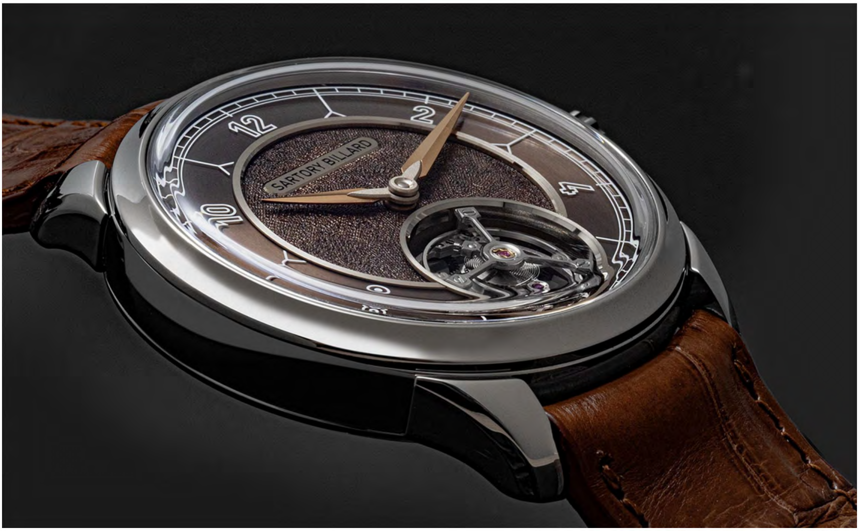

NOVELTIES 12/02/2023

Sartory Billard’s Stunning New Flying Tourbillon Opens Up New Horizons for Collectors

The brand announces its first proprietary movement and an impressive new line of high-end timepieces to house it. But it all began with a collector group’s appeal to make a special club watch. Sound intriguing? Read on...

BY STEVEN ROGERS
Contributor

Rarely a week goes by in the watch-o-sphere without the launch of a special-edition collaborative piece. Watchmaker x **strategic partner**, watchmaker x **watch publication**, watchmaker x **retailer**, watchmaker x **collector**, or watchmaker x **collector group**, collaborative limited editions have been coming thick and fast.

The classic collaboration recipe is to take an existing model or calibre and modify the aesthetics of the dial or mechanics – or switch up the case material – to reflect the values and preferred color palette of the actors involved.

Still, to keep costs and lead times reasonable, it’s usually only “simple” elements that are created from scratch – tonal treatments, dial details, and the like – though, occasionally, a totally new **case material** or **complication module** is born.

All that being said, collaborative pieces hardly ever result in the ground-up development of an entirely new movement. But that is precisely what happened when collector group **CronotempVs Club** asked independent brand **Sartory Billard** to create an exclusive flying tourbillon for its members.

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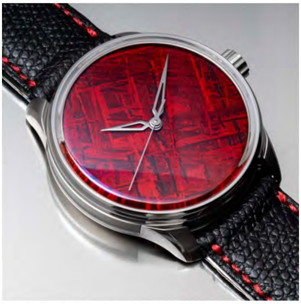
How it All Began

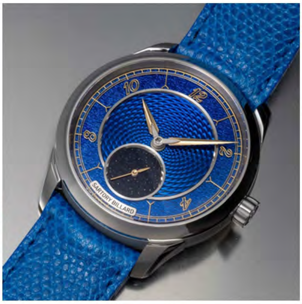
Founded in 2015 and led by designer-watchmaker Armand Billard, Sartory Billard has used movements from La Joux-Perret to power its most recent watches like the **SB04** and **SB05**, which are hailed for their minimalist, eye-catching in-house dials and wide range of customizable options, plus its (depending on those chosen options) accessible price point.

At first, CronotempVs co-founder **Scaramanga** – a long-time admirer of Sartory Billard – thought his club's request in the summer of 2021 would entail the selection of another off-the-shelf calibre. However, the collaboration soon transformed into a quest to develop the brand's first proprietary movement, with its financing made possible thanks to down payments made by CronotempVs Club members.

