

Press Release - Excellence Émail Grand Feu

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LOUIS ERARD: THE SIGNATURE OF AUTHENTIC CRAFTSMANSHIP

Le Noirmont, 4 March 2021

Excellence Émail Grand Feu - Small Seconds – Limited edition of 99 pieces. The coming-together of the most exquisite traditional Grand Feu enamel craftsmanship and fine contemporary watchmaking. For the very first time, Louis Erard is incorporating an artistic craftwork; and this is only just the beginning. This is an achievement which comes with a message: making one of the most exclusive traditional crafts of all times accessible.

The dial is to a watch what skin is to man. If it is true, as Paul Valéry claimed, that the deepest thing in a man is their skin, then the soul of a watch is surely to be found in its dial.

Louis Erard has always followed this philosophy, striving to take as much care as possible over every single detail. This time, Louis Erard is going even further, taking another, extra step. Or, perhaps more accurately, crossing a threshold. Specifically, the threshold of the Donzé Cadrans workshop, the art enameller in Le Locle, the go-to address for some of the most prestigious brands. This is a workshop which manages to maintain the appearance of how an enamelling workshop in the 17th century might very well have looked, with its oven, its collections of enamels and its workbenches cluttered only by brushes.

No high technology, no IT. Man is at the centre: hand, eye, and know-how. Know-how which has been patiently refined, through practice, experiments and failures too, as nothing is taken for granted. The traditional Grand Feu enamel method required the dials to be built up little by little, with thin layers of silica, metallic oxide and potassium, combined for eternity in the alchemy of a succession of rounds of firing at more than 800°C. Everything happens in the oven, where the material, left to itself, is not easily tamed, as evidenced by the high and incompressible level of waste.

This new model, the Excellence Émail Grand Feu, issued in a limited series of only 99 pieces, celebrates the essence of this ancient profession. The process complies with the purest traditions, using a copper base, a ductile and temperamental metal, subjected to enamelling and counter-enamelling, in the exact same manner as the days before industrial technology existed, when synthetic varnishes had not even been imagined and Grand Feu enamel was the only way to provide watches with a face. A face for which centuries have slipped by without leaving a wrinkle. A face which, little by little, modern watchmaking reserves only for its ever-smaller number of high end, elite pieces.

This is the story that the Excellence Émail Grand Feu tells us. However, this watch goes even further. It carries a message: that of bridging the gap between artistic craftwork and accessible watches. Between the excellence of craftsmanship and everyday watchmaking. Currently, no other watch meets this challenge: allowing the exclusive to be within reach, the democratisation of the quintessence.

Let's not be mistaken: despite what the Excellence Émail Grand Feu price may suggest, this creation remains absolutely exclusive. Exclusive and limited, of course, because authentic Grand Feu enamel will never be mass-produced. Every dial is made by hand, piece by piece, a thousand leagues from any industrial logic.

The result is subtle, sensual. The colour, a delicate cream. The softness of the texture, as fine as skin. The harmony of the ecru and blue, that of the signature fir tree hands in blued steel and enamel-transferred indexes. The design of the dial features a small-seconds sub-dial at six o'clock, the ultimate signature of tradition.

And again, the blend of two different times, a mixture of two DNA: centuries of tradition along with contemporary watchmaking. The case, modern, sleek, polished steel, 42 millimetres, water-resistant to 50 metres. The coffee-coloured strap in calf nubuck leather. The Sellita SW261-1 automatic movement, visible through the open caseback.

Finally, the shock of the price: less than 4,000 Swiss francs. This is, it must be said, completely unheard of, considering the type of finish and the level of exclusivity. It will be available from March, at the rate of around fifteen pieces produced per month. The art and style of Louis Erard taking up the challenge of fine watchmaking. More artistic craftwork will follow.

Excellence Émail Grand Feu ref. 34237AA54**Recommended retail price: CHF 3,900**

Movement	Automatic, Sellita SW261-1 calibre, three hands with small seconds at 6 o'clock, 11½", Ø25.60 mm, height: 5.60 mm, 31 jewels, 28,800 VpH (4Hz), élaboré grade movement, special openworked oscillating weight with Louis Erard symbol, approx. 38 hours of power reserve
Functions	HMS Central hour and minute hands, second hand at 6 o'clock
Case	Polished stainless steel, Ø42 mm, lug width: 22 mm, lug to lug: 49.60 mm, thickness: 12.25 mm, 3 pieces, domed sapphire crystal with anti-reflective treatment on both sides, movement visible through the transparent caseback, water-resistant up to a pressure of 5 bars (50 m/165 ft), signature fir tree crown, case back engraved 'Limited Edition 1 of 99'
Dial	Cream colour, in traditional Grand Feu enamel made by Donzé Cadrans S.A., counter at 6 o'clock, blue and beige enamelled transfers
Hands	Signature fir tree hands in blued steel
Strap	Coffee-coloured calf nubuck leather with tone-on-tone stitching, polished stainless steel pin buckle, functional catch spring bars enabling strap to be changed quickly Dimensions: width 22/20 mm, length 80/115 mm

PHOTOS: http://bit.ly/LE_EmailGrandFeu

LOUIS ERARD, THE STORY OF A BRAND FOR CONNOISSEURS

Based in the Jura mountains, the birthplace of watchmaking, Louis Erard embodies the values of Swiss mechanics, the tradition that keeps its promises. Combining luxury, timelessness and elegance, this independent brand is renowned for its mechanical watches and, in particular, its iconic regulators. A collection on which the brand, founded by Mr. Louis Erard in 1929, built its reputation.

Continuing the work of its founder and honouring watchmaking tradition, the Maison is reinterpreting the codes in a contemporary language. Louis Erard is now writing the next chapter of the brand's story. Inspired by high-end watchmaking, the brand is strengthening its collection of mechanical timepieces with complications.

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