



  
**VACHERON CONSTANTIN**  
GENÈVE

“Les Royaumes Aquatiques®”  
Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille – Turtle*



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## “Les Royaumes Aquatiques®” Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille – Turtle*

Overview

A clever play on light and shade

Calibre 2460 SC

“Les Royaumes Aquatiques®”

Vacheron Constantin and the sea

The Anatomy of Beauty®

Sum-up

Technical data

- A new themed assortment from the Les Cabinotiers department, a tribute to the world of the sea and its accompanying mythology.
- A Single-piece edition Les Cabinotiers timepiece showcasing artistic crafts and watchmaking expertise, reflecting an amazing tribute to the emblem of the seas: the turtle
- A dial enamelled using a rare technique combining miniature enamel painting and *grisaille* enamel, which gives life to a marine decor.
- Two other timepieces embodying similar expertise have been created: one featuring a whale and the other a shark.
- A self-winding movement developed and produced by Vacheron Constantin, Calibre 2460 SC
- A 18K white gold 40 mm-diameter case with an officer-type caseback

Geneva, 30 March 2022 – In the opacity of the ocean depths, flora and fauna appear in a play of light and shade. This single-edition Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille – Turtle* timepiece reinterprets this special atmosphere on the dial, depicting a green turtle in a maritime décor adorned with coral and created using two rare techniques: miniature painting and *grisaille* enamel. Self-winding Calibre 2460 SC, developed and crafted by Vacheron Constantin, is housed in a 40 mm-diameter 18K white gold case with an officer-type back.

The turtle, which is thought to have appeared 200 million years ago, is both a marine emblem and a reminder of the slow evolution of species on Earth. “Les Royaumes Aquatiques®”, the topic chosen in 2022 by Vacheron Constantin for its unique Les Cabinotiers timepieces, could not ignore this very special animal as a source of inspiration. A symbol of luck and longevity, the turtle is also present in a number of aquatic fables and legends, notably those surrounding Turtle Island – a 17<sup>th</sup> century buccaneer’s hideout – as well as the founding myths of the Amerindians.

The green turtle – an endangered herbivore weighing around one hundred kilos with its over one-metre shell – was chosen to enliven the watch dial. The animal glides gracefully amid a maritime setting adorned with plants and coral. To create this naturalistic tableau, Vacheron Constantin’s master enameller first used the miniature enamel painting technique and then gave full depth to this scene in *grisaille* enamel. Housed in a 18K white gold case, the dial is swept over by hours, minutes and seconds hands driven by self-winding Calibre 2460 SC.





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The dial of the Les Cabinotier *Grisaille – Turtle* watch plunges into the deep blue sea in a strikingly realistic manner. The challenge of this remarkable creation reflecting a rare degree of enamelling expertise lies in depicting the richness of the ocean depths. Within this environment where the sun's rays penetrate only partially, the field of vision appears to be cloaked in an opaque veil: colours disappear, replaced by a play on light and shade that creates the impression of a lunar landscape at the bottom of the ocean. The genius of craftsmanship displayed here consists in giving the illusion of a *chiaroscuro* immersion. To achieve this, the master artisan first worked on the dial using miniature enamel painting, a technique that forged the reputation of “Geneva enamels” in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and which requires perfect mastery of pigments and firing. The colours – composed of metal oxide powders mixed with a binding agent – are fired multiple times in a kiln heated to more than 800 °C in order to ensure their adhesion to the surface. Each such operation implies a risk of altering their radiance or their exact hue, as well as the potential formation of microbubbles.

The first step is to create the painting in the form of shadows, while anticipating those that will not remain as such. On a translucent enamel background, the master artisan superimposed three basic layers of dark pigments mingling black and blue, before tracing the outlines of the turtle, sea grass and coral in shades of purple tones. Here again, four firings in the kiln were required necessary to achieve a perfect rendering while still maintaining a relative impression of obscurity. After working the dial using the lapping technique, the artisan then opted for a change of method in order to light up the miniature painting: *grisaille* enamel. Representing a skill that appeared in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *grisaille* enamel consists of applying a layer of dark enamel overlaid with touches of a rare white enamel called Limoges white. Each layer is then fired in a kiln for specific times defined to the nearest second. Over the course of another ten or so firings, the details of the turtle and its natural habitat took shape before finally, after 120 hours of enamelling, endowing the dial with an air of stunning realism. Such a level of mastery, which is visible on every part of the dial, sublimates this miniaturist approach to aesthetic sophistication expressed through even the smallest details.





