Review: Sartory Billard Flying Tourbillon SB06-12 CT12 For CronotempVs Watch Club

2.5 Years in the Making: Club Watch Launches Groundbreaking Movement for New High-End Models

SFWATCHLOVER
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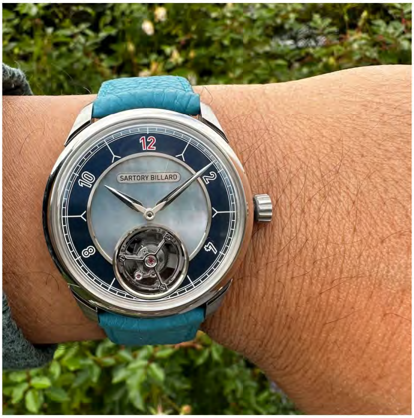
It was certainly the highlight of my watch collecting journey. On December 2nd of 2023, I received a watch from the hands of Mr. Armand Billard, the owner of Sartory Billard. This stunning flying tourbillon was a collaboration between Armand Billard and the CronotempVs Watch Club, of which I'm a member. The delivery ceremony took place in Madrid, where CronotempVs is based. In total, 30 club watches were delivered - some handed over to attending club members in person, while the rest shipped to members all over the world.

During the customization phase, I worked with Armand via email to finalize various options, including choosing a mother of pearl center dial. It was wonderful to finally meet Armand in person, as well as Scaramanga, the CronotempVs co-founder, for the first time. Scaramanga's vision and drive were integral to the project's success. Mr. Christophe Beuchat, Director at Comblémine, also attended the delivery event, marking a major milestone for Comblémine to supply a high-end movement for Sartory Billard.



The Sartory Billard Flying Tourbillon SB06-12 CT12 For CronotempVs exceeded my high expectations! I could not contain my excitement strapping on the watch for the first time and snapping a wrist shot. With its exquisite flying tourbillon complication, the timepiece was a true beauty. Please allow me to share more details of this unforgettable experience.

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Brief history of CronotempVs

CronotempVs is a private watch collectors club co-founded in 2009 by Scaramanga in Madrid, Spain. The club collaborates closely with historical brands and top independents who share the same goal of upholding the highest traditional horological values. These partnerships yield limited production timepieces that are highly coveted. Some models are exclusively for club members, while many others are available to the greater watch community through the CronotempVs Collectors platform.

The club follows a 12-category product roadmap including Paradox, Maitre, Chronograph, Professional, Calendar, Eccentric, Elegance, Nec Plus Ultra, Traveler, Historic, Sound and Chronometry. In 2021, it was time to develop the first model in the 12th category of "Chronometry", which would be named CT12.

The “Chronometry” designation refers to watches prioritizing precision, with other considerations being secondary. Examples include chronometers, high frequency movements, constant force mechanisms, tourbillons and carousels.

Scaramanga, an admirer of Sartory Billard, reached out to founder Armand Billard about a potential collaboration. They devised an exciting proposition - jointly developing a brand new flying tourbillon movement funded by the CronotempVs club.

This was not like common collaborations involving the use of a new color or the addition of a logo. The project was not a standard order since the watch and movement didn’t exist yet. It represented a bit of a "gamble" for the club to embark on creating a high complication from scratch. However, it was Scaramanga's determination to fund a new watch and speed up the partner brand’s evolution.

Brief history of Sartory Billard

Sartory Billard is a young 8-year-old watch brand that has captured a sizable fanbase for its ample customization options at reasonable prices. Clients may choose case materials, dial finishes, numeral styles, colors, and straps among other attributes. Their best known references are the SB04 and SB05, both powered by movements from La Joux-Perret.

Current sole owner and co-founder Armand Billard was a veteran designer prior to founding the company. He has mastered maintaining the brand’s signature aesthetics while granting clients a wide selection of customization possibilities. Sartory Billard timepieces have started appearing at prestigious auctions, cementing its status as a rising independent.

