

GRAIL WATCH 8:
KUDOKE 2 'STARRY NIGHT'



Kudoke's neoclassical masterpiece is reimagined with new details and a color palette evocative of Vincent van Gogh's most famous painting. Limited to 30 numbered pieces and priced at EUR 13,300 excluding taxes.

WORDS BY WEI KOH, FOUNDER OF REVOLUTION, THE RAKE & GRAIL WATCH



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It gives me great pleasure to announce the latest Grail Watch collaboration project with independent watchmaker Stefan Kudoke. The watch we have decided to work on is his Geneva Grand Prix award-winning Kudoke 2, a 39mm by 10.7mm watch featuring Stefan's in-house Kaliber 1-24H. This movement represents an important act of democratization for stunning handmade finishing. It includes a hand-frosted movement bridge, mirror-polished angles, a hand-engraved balance cock, snail-finished barrels, all in a far more accessibly priced package than these crafts are normally associated with.

The Kudoke 2 features a wonderful sense of restrained, German neoclassical watchmaking design, complemented by a touch of poetry — a sky disk at 12 o'clock indicating 24 hours, with a display of day and night. Since its launch in 2019, I have been deeply enamored with this timepiece and consider it an enormous honor to be able to collaborate with Kudoke on this watch. Our version, nicknamed "Starry Night," is inspired by the seminal work of Post-Impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh, in particular the swirling vortex of luminous stars that he saw above him as a patient at the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole asylum.

The Kudoke 2 'Starry Night' is characterized by a brushed and mirror-polished grade 5 titanium case, treated with CVD (Chemical Vapor Deposition) to give it a shimmering translucent blue color. The dial is a stunning "twisting vortex" guilloché treated with blue PVD coating that evokes flinqué enamel watches from the 18th century. We love the dynamic tension created by the ultra modern case contrasted with this decidedly old school dial.

Finally, the infinity-shaped hands, the chapter ring for the indexes as well as the chapter ring for the 24 hours, and the hand-engraved sun and moon disk have all received the careful application of hand-painted Super-LumiNova to create a visual homage to the emotional impact of Van Gogh's legendary painting.



Grail Watch 8: Kudoke 2 'Starry Night' lights up the night with its distinctive luminescent signature



Stefan and Ev Kudoke, and their award-winning Kudoke 2 featuring the inhouse Kaliber 1-24H

KUDOKE MASTERPIECES

Stefan and his wife Ev Kudoke are two of the nicest people in independent watchmaking. So it's with a sense of happiness that I've seen their rise in success over the last half decade. Stefan Kudoke has, of course, been around longer than that. He initially made his reputation with some wildly creative and beautifully executed skeleton watches, but in 2019, he and Ev established what they call their Handwerk or "Handcraft" collection.

The Kudoke 1 and Kudoke 2, which comprised the maiden offerings from the Handwerk family were the very epitome of discreet, pared back — to the point of almost Zen reductionism — neoclassical elegance. The Kudoke 1 is a time-only watch with a seconds indicator at nine o'clock, while the Kudoke 2 is a lovely, poetically creative watch without running seconds but with a 24-hour and day/night indicator. This indicator takes the form of a disk that is hand-engraved with a sun and moon and that also features the indexes for 24 hours, which is read off a fixed circular chapter ring surrounding it. The design of both watches are wonderfully original. They feature a stunning use of negative space on the dial, where the minute flange is pushed to the very perimeter. The bezels of both watches are incredibly thin, so what you get is the feeling of a very, large expansive dial despite the classic 39mm case dimension. The hour and minute hands take predominance in both watches. Arching imperiously over the space of the dial, they are designed as infinity symbols. Beyond the thin and aggressively sloped bezel, the case is smooth and extremely pleasing to touch, and complemented by an onion shaped crown. Turn either watch over and you will be treated to a truly fascinating vision in the form of Kudoke's Kaliber 1, an in-house made and decorated manual wind movement.

KALIBER 1

First presented at Baselworld in 2018, Stefan's in-house movement shares some components with the Habrings' Caliber A11. These two movements were developed together and the sharing of components made it possible for their creation to be economically feasible to the two independent watch couples. They share winding mechanism, jewels, screws, pins and barrel, but beyond that, the Kudoke oscillation system as well as the movement bridges, clicks and clamps are different. The horological language expressed by these two movements is also totally different.

