



VACHERON CONSTANTIN
GENÈVE



Les Cabinotiers
**RÉCITS
DE
VOYAGES**

A watchmaking odyssey honouring arts
and cultures of the world

**Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille* High Jewellery
Dragon**

Embargo lifted on 27 November 2023 – 9:00 AM CET

Overview

Vacheron Constantin and Asia

First green grisaille for
Vacheron Constantin

Calibre 1120

Les Cabinotiers Récits de Voyages

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- Les Cabinotiers - Récits de Voyages collection sets off to discover the world and its wonders in the spirit of openness that has characterised Vacheron Constantin since its origins: China and its ancestral culture are notably highlighted in certain models.
- For the first time, the Maison's master enameller has employed the *grisaille* technique using green enamels to pay an original and vibrant tribute to the mythical five-clawed imperial dragon depicted on the dial.
- Emblematic of the Maison's technical mastery, this one-of-a-kind watch set with baguette-cut diamonds is powered by in-house Calibre 1120, an ultra-thin self-winding movement.

The single-piece edition timepieces in the new Les Cabinotiers – Récits de Voyages range reflects Vacheron Constantin's geographical expansion. With the first commercial contacts forged between Vacheron Constantin and China in the mid-19th century, this country became an essential travel destination. To pay tribute to this country, the Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille* High Jewellery – Dragon watch features a green *grisaille* enamel dial, a first for Vacheron Constantin and an original backdrop for the mythical five-clawed imperial dragon. Manufacture Calibre 1120, one of the thinnest self-winding movements ever produced, powers this one-of-a-kind timepiece set with baguette-cut diamonds.



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Vacheron Constantin's human adventure, which gives substance to artistic crafts, is enriched with Les Cabinotiers – Récits de Voyages, an imaginary horological odyssey to destinations representing the various historical stages in the expansion of the Maison. Each one-of-a-kind timepiece in the collection evokes the arts and cultures of the different continents visited by the Maison. This international expansion, which began in the early 19th century, also included China.

The emperor turned to the best European artisans, including Vacheron Constantin to rebuild his lost collection. Having begun prospecting the Chinese market in the first half of the 19th century, with business contacts documented as early as 1845, the Maison had already established a solid reputation in the country.



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Vacheron Constantin's master artisan has devised a new *grisaille* enamelling technique to enhance the dial of this timepiece and highlight the mythical five-clawed dragon.

A symbol of power, nobility and good fortune, this creature is always accompanied by its pearl, an emblem of wisdom.

The art of *grisaille*, a technique dating back to the 16th century, reveals the motif in a play of chiaroscuro, designed to endow it with special depth. This now rare technique consists of applying layers of a rare white enamel known as Limoges white to a dark enamel base. Each layer is then fired in a kiln, with the firing time precisely defined to the nearest second. Over the course of the firing, the details of the dragon take shape, gradually giving consistency to the way in which the dragon is staged with a wealth of incredibly accurate details. The enameller's work generally ends with the application of a final layer of lapped translucent enamel to achieve an effect of brilliance and depth that brings out the contrasts in the painting.

For this piece, the Maison's master enameller took a different approach by choosing to give a green tint to the translucent enamel applied to the initial work in Limoges white. This colouring reinforces the mythical appearance of the depiction. To accentuate the depth effect, the master enameller then used Limoges white for the final subtleties of the motif by means of successive layers fired in the kiln. Another first is the combination of *grisaille* enamel and gemsetting. The 40 mm case in 18K white gold is set with 146 baguette-cut diamonds on the bezel, middle and lugs (7.1 carats). The crown is adorned with a reverse-set brilliant-cut diamond. It is paired with a dark green alligator leather strap featuring a white gold pin buckle set with 16 baguette-cut diamonds.



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Calibre 1120: a legendary ultra-thin movement

The Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille* High Jewellery – Dragon watch is distinguished by its elegant silhouette. This model with a case measuring just 8.9 mm thick benefits from the Maison's expertise in the world of ultra-thin calibres.

While Vacheron Constantin's first ultra-thin calibres date back to the 19th century, the Manufacture developed several movements renowned for their slenderness throughout the 20th century, in response to the comfort-related expectations of a clientele won over by wristwatches.