Armand was poised to elevate the brand to the next level when Scaramanga reached out, timing perfectly with his ambitions. After extensive discussions they devised building a flying tourbillon with a new model maintaining SB05 visual cues, yet offering personalization options. Their CT12 proposal for the club was met with enthusiasm - 30 members signed on, offering deposits to kickstart the undertaking. The resulting piece would pave the way for the SB06 intended for the general public.

A Brand New Movement by Comblémine

Combémine is a top-notch dial supplier majority owned by acclaimed independent Kari Voutilainen. The company is a supplier for Sartory Billard with their finest guilloché dials.

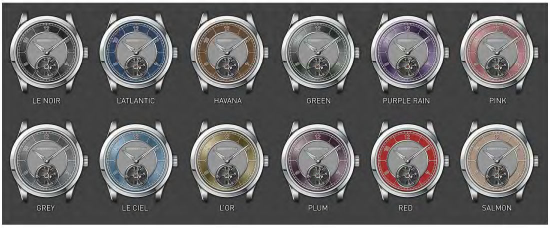
Comblémine had been aiming to expand capabilities under the leadership of Director Christophe Beuchat - a movement development veteran formerly with Parmigiani Fleurier and later as the Head of Engineering for Voutilainen. Their first foray into movement development was creating a regulator for Shane Tulloch, however the brand unfortunately did not survive the pandemic.

Thus, Christophe's team was eager to take on the CronotempVs challenge from Armand which would elevate Comblémine to the next level. It was a dream team highly motivated to deliver excellence for the collectors. Christophe’s prior expertise at conceiving movements, paired with Armand’s design/business acumen and CronotempVs’ financial backing, made for a formidable collaboration. This endeavor would definitively position Comblémine as more than a premier dial maker.

Individualized Design Process

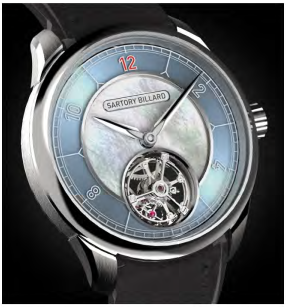
Armand and Scaramanga offered extensive customization options, working with each member to finalize personalizations. Certain design elements, such as the red 12 hour marker, were fixed as symbols of this club watch, while allowing for distinct color and material variations in dial and case. In my opinion, selecting the specifications was the most exciting part of the whole process!

I worked directly with Armand via email on my watch configurations. First, there were 12 dial color choices (see the picture below). We could also upgrade the inner dial, outer dial, or full dial to an array of materials including abalone, onyx, aventurine, mother of pearl, meteorite, jade, and various guilloché patterns.



Case material selections included titanium, yellow, rose or white gold, tantalum and steel. Hands could be rendered in silver, blue, yellow or purple by a heating process. There was also a vast strap catalog.

As a sucker for mother of pearl, I opted for light blue nacre on the inner dial, sky blue on the outer, with a bleu turquoise strap. The case was stainless steel with silver hands. Armand provided exceptional guidance from a design perspective. Please see the computer rendering below, which was remarkably close to the final product.



The computer rendering provided by Armand

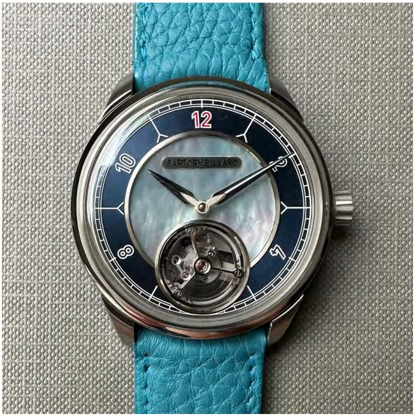
Per Scaramanga's rules, specifications by each participant remained secret until the December 2nd launch. While our WhatsApp group facilitated discussions on all project related topics, the details of personalizations were off-limits. Following the much-anticipated reveal, we were finally able to witness each member's unique personalization. Among the top dial choices were meteorite, guilloché, and aventurine. Notably, I stood out as the sole member with a mother-of-pearl dial. The overall designs were exceptionally impressive!