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### Calibre 2460 SC developed and crafted by Vacheron Constantin

The Manufacture 2460 SC movement features a level of finishing that makes each constituent part an indispensable element of the final aesthetic composition. Oscillating at a rate of 28,800 vibrations per hour and equipped with a 916/1000 gold oscillating weight finely adorned with a *guilloché* motif pattern, it is endowed with an approximately 40-hour power reserve. In the grand tradition of manufacture calibres, the bridges are finished with hand-polishing angles. The straight-graining, which consists in perfectly smoothing the component flanks, is also done by hand, while the screws are scrupulously polished. The plate is circular-grained on both sides with bridges adorned with a *Côtes de Genève* on the caseback side.

Calibre 2460 SC is housed in a 18K white gold case measuring 40 mm in diameter. To admire the meticulous finishing work performed on all components, one must open the officer-type back, a hinged cover first introduced during World War I when small pocket watches with hinged backs were transformed into more practical wristwatches for officers. The Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille – Turtle* watch is fitted with dark blue alligator leather strap secured by a white gold pin buckle.





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### “Les Royaumes Aquatiques®”

“Les Royaumes Aquatiques®” (aquatic kingdoms) evoke the wonderful world of the sea and its accompanying mythology. Since time immemorial, civilisations have venerated the elements composing the universe, including water personified by the gods of the sea and the oceans. Within this context, Poseidon, brother of Zeus and ruler of the seas, stands out with his trident as the symbol of this indomitable nature. He is however not alone in reigning over the tumultuous waves. In the same spirit, the ocean is filled with mysterious creatures, Nereids, Naiads or Sirens who are at times nymphs and at others frightening creatures that appear to sailors, who are always quick to spread sea legends. That of the Flying Dutchman, celebrated by Wagner, refers to the era of the conquest of the oceans, of buccaneering and the daring deeds of Blackbeard.

Despite scientific exploration, the mystery the seas has not vanished. The ocean floor remains virtually unexplored and largely uncharted. Dives into the ocean abyss have revealed unknown species, which nurture myths like that of a colossal squid lurking at the bottom of the sea. The oceans – which cover nearly three-quarters of the Earth's surface, are home to the majority of living species and regulate more than 80% of the Earth's climate – and remain a vast expanse that has not yet revealed all its secrets. The enigmatic aspect of the seven seas and the fabulous creatures that inhabit them remain a source of genuine fascination across the ages. A source of inspiration for poets, an obsession among explorers, a pipe dream for fabulists or a treasure trove for naturalists... the sea has also nurtured the creations of Vacheron Constantin, which this year has chosen “Les Royaumes Aquatiques®” as the theme for its single-edition Les Cabinotiers timepieces.



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## Vacheron Constantin and the sea

Marine life has been a rich source of inspiration throughout the history of Vacheron Constantin. A world that is inseparable from sailing, whether on lakes or the high seas. From the mid-19th century onwards, specially commissioned pieces adorned with miniature enamel paintings or engravings began to be crafted, demonstrating a strong attachment to the world of the sea and its natural or legendary creatures. Lake landscapes and boats with lateen sails, brigantines at anchor, dolphins, sea dragons and mermaids are among the themes chosen for these pocket watches. Great attention has also been devoted to technical aspects. Renowned for its precision “instruments”, Vacheron Constantin delivered marine chronometers to several army corps in the early 20th century, knowing that this equipment was indispensable for calculating longitude at sea. More fanciful yet still radiating a maritime aura, some of the desk chronometers made by the Maison in the 1940s were shaped like rudders, while one of the models of the famous 1937 “Bras en l’air” (arms in the air) pocket watch, displaying the hours and minutes on demand, is named “La Caravelle” with its engraved and gem-set motif. For the 1996 launch of the Overseas line, Vacheron Constantin also drew inspiration from the name of this new collection evoking the spirit of travel across oceans. The caseback is thus meticulously engraved with a caravel skippered by the famous explorer Amerigo Vespucci in his quest to discover the New World.

With its Métiers d’art collection, which appeared in the early 2000s, Vacheron Constantin has revived naturalist themes related to water and its fauna and flora in an approach celebrating decorative techniques. In 2011, the Manufacture presented the second series of three Métiers d’art – La Symbolique des Laques watches featuring the aquatic world thanks to Maki-e: an ancient traditional Japanese technique that consists of sprinkling gold or silver dust on still wet lacquer, usually black, to create the motif. These watches feature the turtle, the frog and the carp, embodiments of longevity, luck and strength in Far Eastern animal symbolism. A year later, it was the turn of the Métiers d’art – Les Univers Infinis series to pick up the theme of water, this time interpreted according to the graphic expression of Dutch artist Cornelis Escher. The Fish watch featuring guilloché and cloisonné enamel and the Shell watch with engraving and champlevé enamel reflect the same sensitivity to naturalist decorations, based on a resolutely contemporary approach.

