



Jules Audemars 30th Anniversary Perpetual Calendar has a Tuscany blue dial with white gold applied hour-markers, displaying hours, minutes, day, date, month, leap-year indicator and moon phases. The platinum case has a 41 mm diameter and a sapphire crystal case back. Limited edition of 90 pieces.



 'Retro' and the watch biz go together like tomatoes and mozzarella, but you can't address the former unless you have acquired many years of operation in the latter. Audemars Piguet, with us since 1875, has as illustrious a past as any with which to reference. Hell's bells: the company is still controlled by the founding families. For many enthusiasts with an appreciation of history, Audemars Piguet is part of an immutable trio of *haute horlogerie* giants - along with Vacheron Constantin and Patek Philippe - against which all others must be judged.



## Aesthetically, the Anniversary is a nod to earlier times, without being blatantly retro

The astonishing success of the Royal Oak has dominated both the activity and reputation of Audemars Piguet over the past 35 years and so the achievements of one of that watch's siblings - introduced in the same decade - has been a little overshadowed. Now, at a time when many watch connoisseurs judge the merits of a timepiece on the quality of its movement, AP felt it appropriate to draw one of its more advanced calibres out into the limelight.

The Jules Audemars Collection, which honours the co-founder with a line of distinctive models, has grown steadily over the past three decades. To date, the series has offered men's and ladies' timepieces, exclusively mechanical and produced only in 18K gold or platinum; embracing a range of quality calibres from manual wind classics to extreme complications.

Re-joining the family in time for the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday is the Jules Audemars Anniversary Perpetual Calendar. And it's quite a contrast to the steady flow of ultra-macho Royal Oak variants. Born in 1978, this particular perpetual calendar appeared at a time when mechanical watches seemed doomed to inhabit history's dustbin. At that time, quartz was on the rise and 'complications' usually referred to marital problems. In that context, the launch of a mechanical perpetual calendar was a brave, maybe even foolhardy move.

At the time launching such a complication, in and of itself, was not enough to mark the watch as special, because perpetual calendar wristwatches were nothing new. What rendered the Audemars Piguet a milestone was its claim to being the first ultra-thin, self-winding perpetual calendar.

### Objet d'art

And for those who lean toward the elegant rather than the butch, it's a thing of beauty. Its movement is 4 mm thick, rightly adjudged by AP as a 'spectacular feat of miniaturisation.' No argument here. As a pure example of the form, the Jules Audemars 30th Anniversary Perpetual Calendar indicates the day, the date, the month, the moon phases and leap-year cycle, with the irregularity of the 30- or 31-day months controlled by a cam on which the various lengths of the months are defined.



The calibre 2120/2802 ultra-thin self-winding movement, which is finished with bevelled components and adorned with a côtes de Genève motif and circular grained.

Better still, the newest Jules Audemars features, on the same axis, a new wheel bearing a cam indicating standard months of February and a leap-year month of February, the latter performing one turn every four years. The watch is thus able to account for leap-years. Thanks to this, the Jules Audemars 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Perpetual Calendar will require no correction whatsoever before 1 March 2100. Just warn your heirs that on that date, he or she will have to actuate the correctors positioned on the side of the case, to adjust the mechanism for their progeny.

Aesthetically, the Anniversary is a nod to earlier times, without being as blatantly retro as its gorgeous new sibling, the Jules Audemars Self-Winding Chronograph (see p 90). It features four sub-dials reading, clockwise from 12, the months and quarters, the date, phases of the moon, and day of the week. The sub-dials are polished in a contrasting pattern to the main dial's satin brushing, to create a unique contrast.

As for the dial colour itself, ideal for enhancing the presence of a platinum case, Audemars Piguet chose a shade of Tuscany blue, with legends in white and hour markers in white gold. A transparent case back and dark blue crocodile strap, with a folding clasp completing the package.

That transparent back exposes one of the most intriguing movements AP has ever produced, the 38-jewel, 355-part Calibre 2120/2802, offering unidirectional winding for a 40 hour power reserve. The 2120/2802 also can be found in the Royal Oak Perpetual Calendar.

As for the bad news, this masterpiece will be issued in a series of only 90 examples. ☹️



In the context, the launch of a mechanical perpetual calendar in 1978 was a brave, maybe even foolhardy move