First Impressions

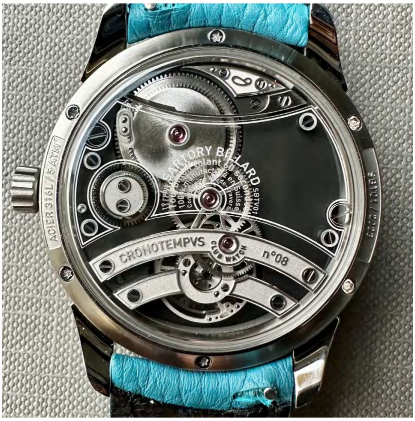
The CT12 is stunning from every angle! As soon as I laid eyes on it, I congratulated myself on the choice of mother of pearl, dial color, hand color and the strap (of course aided by Armand's sagely advice). The color scheme is marvelously cohesive and photogenic whether on the wrist or a watch stand.

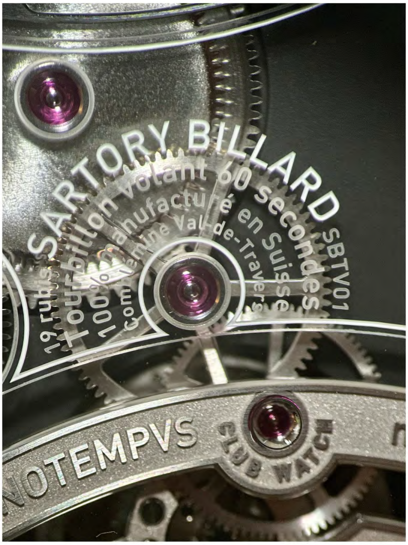
As my first tourbillon, the rotating cage is mesmerizing! It revolves fully every 60 seconds effectively acting as a seconds hand. The 3Hz beat rate is enjoyable to watch and hear clearly even from a distance.

I had noticed that most high-end watches use a slower beat rate of 3Hz. I consulted with Christophe at the CT12 delivery event about this. A higher beat rate is good for timing accuracy, while a lower beat rate leads to a longer power reserve. The ticking sound is also more soothing to the ear at a lower rate. The common decision is to go with 4Hz as a compromise. However, high-end timepieces like the CT12 strive to achieve great chronometry and long power reserve simultaneously, so they opt for a beat rate of 3Hz or 2.5Hz.



Turning the watch over reveals Sartory Billard's first in-house movement - the manual wind flying tourbillon caliber SBTV01 flaunting cutting edge aesthetics and innovations. Engraved on the arched bridge is "*CronotempVs Club Watch No 8*" designating my personal edition. The transparent sapphire bridge grants a fascinating view of the gears underneath. The compact mainspring provides an impressive 96 hour power reserve. The partially visible spinning tourbillon cage from the back offers another vantage point into the hypnotizing mechanical ballet.




SARTORY BILLARD
Tourbillon volant 60 secondes
100% manufacturé en Suisse
Comblémine Val-de-Travers
19 rubis
SBTV01
NOTEMPVS
CLUB WATCH

On the sapphire bridge and the case, we may can the following printing and engraving:

- “*19 rubis*” (19 jewels)
- “*Tourbillon volant 60 secondes*” (Flying tourbillon 60 seconds)
- “*100% manufacture en Suisse*” (100% manufactured in Switzerland)
- “*Comblémine Val-de-Travers*” (Val-de-Travers is a municipality in the Canton of Neuchâtel in Switzerland)
- “*Acier 316L / 5 ATM*” (316L steel / 50 meters waterproof)
- “*SBT01 / 2023*”

The case dimensions are 41mm in diameter, 47mm lug-to-lug, and 9.5mm in height (metal). The lug width is 21mm.

Timing measurements

As usual, I tested the watch on my timegrapher to gather timing metrics. For normal movements, the reading remains relatively stable for each position. However, the data for CT12 went up and down given the rotating cage changing the escapement’s orientation. Therefore, I documented each position’s range then calculated averages.