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In 1911, for example, Vacheron Constantin's records show three calibres with different diameters but a common thickness of 2.82 mm. This quest for thinness led to the creation of movements measuring 2.25 mm thick in 1917 and 1.88 mm in 1924. In 1955, to celebrate its bicentenary, Vacheron Constantin presented Calibre 1003, a manual-winding movement just 1.64 mm thick and at the time the thinnest ever produced.

At just 2.45 mm thick, Calibre 1120 reflects this same concern for combining technical sophistication with elegant design.

Introduced in 1968, this movement was redesigned in 2010 with an 18K gold oscillating weight shaped like a Maltese cross. It retained the same size, yet with a higher 40-hour power reserve. Bearing the prestigious Hallmark of Geneva, it was taken to the next level in terms of decoration and finishing, featuring a Côtes de Genève motif, circular graining, chamfering and straight-grained flanks. With its 144 components and a regulator operating at a rate of 19,800 vibrations per hour (2.75 Hz), this latest-generation Calibre 1120 drives the watch's white gold leaf-shaped hands.



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Les Cabinotiers *Récits de Voyages* series

Vacheron Constantin's vocation has always been to perfect the art of watchmaking in Geneva while remaining open to the world. The founder's grandson Jacques-Barthélemy Vacheron (1787-1864) was the first to criss-cross the roads of France and Italy, followed by his partner François Constantin (1788-1854), a tireless traveller who oversaw the commercial development of the Maison. He established commercial relations with Central Europe, South America, Scandinavia and Asia, during a period in time when Vacheron Constantin was also gaining a foothold in the United States and China, as well as in Brazil, Hong Kong and Cuba.

François Constantin's correspondence stretching over a quarter of a century paints the portrait of a Manufacture that was open to a Europe undergoing major restructuring in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna. This scope and reach continued to expand as the Vacheron Constantin name crossed borders and conquered new markets. Since that time, the very notion of travel has been inherent to the values of the Maison, an integral part of the human adventure characterising its nearly 270-year history. Following in its founders' footsteps, the Maison offers these *Récits de Voyages* series as a watchmaking odyssey through the world and its wonders, applying craftsmanship and mechanical art as its means of expression.





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Vacheron Constantin presents Les Récits de Voyages, a collection of one-of-a-kind Les Cabinotiers timepieces combining craftsmanship and technical mastery. This collection dedicated to the Maison's international expansion that began in the 19th century celebrates the spirit of openness it has demonstrated from the outset. Each watch illustrates the successive stages of this odyssey. Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille* High Jewellery – Dragon pays tribute to China, a country whose trade with Vacheron Constantin dates back to 1845. On the dial of this watch featuring a five-clawed imperial dragon and its pearl, Vacheron Constantin's master artisan has created a motif in green *grisaille* enamel, a first

for the Manufacture, another first being the gemsetting of a model with a *grisaille* enamel dial. The case of this timepiece is entirely set with 146 baguette-cut diamonds on the bezel, middle and lugs, while a brilliant-cut diamond adorns the crown. This Hallmark of Geneva-certified watch is powered by self-winding Calibre 1120, a legendary movement distinguished by its extreme 2.45 mm thinness and its aesthetically pleasing construction. It is housed in a white gold case measuring 40 mm in diameter and 8.9 mm thick, paired with a dark green alligator leather strap secured by a gemset white gold pin buckle.



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You highlight the thinness of some of the models presented in this Les Cabinotiers – *Récits de Voyages* collection. What are Vacheron Constantin's credentials in this field?