The Full List of Winning Watches from the 2024 Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève (GPHG)



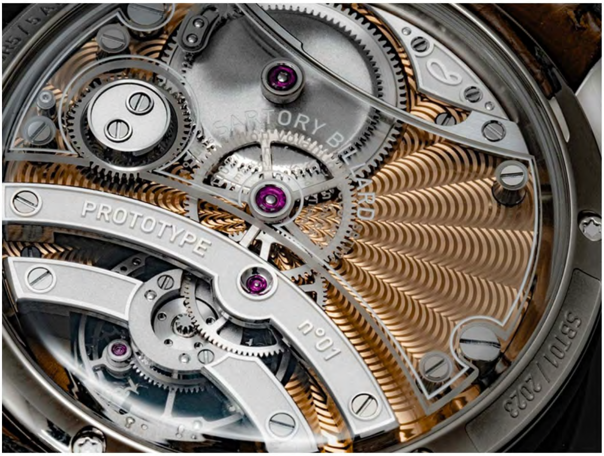
The SARTORY-BILLARD "SB04"



The SARTORY-BILLARD "SB05"

Nearly two and a half years later, the project has finally come to fruition with the unveiling of the SBT01 flying tourbillon movement (developed exclusively for Sartory Billard by **Kari Voutilainen**'s Comblémine workshop).

With its visually impressive architecture as well as its fine hand-finishing carried out by **Philippe Narbel** – known for his decoration work on Audemars Piguet's skeleton watches – the SBT01 is set to elevate the Sartory Billard name to a whole new level among the watch collector community.



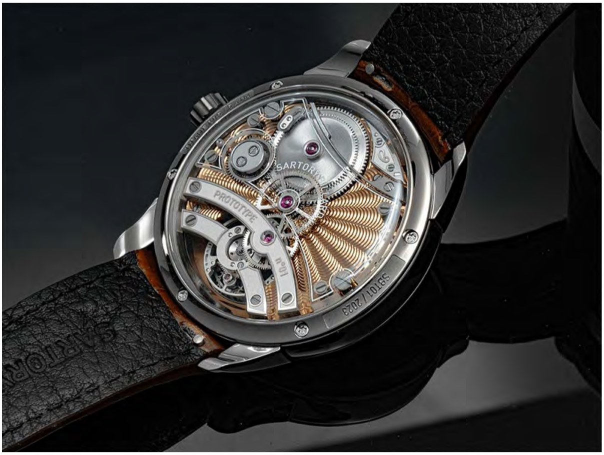
The SBT01 Flying Tourbillon Movement

And, of course, with the launch of the SBT01 movement comes the announcement of the first watches to be powered by it: First, since it was the piece whose creation helped sow the seeds of the new calibre, there's the CT12 Club watch by Sartory Billard reserved for CronotempVs. Next, there is Sartory Billard's own new flying tourbillon line, the **SB06**, which comes in both a 12-hour and a 24-hour format and is available to everyone.

The SBT01 Flying Tourbillon Movement

To develop the SBT01 flying tourbillon movement, Comblémine's constructors proposed a base calibre structure to Sartory Billard and CronotempVs Club, and the latter two responded with how they would like to finesse its design.

And what a design they conjured! The new movement stands out for a pair of arcing bridges and a large transparent upper bridge made out of sapphire, all of which allow for spectacular views of the moving parts, including the tourbillon cage, gears, ratchet wheel, and mainspring barrel.



The SBT01 Flying Tourbillon Movement

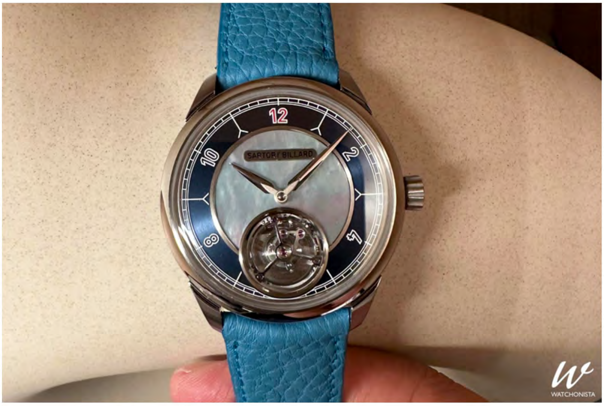
The movement is manually wound and sports a 3Hz balance as well as a handy four-day power reserve. Each component, even those that aren't visible, undergoes meticulous hand-finishing, such as black-polished screws and polished countersinks and columns.

Moreover, acclaimed decoration specialist Philippe Narbel has been entrusted with hand-finishing the internal angles of the arcing bridges and tourbillon cage. And in keeping with artisanal watchmaking tradition, each movement is assembled from A-to-Z and regulated by a single master watchmaker.

