

Oldenzaal, February 14, 2025

1944 Tanfana

Sons of Oldenzaal

It is often said that a person is a product of their environment, a statement that seems appropriate when discussing Bart and Tim Grönefeld, aka 'The Horological Brothers'. The siblings were born in Oldenzaal, a city in the Netherlands close to the German border. While both brothers have spent time in Switzerland, attending WOSTEP, the prestigious school of watchmaking in Neuchâtel, and subsequently worked on complicated mechanisms in Le Locle, their love for Oldenzaal meant their return home was inevitable.

The name Grönefeld is interwoven with the history of Oldenzaal. The horological family's storied past began in 1912 when Johan Grönefeld embarked on a career in watchmaking, working in the heart of the city under the tutelage of his uncle. Johan was later succeeded by his son Sjef and thereafter, his grandchildren Bart and Tim. Today, Bart and Tim's children have chosen to follow in the footsteps of their forefathers, ensuring this Dutch watchmaking dynasty endures.

A Local Flavour

Since establishing their eponymous watch brand in 2008, The Horological Brothers have been repeatedly inspired by Oldenzaal. The clock of Saint Plechelmus Basilica was once maintained by their grandfather, then their father and is now cared for by Bart. This clock served as inspiration for the GPHG prize-winning watch, the 1941 Remontoire. Should you stroll along the city's intricately paved streets, formed of interwoven brick, it is difficult to ignore the buildings with their elaborately shaped 'bell gables'. This architectural style is echoed in the design of Grönefeld's distinctive stainless steel movement bridges.

The Inspiration for the 1944 Tanfana

Wishing to create their first ladies' watch, The Horological Brothers found inspiration in the Tankenberg, a tiny mountain approximately 2 km from Saint Plechelmus. On the northern slope of the hill sits a gazebo. The structure was erected on the site of a former temple where 'Tanfana', a goddess, once stood. Tanfana is considered a guardian of peace and harmony and is referenced in Bart and Tim's latest creation, their inaugural ladies' model.

While Tanfana ignited the brothers' imagination, their family is never far from their thoughts. Keen to recognise the contribution of their mother to their careers, they wanted to honour her. The 1944 Tanfana pays tribute to their mother Antoinette, affectionally referred to as 'Netty' with the name referencing her year of birth.

The Dial – Eminently Feminine

The dial of the 1944 Tanfana is formed of aventurine, a glossy midnight blue material incorporating numerous glinting metallic inclusions. Its geometric motif, known as the 'Flower of Life', enhances the dial's visual depth and texture. This pattern is linked to Sacred Geometry, an ancient discipline that explores the spiritual meaning of shapes and proportions often found in nature.

Extended Lancette hands, a style employed on the majority of Grönefeld timepieces, converse with applied trapezoidal indexes to pronounce the time clearly. The hands are formed of red gold, matching the indexes.

A small display sits at the base of the dial. It eschews the customary seconds hand and track combination in favour of an animated floral motif. As time passes and the floral motif rotates, it creates a mesmerising moiré effect, reminiscent of a flower endlessly blooming.

Beautifully Formed

Measuring 37.5 mm in diameter, the case of the 1944 Tanfana is intricately shaped. It incorporates a multitude of heights and unites different lines and curves, bestowing areas of brilliance and shade. The case execution is nuanced and sophisticated while contributing to the harmonious appearance of the watch. The crown features an aventurine cabochon mirroring the appearance of the dial.

Offered in Red Gold Au750 5N, gleaming surfaces abound. The 1944 Tanfana has a gem-set case and pin buckle, providing an additional quotient of sparkle. For example, the Red Gold Au750 5N Tanfana is specified with 233 brilliant cut diamonds weighing approximately 2.73 carats gracing the bezel, case and pin buckle.

The 1944 Tanfana is offered with a wide array of straps to choose from.

An Inner Beauty

Grönefeld is synonymous with making fine mechanical movements enhanced with peerless hand finishing and the Calibre G-06 proves no exception. To the rear of the watch, a pane of sapphire crystal grants sight of the movement.

The automatic movement within the 1944 Tanfana obviates the need for manual winding, making it ideal for daily use. The 22-karat red gold oscillating weight is openworked, runs on ceramic ball bearings and features 'The Tree of Life' symbol in white gold. It is also engraved with 'Goddess' and 'Tanfana'. The Tree of Life symbolises strength, growth and resilience. Its roots represent family and foundation, while the branches reflect dreams and self-discovery.

The movement is endowed with a free-sprung balance, a more precise means of regulating the rate than the simple index-adjusted balance. By employing a variable inertia balance, the rate is less susceptible to positional influence.

Upholding the Grönefeld ethos, there are numerous examples of the company's no-compromise approach. The stainless steel bridges replicate the appearance of the aforementioned 'bell gables' and feature micro-blasted centres, various engravings in relief and gleaming hand-bevelled edges. The 5-arm double spoke gear train wheels efficiently transmit force while imbuing the movement with a contemporary look.

The mainplate is adorned with spotting, the screws are mirror polished with chamfered rims and slots, while the use of gold chatons reinforces the sense of refinement and pays tribute to watchmaking tradition.

A New Era

The 1944 Tanfana is the first Grönefeld ladies' model. It embraces new design codes and employs some materials not previously seen on a Grönefeld timepiece; however, it still subscribes to the same exacting standards which have attracted praise from legions of watch aficionados over the years.

Indeed, it is this consistency that has come to define the work of The Horological Brothers and their talented team of watchmakers. Bart and Tim have repeatedly demonstrated their unwavering quest for excellence, earning them the prestigious "Grand Prix d'Horlogerie de Genève" awards on three separate occasions.

Bart and Tim are third generation watchmakers who continue to create extraordinary timepieces. As The Horological Brothers look to the future, witnessing the next generation of Grönefeld watchmakers prosper, they remain mindful of their roots, Oldenzaal and the importance of family. The 1944 Tanfana encapsulates everything Bart and Tim hold dear.