The first thing you'll see when gazing at a Kudoke caliber is a stunning and original movement design. It is configured in a three-quarter plate design that is typical of Saxon watchmaking but has a balance bridge that protrudes out almost directly from the movement's barrel and ratchet wheel, and creates the optical illusion that this bridge is integrated into the baseplate. I've always thought the architecture of this bridge, and the way it visually explodes from the barrel, brings a strong sense of dynamic energy to the movement design.



The stunning and original movement design of the Kudoke Kaliber 1-24H

Then, there is the finishing to this majestic movement bridge, which involves a painstaking process named reaming or grenage. This frosted decoration is inspired by British watchmaking, in particular marine chronometers. It is carried out by hand and involves granular particles of glass or sand suspended in oil. The baseplate is coated with this and then rubbed in circles against a flat surface. And when I say rubbed, I mean with Daniel in the Karate Kid performing wax-on, wax-off-like regularity. Any abrupt shift in the pattern of the circles or the pressure applied to the baseplate would cause a deformation of this pattern.

Then, Stefan and his team apply beautiful mirror beveling to all the edges of the movement bridge. Look closely and you'll see that this is actually convex in form. The balance cock of the movement is definitely the star and is adorned with hand engraving as well as mirror polishing along its edges. The steel barrel and ratchet wheels are snailed and, along with the click spring and logo plate, a fine sliff with 12 μ is applied to the click spring with a polishing along the edges. It really is easy to fall in love with a Kudoke movement. Stefan and Ev's watches are important in that they have brought all the charm of a highly hand-finished movement to a more accessible price point.

In fact, the Kudokes are really among the chief pioneers of this hand-finished renaissance. In 2019, the Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève (GPHG) awarded the Kudoke 2 with the "Petite Aiguille" Prize as the best watch between the 4,000 and 10,000 Swiss franc range. I could only agree with the choice enthusiastically.



Note the star engraving within the infinity symbol on the balance cock, which is unique to this edition and a subtle reference to the "Starry Night" inspiration

STARRY NIGHTS

Thus smitten by Stefan and Ev's charming brand of watchmaking, two years ago during the COVID pandemic, I managed to get them on a Zoom call. Considering the massive popularity of their brand, I want to thank them for entertaining me. When asked what we might potentially collaborate on, somehow the topic turned to art, and I professed a love for Vincent van Gogh's painting, *The Starry Night*. The artist was severely depressed and suffered psychotic episodes and delusions. The *Starry Night* painted in June of 1889, when he was a patient at the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole asylum, is his masterwork. Stefan and Ev stated that they, too, were huge fans of Van Gogh and of this painting in particular. And with that, we had our source of inspiration.

We decided to create a "Starry Night" version of the Kudoke 2 by first selecting a prevailing blue color theme for the watch. The grade 5 titanium case of the timepiece is first finished to perfection with mirror polishing and a vertical sliff on its flanks and bottom before being sent to Positive Coating on La Chaux-de-Fonds, where it is treated with CVD. This creates a kind of ethereal blue to the titanium that is incredibly reflective of light, yet is translucent enough for you to see all the details of the finish to the case.

