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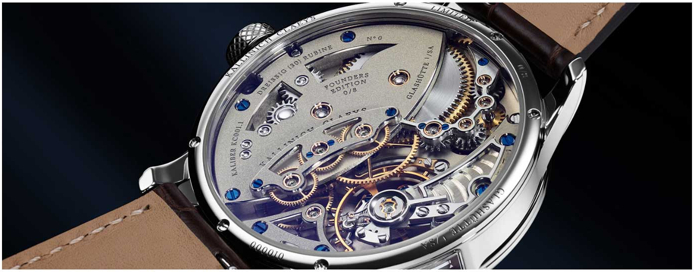
The Saxonian Indie Watch That Should Have Been Nominated at the GPHG

An elaborately constructed center-seconds watch by two young, former A. Lange & Söhne watchmakers.

by Cheryl Chia . Sep 7, 2024



Home / **The Saxonian Indie Watch That Should Have Been Nominated at the GPHG**

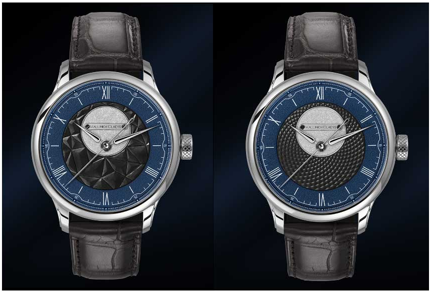
The social media-facilitated rise of independent watchmaking has unleashed a torrent of creative talent, each vying for attention in a segment that suddenly seems saturated with new names and novel ideas. While it has brought many fresh voices to the fore, it has also created a landscape where enthusiasts, who, amidst their intense careers that afford them these watches, must now navigate a tumultuous sea of options, where not all that glitters is gold. For every independent watchmaker who expands the boundaries of horology with genuine passion and skill, there are countless others who ride the wave. Oftentimes, it involves a fair bit of watchful waiting even after the entire watch has been revealed but sometimes it just hits you in a way that makes it hard to look away. If you have seen the movement image of Kallinich Claeys' watch circulating on Instagram, you would have probably felt that.

Here is a time-only (and power reserve indicator) watch with all the classic idioms of Glashütte watchmaking yet is just as elaborate in construction and rich in carefully thought-out details as any complicated watch to emerge from the storied town. Kallinich Claeys was founded in 2022 by Johannes Kallinich and Thibault Claeys — both former A. Lange & Söhne watchmakers.

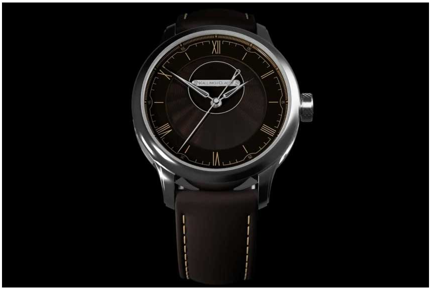
Johannes Kallinich (left) and Thibault Claeys (right)

Kallinich, now 31, began his career at the Saxonia department of A. Lange & Söhne immediately after graduation. At the age of 24, he became the head of the Lange 1 department before transitioning to work on Lange chronographs. Thibault Claeys, who turns 28 this year, hails from Belgium and went to a watchmaking school in Antwerp. After graduating, he joined the Lange 1815 department in 2019. The two watchmakers met in 2021 while Kallinich was pursuing his Master Watchmaker certification, forging a strong friendship that led to their venture just a year later.

In 2022, they unveiled the initial renderings of their first watch, the Einser Zentralsekunde that translates to: “One Central Seconds” and have recently completed the first prototypes. Production started in early August and delivery of the first watches will soon follow in mid-September. Two versions were unveiled: the Einser Central Seconds and Einser Founders Edition limited to 22 pieces and 8 pieces respectively — totalling 30 pieces. There is also a Hong Kong Edition limited to 10 pieces developed for A Watch Company, a Hong Kong based retailer specialising in independent watchmaking.



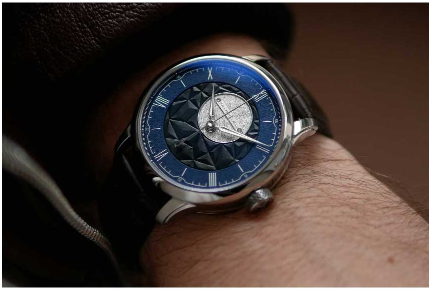
Einser Founders Edition (left) and Einser Central Seconds (Right)



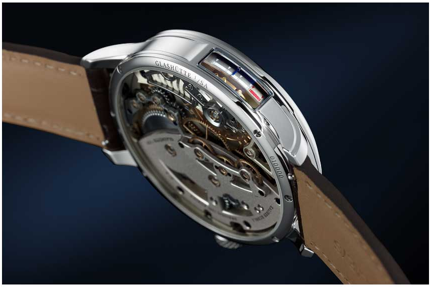
EINSER Central Seconds "Hongkong Edition"

Making the case and dial for Einser Zentralsekunde

The watch has a stepped case in stainless steel. It measures 41mm by 11mm and comprises of four parts — bezel, case middle, a curved sapphire crystal insert for the power reserve indicator at around eight o’clock on the band and a case back. Notably, the case middle has a smooth recess that transitions into the stepped lugs. The case is entirely polished and the stepped lugs give it a very elegant appearance despite its substantial case size. The crown is large and knurled with a cross hatch pattern for grip.



