six months. Of course, that period is subject to adaptation according to bespoke requests for the customer's unique timepiece.



A custom-made conclusion

I mentioned the fictive Tourbillon Club when contemplating these new flying tourbillon watches with "Sartory Billard" on the dial. I still don't have the definitive answer to the question of whether paying nearly €100K for a Sartory Billard watch will give you the reaction you're looking for in the company of your peers. And I also don't know if it will bring you the complex and hard-to-grasp satisfaction that, for example, a Vacheron Constantin or A. Lange & Söhne tourbillon watch might.

Having said that, people who are in the market for a custom-made tourbillon are not participating in their first rodeo. And please keep in mind that there is indeed one club that will always feel like a warm bath for Sartory Billard wearers. That's ChronotempVs, of course. Bagging an invitation to that club before bagging either the Sartory Billard SB06-12 or SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon could be a good idea for watch lovers who can't live without validation.

On the other hand, if you, as a watch aficionado, are the definition of confidence, experience, and knowledge, having a Sartory Billard tourbillon made to your taste could be a watch dream come true. In that case, the only thing you might want to ask yourself is if the watch has the "Three T's."

Watch specifications

BRAND	Sartory Billard
MODEL	SB06-12 and SB06-24 Flying Tourbillon
CASE MATERIAL	Steel, titanium, gold, platinum, or tantalum

CASE DIMENSIONS	41mm (diameter) × 47mm (lug-to-lug length) × 9.5mm (thickness) × 21mm (lug spacing)
CRYSTAL	Double-domed sapphire with antireflective treatment
CASE BACK	Steel, titanium, gold, platinum, or tantalum with antireflective sapphire display
MOVEMENT	SBTV01 — hand-wound flying tourbillon caliber by Combleminé, 21,600vph frequency, 96-hour power reserve, 19 jewels, 209 components
WATER RESISTANCE	5 ATM
STRAP	Handmade leather strap from Scarlett Paris in type, length, and color of choice
PRICE	SB06-12: €88,000 (titanium or steel, excl. VAT) / SB06-24 : €96,000 (titanium, steel, gold, platinum, or tantalum, excl. VAT)
SPECIAL NOTE(S)	Limited to 24 units of SB06-12 or SB06-24 a year. Delivery period from six months, subject to adaptation according to the bespoke requests.

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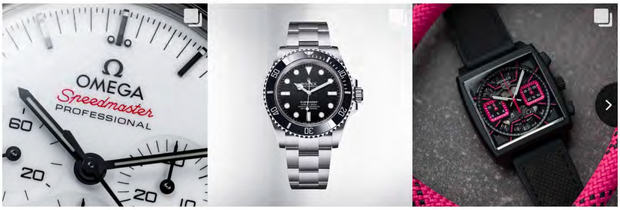

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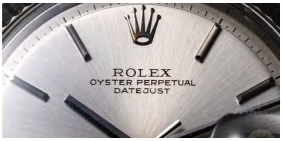

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