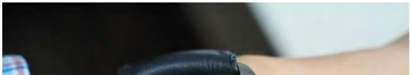
SB06-12 CT12 #8 Timing

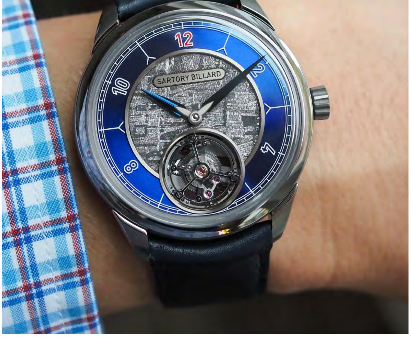
- 12 up: -8 to +6 s/d, average = -1 s/d
- 12 down: -10 to +5 s/d, average = -2.5 s/d
- Crown up: -8 to +6 s/d, average = -1 s/d
- Crown down: -9 to +5 s/d, average = -2 s/d
- Dial up: +3 to +7 s/d, average = +5 s/d
- Dial down: +8 to +12 s/d, average = +10 s/d
- Timing accuracy: +1.4 seconds per day (averaged over 6 positions)

The superb performance by the timegrapher aligned well with the wearing experience. The CronotempVs Club can pride itself on a resounding “*Chronometry*” category triumph with this tourbillon.

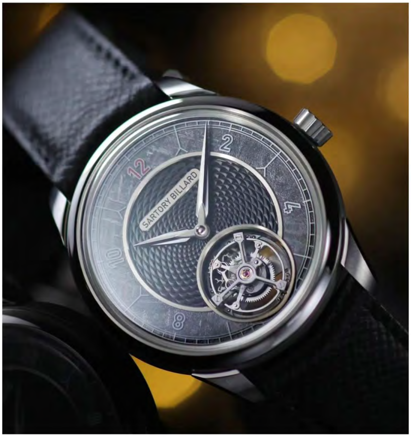
A True Club Watch

The CT12 project forged stronger bonds among club members. The sheer excitement and joy following the watch delivery defy full expression in words. Presented here are some pictures to visually capture the distinctiveness of the CT12 timepieces.

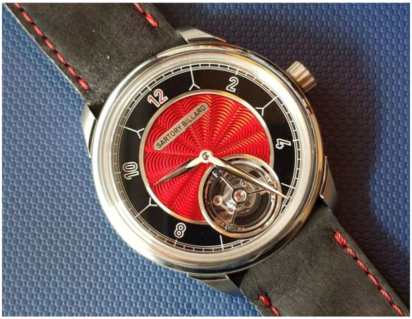




Source: IG @watchsymmetry



Source: IG @barnawatches



Source: IG @justawatchfan

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Source: IG @monaco.watchclub

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Source: IG @horoptimist

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#aguy2watch

Source: IG @aguy2watch

SARTORY BILLARD

Source IG: @scaramanga__

Conclusion

On the day of the CT12 delivery, Armand also unveiled the SB06-12 and SB06-24 as the latest additions to his brand's offerings. This announcement set the watch community abuzz with both excitement and surprise. Undoubtedly, it marks a new chapter for Sartory Billard as it ventures into the domain of high-end watchmaking. The collaboration with CronotempVs, spearheaded by Scaramanga, has played a pivotal role in making this expansion possible. I take immense pride in being part of this endeavor and extend my best wishes to Armand as he propels his brand to new heights.

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SARTORY BILLARD
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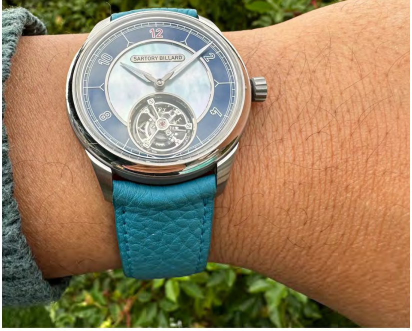

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Congratulations 🍾🎉🎊

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