The CronotempVs CT12 by Sartory Billard

Dial side, the SBT01's tourbillon is located at 6 o'clock, and with good reason. Scaramanga explained it to us: *"I really liked Sartory Billard's SB05 with small seconds at 6 o'clock. It has a modern, elegant, clean design, and it's a watch that looks good however you personalize it."*

He continued: *"When I looked at where the small seconds were, I thought this is just begging to have a tourbillon there. That, for me, would really complete the concept. So this thinking informed the design of the CT12."*



The CronotempVs CT12 by Sartory Billard © Henri Lee

Indeed, at first glance, the CT12 looks rather like the SB05 with its airy, sapphire chapter ring and textured dial center, as well as signature spear-shaped hour and minute hands. But, of course, the presence of the tourbillon is the tell-tale sign that this watch is something different, something special.

The seven-part case, made for Sartory Billard by another Kari Voutilainen-led company – Voutilainen & Cattin – also looks similar to the SB05's case but had to be re-engineered to fit the new movement, all while retaining its elegant proportions. As such, the case is now 41mm in diameter and 9.5mm in height, while the lugs angle down more to wrap around even small wrists.

WATCHONISTA

The CronotempVs CT12 by Sartory Billard © Henri Lee

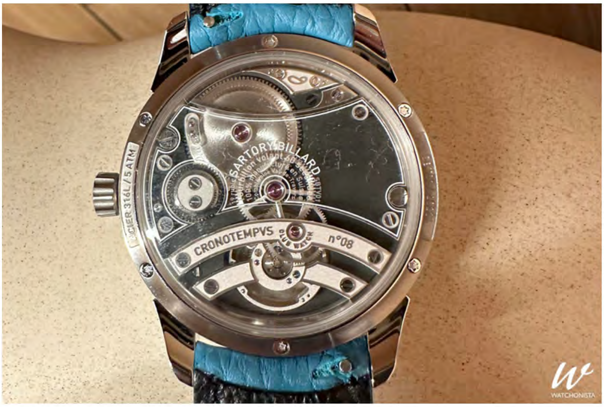
Meanwhile, both the front and back of the watch feature a double-domed sapphire crystal, with the back crystal really helping to bring out the depth and layered construction of the movement.

Respect for the Brand's DNA

"A big part of Sartory Billard's DNA is the ability for you to take a blank slate and just choose how you would like it, so we wanted to incorporate that idea into the CT12," said Scaramanga.

In light of that wish, the CT12 is the first CronotempVs Club watch that owners have been able to individually customize, from the composition of the dial (e.g., guilloche, tremblage, stone, enamel, or maki-e) to the color treatment and finishing of the movement, to the choice of case material (platinum, gold, tantalum, steel, or titanium). The strap is handmade by **Scarlett Paris** and is also customizable in terms of its leather type, color, and size.

The piece shown above and below here shows how one CronotempVs member personalized their CT12 with a mother-of-pearl dial center. It highlights two constant features across all these numbered club watches: A red-toned 12 index and "CronotempVs Club Watch" in relief on one of the arcing bridges.



The CronotempVs CT12 by Sartory Billard © Henri Lee

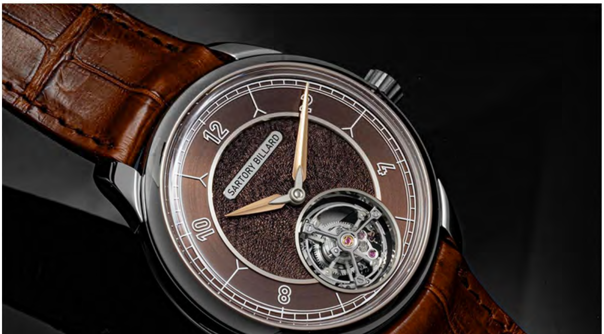
"The CT12 is the 11th watch to be privately commissioned by CronotempVs Club since our founding in 2009," said Scaramanga. *"We're proud to have been able to offer our members the chance to participate in this very special collaboration as well as help jumpstart a new path for Sartory Billard."*

The CT12 is only available to its club members who placed their orders at the outset of the project. While the club is determined to evolve and embrace a new generation of collectors, it is currently overbooked. To ensure a manageable and sustainable development of the club, it is unable to accept any new members for at least the next six months.