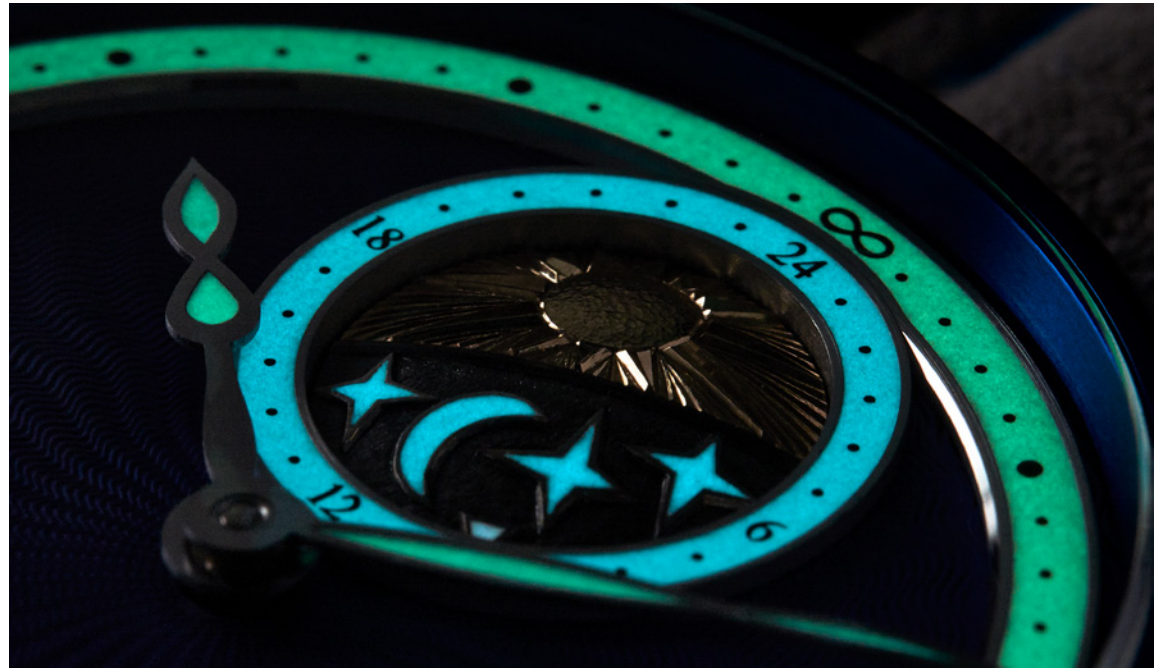


Three colors of Super-LumiNova applied on the watch: blue, bright green and white



Then we decided on a dial which would feature a twisted guilloché pattern reminiscent of that found in the center of the sky portrayed in the painting. This is painted a translucent blue color as well, echoing the chromatic theme of the artwork.

Next, we applied three colors of Super-LumiNova to the watch: bright green for the infinity-shaped hour and minute hands and the raised chapter ring with the indexes, laser beam blue for the moon, stars and 24-hour chapter ring of the day/night indicator, and white for the little triangle on the night side to indicate the actual hour of day or night. All three of these luminous colors echo those found in Van Gogh's painting. The result is a watch that explodes into life when you enter a dark environment.



Up close with Grail Watch 8: Kudoke 2 'Starry Night'



GRAIL WATCH'S CREATIVE MANTRA

The concept of Luminous Signature is the third code in Grail Watch's creative mantra. It was first expressed in our collaboration with Trilobe in a watch called Une Folle Soirée, where the three time-telling disks and all the angles of the baseplate had been treated in Super-LumiNova. Before that, we had created two Bvlgari Octo Finissimo Chronographs with fully luminous dials. Earlier this year, we launched the Chronoswiss Opus Blue, also with a CVD treated grade 5 titanium case and a luminous skeleton dial. While the movement of the Kudoke 2 has gone through different incarnations, we decided that the beauty of Stefan's original British yellow gold-treated, frosted three-quarter plate and hand-engraved balance cock simply could not be surpassed. As such, we decided on this finish for his stunning movement.



Grail Watch 8: Kudoke 2 'Starry Night' proudly expresses Grail Watch's design code of a Luminous Signature, channeling the creative spirit of the great Post-Impressionist artist Vincent van Gogh. Created with two of the coolest people in the watch industry, this watch will be made in just 30 examples and is priced at EUR 13,300 excluding taxes.

Apart from the new blue CVD treated grade 5 titanium case, blue PVD coated guilloché and special luminous indications, it also comes with three straps — a gray Alcantara strap selected by Stefan and Ev, a Delugs for Grail Watch Denim Babele strap and a fantastic Delugs Cut-To-Size navy blue rubber strap. The last allows you to wear the fantastic titanium timepiece in more sporting environments, as I did with the prototype in the waters of the Maldives, thanks to the watch's 50 meters of water resistance.

I hope you enjoy wearing this watch as much as we have loved creating it for you!

GRAIL WATCH 8:

KUDOKE 2 'STARRY NIGHT'

Hand-engraved sky disk:
Gold-plated Sun / Rhodium-plated Moon and Stars filled with blue Super-LumiNova

Infinity-shaped steel hands filled with green Super-LumiNova

24-hour chapter ring filled with blue Super-LumiNova

(Pictured here) Alcantara strap with quick-release spring bars; Blue CVD-coated titanium pin buckle



39 x 10.7mm brushed and polished blue CVD-coated titanium case; water-resistant to 50m; sapphire crystal

Minute chapter ring filled with green Super-LumiNova

Onion-shaped crown

Blue PVD coated guilloché dial

PRICE

EUR 13,300 excluding taxes

AVAILABILITY

Limited edition of 30 pieces

Quick-release system

Limited and numbered edition of 30 pieces

Manual-winding Kaliber 1-24 with 46-hour power reserve; 28,800 beats per hour

Yellow gold-plated hand-engraved balance cock

Yellow gold-plated frosted finished movement



AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE
10 May 2023
10pm SGT / 4pm CET / 10am EST
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