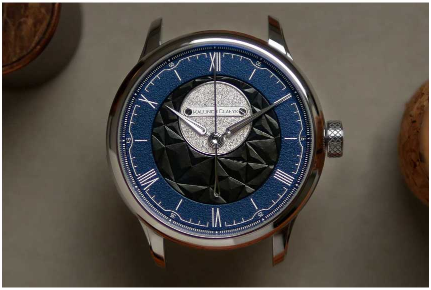
Kallinich Claeys Einser Zentralsekunde (Founders Edition) with an elaborate three-part dial: an embossed chapter ring, a relief-engraved dial central disc and an offset insert finished with tremblage engraving



Linear power reserve indicator visible through a curved sapphire crystal aperture in the case band

The duo, who currently employs only one person and produces nearly the entire movement themselves, has sensibly chosen to outsource the external parts of the watch. They entrusted the case production and dial finishing to specialists, mostly based in Germany. The case, for example, was made by RP Uhrgehäuse, the same case maker used by Glashütte Original.

The dial construction is very elaborate. It consists of three parts: a chapter ring, a central disc insert and an offset circular insert that carries a plaque with the brand name. The blanks were made by the duo while the decoration was done by external specialists. Dial specialist Cador decorated the chapter ring with an embossed pattern, over which the numerals as well as minute and second graduations were pad-printed. In the Founders' Edition, the central disc features a relief-engraved geometric pattern, while in the Einser Central Seconds model, it is embellished with guilloché. The offset circular insert in both editions is finished with tremblage engraving. All engraving work is performed by Helmut Wagner, a master engraver renowned for his craft, who previously served as the head of engraving at A. Lange & Söhne.



Kallinich Claeys Einser Zentralsekunde

The hands were produced by a supplier but entirely hand-finished in-house. They are straight-grained on their top surfaces, with bevelled and polished edges, and a deep, chamfered and polished recess.

The caliber KC001.1 is exemplary in construction and finish

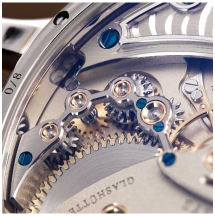
To start off, the construction is very unusual. It has a deliberately anachronistic layout that recalls the earliest centre seconds movements in watchmaking. These had an indirectly driven centre seconds hand where the fourth wheel is not located in the centre but were later adapted into centre seconds movements. Today, modern movements are typically conceived with the fourth wheel positioned in the centre while the second wheel (traditionally the centre wheel) drives the cannon pinion indirectly, although there are various other methods to achieve a direct drive central seconds. However, back then an indirectly driven centre seconds was not a trivial matter and even a skilled movement maker such as Patek Philippe relied on Victorin Piguet to adapt these movements.

When viewed from the movement side, the fourth wheel in the Einser Zentralsekunde is located at six o'clock, perfectly positioned to drive a small seconds hand in a sub-dial. However, in order to drive a seconds hand on the same axis as the hour and minute hands, three additional wheels had to be added above the barrel bridge to relocate the seconds.

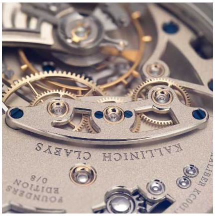
KALLINICH CLAEYS
DREISSIG (30) RUBINE
FOUNDERS EDITION 0/8
GLASHÜTTE I/SA

Kallinich Claeys Einser Zentralsekunde

As the additional gearing is outside the power flow of the gear train and are driven off the fourth wheel – the wheel furthest from the mainspring and thus the one with the least torque, there is a tendency for the seconds hand to flutter due to backlash in the motion of the wheels. To eliminate this, there is a tension spring of about 0.05mm thin under the central seconds shaft that helps maintain the stability of the seconds hand.



The power reserve differential gearing are supported by an intricate steel bridge



The auxiliary train for the central seconds is supported by an additional German silver bridge that is screwed to the barrel bridge

Another reason why the movement appears to be remarkably dense for a three-hand watch is the inclusion of a power reserve indicator along the case band. Whenever there is a power reserve indicator in a watch, a differential gearing is needed. This would typically consist of an input wheel that is driven in rotation when the barrel is wound, a second input wheel that is driven when the mainspring is let down and an output connected to the power reserve indicator. The differential in the Einser Zentralsekunde consists of 9 parts and can be seen in action on the back of the watch as the barrel is being wound.

