

Press Release

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DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST

A trailblazing chronograph – supremely finished

Following the relaunch of the brand, A. Lange & Söhne presented their first chronograph, the DATOGRAPH, 25 years ago. In the latest model, the unique alliance of technical complexity and expressive design is enriched with further exceptional elements, created by the artisanal finishers' hands. The limited HANDWERKSKUNST edition boasts rare and exceedingly sophisticated dial and movement decorations.



The new DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST in yellow gold with a black-rhodiumed dial adorned with tremblage engraving

The DATOGRAPH has been a benchmark in chronograph construction since 1999. To commemorate its 25th anniversary, A. Lange & Söhne has presented two fascinating interpretations of this mechanical magnum opus: the DATOGRAPH UP/DOWN in white gold with a blue dial and the DATOGRAPH PERPETUAL TOURBILLON HONEYGOLD “Lumen”.

A rare composition of aesthetic details

The limited-edition DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST will be launched shortly – a further highlight of the anniversary year. Exclusive decorations accord the unparalleled dial design of the original model an artistic and refined appearance. Since 2011, the attribute “HANDWERKSKUNST” has been used to identify exclusive, special limited-edition watches whose dials and movements are adorned with particularly elaborate decorations. Endless

patience, ample experience, a keen eye, a steady hand as well as the absolute commitment to perfect every single detail – these are the finishers' and engravers' prerequisites to raise the decorative opulence for which A. Lange & Söhne is renowned to an inordinately high level.

Tremblage engraving on the dial: magnificent artisanal virtuosity on small surfaces

The black-rhodiumed main dial as well as the rhodiumed, light-grey totalisers of the DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST feature an ornate tremblage engraving, resulting in a three-dimensional structure with subtle light reflexions. For this technique, the engraver uses a specially crafted lining burin to create a fine-grained surface. The challenge presented here is to not only achieve a uniform texture on the smallest of planes but to simultaneously preserve certain dial elements such as the arch brand logo, the minutes and seconds graduations as well as the tachymeter scale. Together with the subsidiary dials that were moved downwards slightly and the aperture for the outsize date, they remain clearly visible with their sculpted contours of the relief engraving and contrast crisply against the dark background. In a first step, the edges of the appliques and Roman numerals are chamfered and the surfaces are decorated with straight graining. In a second step that requires great diligence, they are placed on the dial. The hands of this HANDWERKSKUNST edition showcase meticulously executed circumferential chamfers and straight graining.



Close-up of the DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST

Black polishing of the chronograph levers – the apex of finissage

The artisanal virtuosity also manifests itself in every detail of the lavishly finished manufacture calibre L951.8. For example, the finishers blackpolish the surfaces of the chronograph levers, a particularly time-consuming and rare technique: it ensures that incident light is reflected in merely one single direction. Viewed from this perspective only, the surface of the lever appears

to be jet black, yet seen from all other angles, it has a mirror-like gloss. Inspired by historic pocket watches, the granular surface of the bridges on the three-quarter plate made of German silver represents the design counterpart of the tremblage engraving of the dial. And last but not least, a glance through the sapphire-crystal caseback reveals the intricacy and mechanical beauty of the manually wound movement.



Detail of the manufacture calibre L951.8

Hand-engraved balance cock with a vine motive

The manual engraving on the balance cock is the most distinctive design element. This minuscule yet lavishly decorated movement part with its special filigreed vine pattern sets the DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST apart. Unlike a conventional Lange engraving where the pattern is cut into the material, for this piece the vine pattern is relief-engraved. Floral motives have a long-standing tradition at A. Lange & Söhne. They graced the first precision pocket watches dating back to the fledgling years of the manufacture in the 19th century. Hence, this calibre constitutes a significant example of the manufacture's competence in chronograph construction as well as its artistic craftsmanship.

The DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST is the eighth model of this special edition and features a yellow-gold case with a diameter of 41.0 millimetres and a height of 13.1 millimetres. Given the extraordinary amount of artisanal work involved, this masterpiece is limited to only 25 watches worldwide. This timepiece is exclusively available at Lange boutiques. Towards the end of August 2024, it will make its debut at Watches & Wonders Shanghai 2024 and will also be shown during the Concours of Elegance at Hampton Court Palace near London, taking place at approximately the same time.

“With the DATOGRAPH, our engineers created a manufacture chronograph as early as 25 years ago that unites highly sophisticated functions with a balanced dial design,” explains Anthony de Haas, Director Product Development. “In the DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST, the artisanal perfection is raised to an even higher level. Be it at a glance at the dial or through the sapphire-crystal caseback – every perspective reveals fascinating details that are testament to the outstanding prowess of our engravers and finishers. Manually executed with the highest degree of precision, the decorations and finishing exhibit aesthetics that no machine in the whole world could possibly achieve.”

About A. Lange & Söhne

Dresden watchmaker Ferdinand Adolph Lange laid the foundations for Saxony's precision watchmaking industry when he established his manufacture in 1845. His precious pocket watches remain highly coveted among collectors all over the world. The company was expropriated after World War II, and the name A. Lange & Söhne nearly vanished. In 1990, Ferdinand Adolph Lange's great-grandson, Walter Lange, had the courage to relaunch the brand. Today, Lange crafts only a few thousand wristwatches per year, predominantly in gold or platinum. They are equipped exclusively with movements made in-house that are elaborately finished and assembled twice by hand. With 72 manufacture calibres developed since 1990, A. Lange & Söhne has secured a top-tier position in the world of watchmaking. Its greatest achievements include the LANGE 1, the first regularly produced wristwatch with an outsize date, and the ZEITWERK, with its precisely jumping numerals. Extraordinary complications such as the ZEITWERK MINUTE REPEATER, the TRIPLE SPLIT and the GRAND COMPLICATION presented in 2013, the most complicated model to date, represent what the manufacture always strives for: to drive the traditional art of watchmaking to ever-new heights. Launched in 2019, the sporty-elegant ODYSSEUS marked the beginning of a new chapter for A. Lange & Söhne.

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DATOGRAPH HANDWERKSKUNST		Ref. 405.048F
Movement	Lange manufacture calibre L951.8, manually wound, crafted to the most exacting Lange quality standards, decorated and assembled by hand; precision-adjusted in five positions; plates and bridges made of untreated German silver; balance cock engraved by hand	
No. of movement parts	426	
No. of jewels	43	
No. of screwed gold chatons	4	
Escapement	Lever escapement	
Oscillation system	Shock-resistant balance with eccentric poising weights; superior-quality balance spring manufactured in-house, frequency of 18,000 semi-oscillations per hour, precision beat adjustment system with lateral setscrew and whiplash spring	
Power reserve	60 hours when fully wound	
Functions	Time indicated in hours, minutes, and subsidiary seconds dial with stop seconds; flyback chronograph with precisely jumping minute counter; outsize date	
Operating elements	Crown for winding the watch and setting the time; two chronograph buttons, one button for rapid correction of the outsize date	
Case dimensions	Diameter: 41.0 millimetres; height: 13.1 millimetres	
Movement dimensions	Diameter: 30.6 millimetres; height: 7.9 millimetres	
Crystal and transparent caseback	Sapphire crystal (Mohs hardness 9)	
Case	750 yellow gold	
Dial	750 gold, main dial black-rhodiumed and tremblage-engraved; totalisers rhodiumed and tremblage-engraved	
Hands	Hour and minute hands: 750 gold; subsidiary seconds and minute counter hands: steel, yellow gold-plated; chrono seconds hand: steel, yellow gold-plated	
Strap	Hand-stitched alligator leather, dark-brown, grey seam	
Buckle	Deployant buckle in 750 yellow gold	
Limited edition	25 watches, edition number engraving	