## Les Cabinotiers: single-piece creations

In the Vacheron Constantin universe, Les Cabinotiers represents a department in its own right dedicated to the personalisation of models and to unique creations. This tradition dates back to the 18th century, a time when master watchmakers were called cabinotiers and worked in ateliers bathed in natural light, known as cabinets and located on the top floors of Geneva’s buildings. In the hands of these learned artisans, open to the new ideas of the Enlightenment, exceptional timepieces were born, inspired by astronomy, mechanical engineering and the arts. This expertise, which constitutes the great Geneva watchmaking tradition, has been flowing through Vacheron Constantin’s veins since 1755.



1 18K yellow gold watch, representing a hand-engraved mermaid – Circa 1910

2 Table chronometer, representing a boat rudder – 1930

3 « Bras en l’air » pocket watch, depicting a hand-engraved and set “Caravel” – 1937



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### The Anatomy of Beauty®

The rendering of this turtle in a maritime décor adorned with coral reflects Vacheron Constantin's particular attentiveness to detail, a real second nature. This extraordinarily painstaking care is expressed through the designers' aesthetic choices and preferences as well as in the meticulous finishing work performed by the artisans. All the components of a Vacheron Constantin watch benefit from this scrupulous attention, even those that remain invisible once the movement has been assembled. A keen eye will note the fine *guilloché* work on a dial or the gem-set minutes track; it will make out the contours of the Maison's Maltese cross emblem on the links of a bracelet; it will notice the small flame-blued screw serving as a seconds indicator on a tourbillon carriage and the mirror polish of a minute-repeater hammer; it will appreciate the artisans' delicate touch when chamfering a plate or rounding off a bridge; and finally, it will admire the miniature enamel painting depicting a ship tossed around by a stormy sea streaked with lightning. At Vacheron Constantin, concern for detail delicately shapes an anatomy of beauty in which nothing is left to chance.



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A marine reptile thought to have appeared 200 million years ago and a legendary creature, the turtle finds its place within the Les Cabinotiers theme for 2022. Entitled “Les Royaumes Aquatiques®”, it is dedicated to the world of the sea and the accompanying mythology. This single-edition Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille – Turtle* piece takes up the challenge of creating the illusion of an immersion into the abyss, towards these marine landscapes composed of shade and light. To recreate this chiaroscuro world, Vacheron Constantin’s master artisan first worked on the dial according to the miniature enamel painting technique so as to reveal the shadow-like motifs. The *grisaille* enamel technique was used to light up the dial, revealing in successive layers the details of the turtle in its natural habitat. No less than 18 firings in the kiln in the course of a 120-hour process were required to complete this strikingly realistic masterpiece of miniaturisation. The watch is powered by self-winding Calibre 2460 SC, a movement developed and crafted by Vacheron Constantin, indicating hours, minutes and seconds. In the grand tradition of manufacture calibres, all movement components have been finished and decorated by hand. The care lavished on the finishing touches can be admired by opening the officer-type back of the 40 mm-diameter 18K white gold case.



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## TECHNICAL DATA

### Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille – Turtle*

Reference 2400C/000G-071C

Calibre 2460 SC  
Developed and manufactured by Vacheron Constantin  
Mechanical, self-winding  
26.2 mm diameter, 3.6 mm thick  
Approximately 40 hours of power reserve  
4 Hz (28,800 vibrations/hour)  
182 components  
27 jewels  
Hallmark of Geneva certified timepiece

Indications Hours, minutes, central seconds

Setting Hours and minutes adjustment: winding crown (2 positions)

Case 18K white gold  
40 mm diameter, 9.42 mm thick

Dial 18K gold covered with “Grand Feu” miniature enamelling and *grisaille* enamelling representing a “Turtle”  
18K white gold hands

Strap Dark blue *Mississippiensis* alligator leather, hand-stitched, saddle-finish, large square scales

Buckle 18K white gold buckle  
Polished half Maltese cross-shaped

Box Les Cabinotiers model

#### Single-piece edition

“Les Cabinotiers”, “Pièce unique”, “AC” hallmark engraved on caseback





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Founded in 1755, Vacheron Constantin is the world's oldest watch Manufacture in continuous production for over 265 years, faithfully perpetuating a proud heritage of watchmaking excellence and stylistic sophistication through generations of master craftsmen.

At the pinnacle of Haute Horlogerie and understated elegance, the Maison creates timepieces with unique technical and aesthetic signatures, and an extremely high level of finishing touches.

Vacheron Constantin brings to life unparalleled heritage and a spirit of innovation through its collections: Patrimony, Traditionnelle, Métiers d'Art, Overseas, Fiftysix, Historiques and Égérie. It also offers its discerning clientele of connoisseurs the rare opportunity to acquire unique and bespoke timepieces by means of its "Les Cabinotiers" department.

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