The Sartory Billard SB06-12 and SB06-24

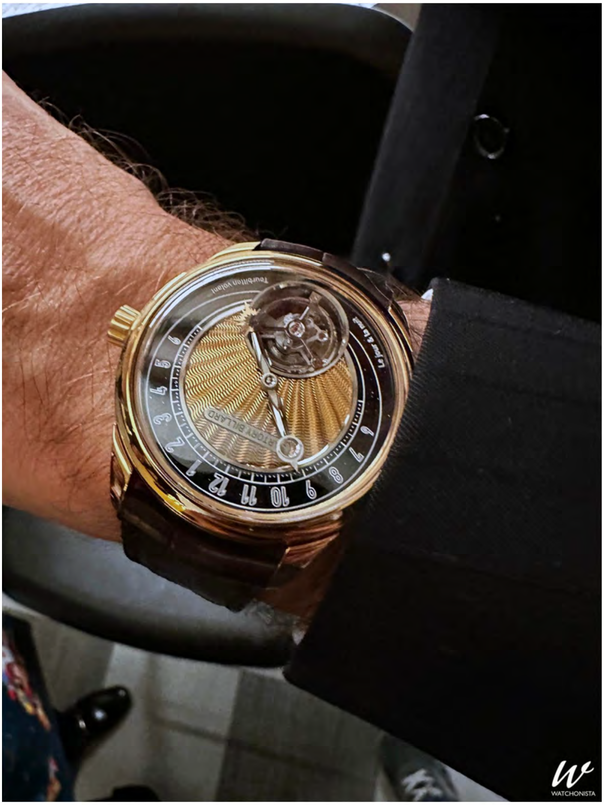
And so to the first models to use SBT01 being offered by the brand itself: The **SB06**-12 follows the same core design of the CT12 and allows for the same degree of customization of its dial, movement, case, and strap details.

To demonstrate just one potential execution of it, Sartory Billard has created a fetching Havana-toned version with a tremblage hour dial and rose gold hour and minute hands. Meanwhile, its gilded mainplate is decorated with a stunning radial guilloche.



The Sartory Billard SB06-12 Havana © Sartory Billard

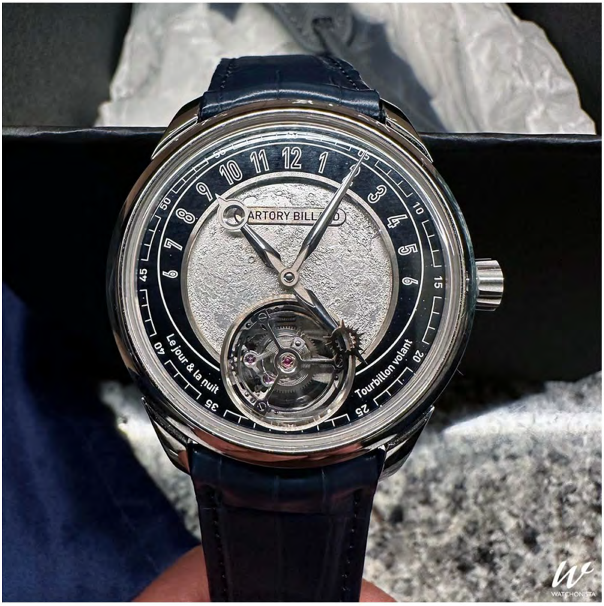
The SB06-24, on the other hand, marks a departure from Sartory Billard's minimalist aesthetic, not least of which is because the dial is necessarily quite busy thanks to the 24-hour display. This display is achieved by adding a gear module to the SBT01, which makes the double-headed hour hand run twice as slow. A solid gold sun on one end of the hand denotes daytime hours, while a lume-filled moon symbol indicates night-time hours.



© Henri Lee

Again, to exemplify what collectors could ask for, the brand has presented two alluring versions of the SB06-24: First, the Le Jour features a guilloche dial center and aventurine chapter ring, with gilded guilloche movement, housed in a rose gold case.

And secondly, La Nuit boasts a finely engraved dial center depicting the moon. This scale lunar representation – based on altimeter measurements from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter – is encircled by an aventurine chapter ring. The guilloche-decorated movement is treated navy blue, while the case is in platinum.



© Henri Lee

> *"The transition from an exclusive club project to a key offering in our collection underscores our dedication to expanding the horizons of bespoke watchmaking,"* said the brand in its press materials. *"We encourage all who cherish unique, personalized timepieces to explore the SB06-12 and SB06-24 models and experience the pinnacle of our craftsmanship."*

Pricing & Availability

While CronotempVs Club members will all be receiving their customized CT12s today at their annual get-together – delivered in person by Armand Billard – the SB06-12 and SB06-24 are available for all to order immediately. Prices start at €88,000 and €96,000 respectively, excluding taxes. Combined production of both is limited to 24 pieces per year.

For more information, please visit the **Sartory Billard** and **CronotempVs Club** websites.

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