

Glashütte, September 2012

Phoenix from the ashes

“BENU” is the name of the very first wristwatch presented by the Moritz Grossmann manufacture

The BENU projects a distinctive personality and discreet elegance. Its conspicuous facet is that it always remains inconspicuous. It takes a second look to discover the assets of this extraordinary timepiece: a delicate rose-gold bezel frames the solid-silver dial with its crisp Arabic numerals and the fine-tipped brown-violet hands. They have the same hue as the annealed screws that are visible on the surface of the calibre.

The upper half of the dial beneath the “12” displays the traditional “MORITZ GROSSMANN GLASHÜTTE i/SA” signature. The small arc above the maker’s name and the horizontal lines on either side of the provenance symbolise the brand-typical cutout of the plate above the movement that exposes the screw balance, its beating heart, when viewed through the sapphire-crystal back.

Following an old tradition, the subsidiary seconds dial stands above the “6” and is slightly recessed to allow the hour and minute hands to hover as closely as possible over the dial. The precision scale graduations and the slender hands are reminders that a watch is meant to accurately keep the time. The aesthetic clarity of its face is reminiscent of a Glashütte precision instrument from the 19th century.

Shaped in the form of stretched rhombuses, the steel hands consist of two parts (hand and bushing), which are manually crafted, hardened and ground by Grossmann’s watchmakers. This sequence of time-consuming processes is the only way to impart three-dimensionality to the hands and achieve the daintiness of the tips. The shape of the hands and their remarkable length assure precise readings of time. Brown-violet was chosen as the annealing colour – it is the darkest hue of steel obtainable with thermal hardening. As a prominent contrast, the eyes of the hands are mirror-polished.

The antireflective sapphire-crystal back reveals the inner life of the watch with seductive depth. The curved, milled cutout of the German silver 2/3 plate, a typical Grossmann hallmark, puts the spotlight on the large screw balance and its breathing hairspring. The plate itself bears the hand-engraved brand signature: “MORITZ GROSSMANN GLASHÜTTE i/SA”. The three screwed gold chatons that secure the jewel bearings are eye-catching plate accents just like the white sapphire bearing jewels and the brown-violet

screws that were naturally annealed over an open fire. Three-band snailing on the ratchet wheel complements the sublime harmony of the movement. The watch is unique in its orchestration.

Functional aesthetics: Heritage in time

The construction of the calibre 100.0 movement is a functional work of art and a feast for the eyes of every connoisseur. The German silver 2/3 plate replaces a number of bridges and improves the mechanical stability of the movement. Polishes, graining, snailing, and wide Glashütte ribbing embellish the parts, and the inscriptions are always engraved by hand as well. German silver, steel, the brown-violet tint of the screws, as well as the gold of the chatons and of the large balance wheel rim constitute a classically discreet composition of natural material colours. A loupe allows the observer to delight in the superb finissage of the surfaces and the bevelled, mirrorpolished edges on a visual excursion across the individual levels of the movement.

A classic lever escapement establishes the link between the going train and the oscillation system of the calibre. Found in almost all mechanical watches, this escapement was modified according to considerations proposed by Hugo Müller (1863 to 1943), a well-known Glashütte regleur.

The classic screw balance breathes with a Nivarox hairspring featuring a terminal curve that was first calculated by regleur and chronometer maker Gustav Gerstenberger (1886 to 1983) in Glashütte. It performs 18,000 semi-oscillations per hour, which is equivalent to a frequency of 2.5 hertz.

Innovation and tradition

The BENU incorporates a number of innovations and traditional features that reflect the heritage of Moritz Grossmann:

- The oscillation system and the escapement are mounted on two **hand-engraved cocks**: The large one, for the balance wheel and the hairspring, is cantilevered according to Moritz Grossmann's design for his lever chronometers. It also carries the Grossmann micrometer screw. The escape wheel sits on the smaller, adjacent cock. At a lower level, a third, snailed cock holds the lever. Its size was deliberately reduced to showcase the escapement.
- The BENU features an **index adjuster** that allows the watch to be regulated to onesecond accuracy without disrupting the equilibrium of the oscillation system. The

Grossmann **micrometer screw** enables accurate, tension-free adjustments of the index tail in both directions.

- On the inside, the balance spring is overcoiled with a quarter arc and pinned to the classic roller.
- When the crown is pulled, the seconds hand is stopped to allow precise timesetting. The **stop-seconds device** relies on a spring that advances a pin onto the circumference of the double roller and temporarily halts the oscillation system.
- A modified **Glashütte stopwork** secures the tension of the mainspring. After winding, it allows the ratchet wheel to reverse somewhat and slightly relax the mainspring. Grossmann's watchmakers implement this controlled backlash with a slotted hole in which the pin on the stop click can slide.
- Two beautifully contoured **pillars** – evocative of Grossmann's pocket watches of old – and the separately **removable winder** – a refinement of the Glashütte clutch winding mechanism – support the plates.
- The winding wheels have polished bevel faces in the tothing and sparkle with exceptional brilliance. The largest one, the ratchet wheel, is also decorated with traditional **three-band snailing**, accentuating a harmonious match with the wide ribbing and the freehand engravings on the cocks and the 2/3 plate.
- As in old Grossmann pocket watches, the jewels – white sapphire – are set in prominent **gold chatons**. Together with their brown-violet annealed steel screws, they stand out over the surface of the plate.

BENU – the new beginning

The name of Grossmann's first revival watch is BENU. It comes from ancient Egyptian mythology: Bennu (as spelled in English), the divine heron, settled into its nest one evening and was consumed by fire there. It left an egg from which another Bennu bird hatched the next morning.

Moritz Grossmann was an ingenious watchmaker who lived from 1826 to 1885. In the Saxon town of Glashütte, he crafted numerous pocket watches, various chronometers, and a few precision pendulum clocks that are still coveted collectors' items at international auctions. Now, more than 125 years after the death of this eminent German master of superior watchmaking, watches that bear his name are once again available.

The BENU radiates understated beauty; its gestalt flatters the eye and the wrist. It gives Moritz Grossmann's horological accomplishments a new life in the 21st century: graceful in design, innovative and premeditated in its mechanical finesse, and immaculate in its traditional artisanship. The BENU is much more than the sum of its 188 parts. Every single

element is crafted with the same precision and perfection. As always, details are what manifest the utmost in quality.

This also applies to the carefully hand-stitched brown alligator strap secured with a butterfly clasp that makes it easy to put on and take off the watch. It, too, is crafted from 750/000 rose gold, and features a dependable pushbutton catch.

The BENU, Ref. 001.A-211-01-1, is limited to 100 watches worldwide and will be available starting in 2011. The price in Germany is 16.800 Euro.