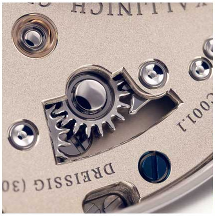
During winding, the ratchet wheel drives an intermediate pinion which drives the input wheel in the differential. As the watch runs, the barrel drives a set of pinions which drives the second input wheel in the differential. The differential mechanism includes planet gears – the smallest being 1.4mm in diameter – mounted on a carrier, which are connected to both input wheels. These planet gears calculate the difference in rotations between the two input wheels, allowing the output wheel to move the power reserve indicator (a toothed rack) accordingly. The output train, along with the toothed rack is hidden beneath the base plate on the dial side, which provides an element of mystery.

DREISSIG (30) RUBINE
FOUNDERS EDITION 0/8
GLASHÜTTE
GLASHÜTTE I/SA
000010

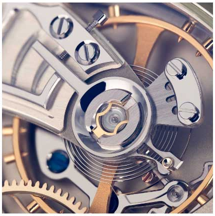
A closer look at the differential made up of nine parts with the output train hidden beneath the base plate on the dial side

Power reserve is 45 hours and beat frequency is a traditional 18,000 vph. It has a fine regulator which differs from the Swan neck regulator in shape but works the same way. It works in conjunction with the regulating index, which adjusts the effective length of the hairspring. This index has two curb pins between which the hairspring passes. While the swan neck regulator itself is a curved, finely shaped steel spring, the steel spring here follows the shape of the balance cock and has been black-polished. Likewise, it applies pressure to a fine adjustment screw, which in turn controls the position of the regulating index.

Additionally, there is a stop-seconds mechanism that is equally well thought out, with careful attention paid to ensuring the right amount of force. The stopping spring has an additional spring pinned to it, which functions like a shock absorber, cushioning the impact of the brake lever against both the stopping spring and the balance wheel.



Intermediate winding wheel next to the crown wheel has a ball bearing race installed in it housing three ceramic balls and is secured to the base plate with a mirror-polished mushroom pin

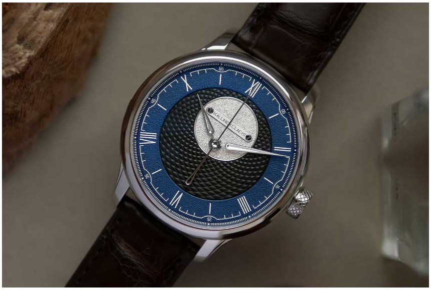


Fine regulator with a spring that traces the shape of the balance cock engraved with "gills"

The movement is produced almost entirely in-house, including all pins and gears. Notably, the winding train has a very intricate wheel just 4.8mm in diameter which has a ball bearing race installed in it containing tiny ceramic ball bearings to reduce friction. The base plate and bridges are made of German silver while the intricate differential bridge is made of steel, which provides a nice contrast. A hallmark of Glashütte watchmaking is the three-quarter plate but the bridges were designed to showcase the most interesting parts of the movement. The composition is classic Glashütte where jewels – made of sapphire in this case – are embedded in gold chatons and secured to the bridges by blued screws. However, it is distinguished by a generous dose of anglage.

The barrel bridge, central seconds train bridge and escape wheel bridge collectively incorporate 19 internal angles in the cutouts. The teeth on the mainspring barrel, ratchet wheel, winding train wheels as well as several wheels in the differential are bevelled and polished. Equally impressive are the mirror-polished pins that create multiple gleaming domes around the movement, adding a touch of refinement. The intermediate winding wheel with ball bearings, for instance, is secured to the base plate with a large mirror-polished mushroom pin. Lastly, the balance cock is engraved with “shark gills” by Wagner.

As a manifestation of craft, the amount of attention lavished on the movement is as impressive as any other finely crafted three-hander that’s in vogue but its construction reveals a level of sophistication that will be key to standing the test of time.



Kallinich Claeys Einser Zentralsekunde

As this is the first outing, the watch is priced modestly at EUR 24,590 before taxes. All 30 pieces have already been allocated but at the time of writing, there are a couple of pieces left for the Hong Kong edition, which are sold directly through A Watch

Company.

Tech Specs: Kallinich Claeys Einser Zentralsekunde

Movement: Manual-winding Calibre KC001.1 at 2.5 hz (18,000 vph); 45-hour power reserve
Functions: Hours and minutes; central seconds; power reserve indicator (on case band)
Case: 41mm × 11mm; stainless steel
Dial: Embossed blue chapter ring; central dial decorated with hand-engraving (relief-engraving on the Einser Founders' Edition and guilloche on the Einser Central Seconds); inner offset dial finished with tremblage engraving; hands with polished chamfers and straight graining
Strap: Hand-stitched dark brown alligator leather with grey seam
Availability: 8 pieces (Einser Founders Edition) and 22 pieces (Einser Central Seconds)
Price: EUR 24,590

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