
DISCREET AND SOPHISTICATED: THE MONOPUSHER CHRONOGRAPH FROM IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

A technically elegant complication that is not only robust and reliable but also highly user-friendly: The monopusher chronograph exemplifies IWC Schaffhausen's classic engineering approach to watchmaking.

The chronograph is one of the most prevalent complications in watchmaking and offers almost limitless applications in everyday life. In the traditional design, the mechanical stopwatch is operated using two pushers on the side of the case. The monopusher, on the other hand, can be started, stopped, and reset to zero via a single pusher integrated into the crown. This solution is not only technically ingenious but also allows for a more discreet, unobtrusive design.

Alongside movements from the 89000 and 69000 calibre families, the IWC-manufactured 59360 calibre is the third chronograph developed and manufactured entirely in Schaffhausen. Based on a movement from the 59000 calibre family, it is wound manually and offers a generous power reserve of 192 hours. Its debut was in 2014 in the Portofino Hand-Wound Monopusher (Ref. 5151). The first Portugieser with a monopusher, the Portugieser Hand-Wound Monopusher Edition "Laureus Sport for Good", was presented in 2020. Now, this ingenious mechanism provides a Big Pilot's Watch with a chronograph function for the first time: The Big Pilot's Watch Monopusher Edition "Le Petit Prince" (Ref. 515202).

Operating the monopusher chronograph is remarkably simple. Pressing the pusher for the first time couples the chronograph mechanism to the fourth wheel of the base movement via the oscillating pinion, and a new timing phase begins. When the pusher is pressed a second time, the chronograph is uncoupled from the base movement. A stop time of up to 60 minutes is displayed on the totaliser at 12 o'clock. Pressing the pusher for a third time returns the chronograph second and minute hands to position zero.

As with other chronographs from IWC, individual switching states are controlled by a column wheel. This complex component resembles the rook on a chessboard and has two distinct functional levels. In the 59360 calibre, the column wheel is particularly large, and its operation can be observed through the transparent case back. The tooth system on the lower level moves the column wheel forward by one position each time the pusher is activated. On the upper level, there is a circle comprising six vertical columns. From these columns and the recesses in between them, three levers on the sides read the instructions. Depending on whether the levers rest on a column or fall into a recess, a different action is triggered. While chronographs with two pushers allow the addition of several short times before resetting the hands to zero, the monopusher executes the same program in an endless loop: "start chronograph", "stop chronograph", "reset hands".

Mounted on the back of the base movement, the monopusher module consists of 66 smartly arranged parts and is a masterpiece of precision engineering. One challenge in chronograph design is that high forces act on the individual components when the mechanism is started, stopped, and reset to zero. Therefore, the intermediate wheel features a unique shape with optimised weight and inertia. This ensures that operating the chronograph affects the amplitude of the balance as little as possible. The intermediate wheel and other critical components of the 59360 calibre are manufactured using the so-called Liga process. Based on photolithography, electroplating and micro-moulding, it enables the manufacture of parts with highly complex geometries and a level of dimensional accuracy that cannot be achieved using conventional machining techniques.

IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN

In 1868, the American watchmaker and entrepreneur Florentine Ariosto Jones travelled from Boston to Switzerland and founded the 'International Watch Company' in Schaffhausen. His visionary dream was to combine advanced American manufacturing methods with the craftsmanship of Swiss watchmakers to make the best pocket watches of his time. In doing so, he not only laid the foundation for IWC's unique engineering approach but also established the centralised production of mechanical watches in Switzerland.

Over its 150 year history, IWC Schaffhausen has developed a reputation for creating functional complications, especially chronographs and calendars, which are ingenious, robust, and easy for customers to use. A pioneer in the use of titanium and ceramics, IWC today specialises in highly engineered technical watch cases manufactured from advanced materials, such as titanium-aluminide and Ceratanium®. Preferring the principle of "form follows function" over decoration, the Swiss watch manufacturer's timeless creations embody their owners' dreams and ambitions as they journey through life.

IWC sources materials responsibly and takes action to minimise its impact on the environment, creating intrinsically sustainable timepieces that are built to last for generations. The company prides itself in training its own future watchmakers and engineers, as well as offering an excellent working environment for all employees. IWC also partners with organisations that work globally to support children and young people.

DOWNLOADS

Images of the Big Pilot's Watch Monopusher Edition "Le Petit Prince" can be obtained at press.iwc.com

FURTHER INFORMATION

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