Since its creation in 1755, Vacheron Constantin has been involved in all areas of the watchmaking art: pocket watches, wristwatches, rings, sautoir necklaces and brooches, demonstrating consummate mastery of complications, grand complications and ultra-thin mechanical movements. While this latter field of expertise might easily appear less prestigious than grand complication models, this is definitely not the case. Ultra-thin calibres require just as much talent and expertise, as demonstrated by Vacheron Constantin since its origins. As far back as the early 19th century, correspondence between the Maison's directors clearly referred to "thin watches". This quest for slimmness became a Vacheron Constantin signature throughout the 20th century, as exemplified by a pocket watch unveiled in 1931 with a mechanical manual-winding movement measuring 17 5/12 *lignes* or 39.20 mm in diameter and barely 0.94 mm thick. Calibre 1003, presented in 1955 to celebrate the Maison's 200th anniversary; as well as Calibre 1120, which appeared 13 years later and is featured in the Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille* High Jewellery – Dragon watch, are part of this trend towards ultra-thin, aesthetically accomplished movements. Some of these calibres have become iconic among collectors, who recognise both the technical solutions adopted and the sense of form in the arrangement of their components. What applies to watches with two or three hands also applies to complications, notably thanks to this same Calibre 1120 with additional function modules. While on this topic, I should also mention the example of minute repeater Calibre 1731, the thinnest on the market at the time of its presentation in 2013 at just 3.90 mm thick.

***Grisaille* enamel and gemsetting: why are these two artistic crafts perfectly mastered by Vacheron Constantin only now being combined?**

These two techniques are indeed among the artistic crafts perfectly mastered within the Manufacture. The fact that it had not previously seemed appropriate to combine the two was mainly because dials produced in *grisaille* enamel are strikingly beautiful, showcasing breathtaking attention to detail through chiaroscuro atmospheres forming realistic depictions that nothing should be allowed to disturb. The *grisaille* enamel models presented last year by Vacheron Constantin in its "Les Royaumes Aquatiques®" Les Cabinotiers collection feature a smooth bezel and case, with no gemsetting. With Les Cabinotiers *Grisaille* High Jewellery – Dragon, the green shade given to the dial's *grisaille* enamel – a first for Vacheron Constantin – prompted the Maison's designers to try something different. Gemsetting the case was an obvious choice, not only because it accentuates the depth effect intended by this enamelling technique, but also because it enhances its brilliance.



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Do Vacheron Constantin and China enjoy a longstanding shared history?

China is a fascinating country with which Vacheron Constantin has enjoyed close ties since the mid-19th century. In 2015, to celebrate 65 years of bilateral relations between China and Switzerland, Vacheron Constantin took part in the "Geneva at the Heart of Time – The Origin of Swiss Watchmaking Culture" exhibition, in partnership with the *Musée d'art et d'histoire* (MAH) in Geneva and the Capital Museum in Beijing. This was the largest watchmaking exhibition ever staged in Asia, with more than 350 pieces, tools, paintings and engravings, a third of which came from Vacheron Constantin's heritage collection. The Manufacture was also present at the exhibition site at the Capital Museum in Beijing with its master watchmakers, engravers, enamellers and *guilloché* artists. This simple example illustrates China's importance for the Manufacture, which has around 30 points of sale in the country. Chinese customers are sensitive to *la belle horlogerie* and to fine craftsmanship. They are highly appreciative of artistic crafts and show great loyalty to these principles.



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TECHNICAL DATA

Grisaille High Jewellery – Dragon

Reference	2017C/000G-096C Hallmark of Geneva certified timepiece
Caliber	1120 Developed and manufactured by Vacheron Constantin Mechanical self-winding 28.40 mm diameter, 2.40 mm thick Movement power reserve: approximately 40 hours 2.75 Hz (19'800 vibrations/hour) 144 components 36 jewels
Indications	Hours and minutes
Case	18K white gold set with 146 baguette-cut diamonds (approx. 7.10 cts) 40 mm diameter, 8.90 mm thick Crown set with an inverted brilliant-cut diamond (approx. 0.10 ct) Transparent sapphire crystal caseback
Dial	"Green" <i>Grisaille</i> enamel representing a dragon
Strap	Dark green Mississippensis alligator leather with alligator leather inner shell, hand-stitched, saddle-finish, large square scales
Clasp	18K white gold pin buckle set with 16 baguette-cut diamonds (approx. 0.60 ct)
Presentation box & accessory	Les Cabinotiers model
Unique timepiece	« Pièce unique », « Les Cabinotiers » and « AC » hallmark engraved on the back of the timepiece



Founded in 1755, Vacheron Constantin is the world's oldest watch Manufacture in continuous production for nearly 270 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 vintage pieces within the Les Collectionneurs assortment, as well as unique and bespoke timepieces by means of its Les Cabinotiers department.

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