

Vertigo

A new flying tourbillon elevates Roger Dubuis to heady heights

James Gurney

To claim status as an exclusive manufacture is a privilege held by few. However, the new RD-03 movement goes a long way in proving Roger Dubuis' worth among such horological elite. *QP* casts its eye over this most sophisticated flying tourbillon, within its first habitat – the Golden Square case.

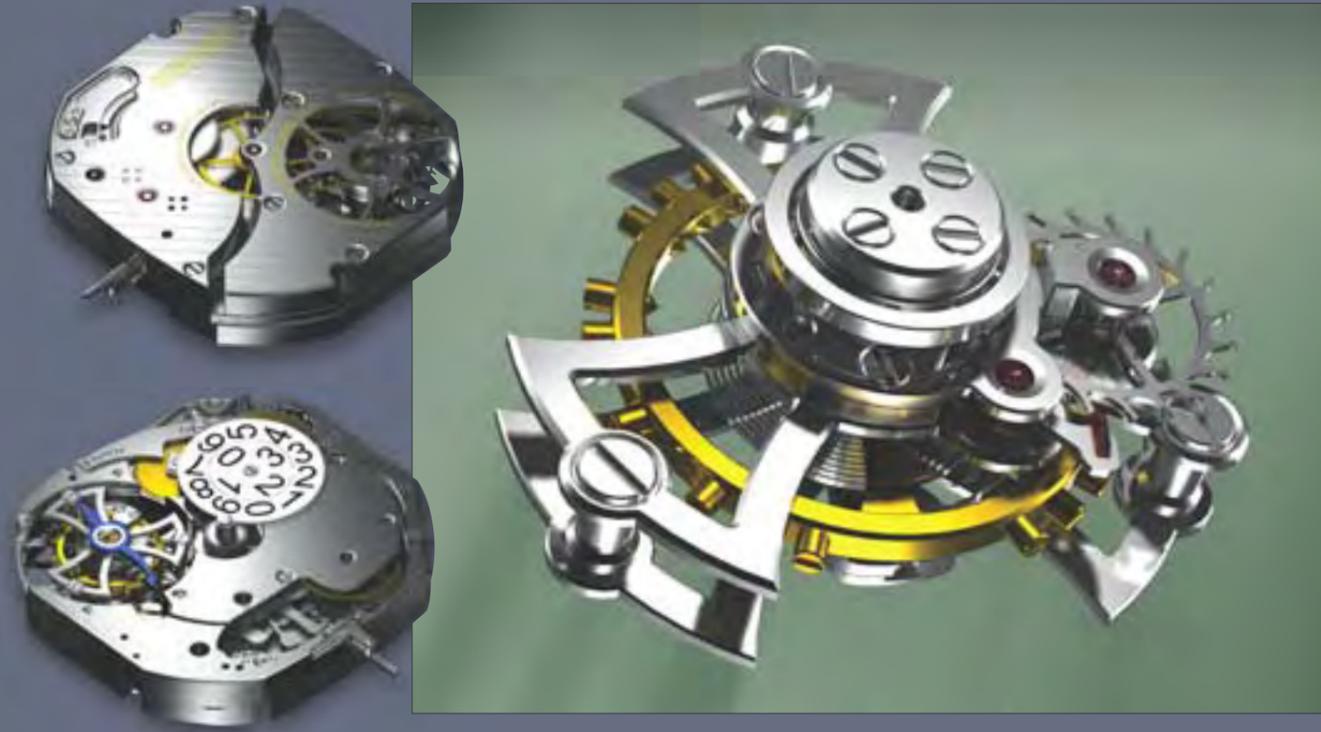
Verticality is the watchword of the moment for the more self-consciously elite of the watchmaking houses – not the least being Roger Dubuis. The term simply refers to the ability to make as much of a watch under one roof – or at least within one company – as is feasible (clearly no one will go to the lengths of acquiring an alligator farm just to fulfil the concept). If this does not seem the most exciting concept, it does transpire to be the issue on which both industry and cognoscenti ultimately judge a company. Simply, the more you can claim to produce yourself, the more you command the respect of your sternest critics: your competitors. It would be a mistake to write this off as mere pride, as this impression

filters through to the buyers – even those who do not spend hours looking through the discussion forums on the web.

Having your own source of essential components is, however, a strategically sensible move, since the recent upheavals in the previously invisible component supply business have changed the rules – particularly as many once-independent companies have been acquired by the larger watch companies. Perhaps more importantly, the possession of such supplies is a guarantor of a company's future prospects. It is all too often the case that extremely expensive watches needing repair cannot be dealt with by the company they were sold by.



The existing 'Golden Square' is the first case privileged enough to house the new flying tourbillon.



(Above) Top and bottom computer-generated views of the RD-03 calibre.

(Right) A magnificent computer-generated view of the flying tourbillon set into its cage.

Ready for take-off

The above may seem to be a roundabout way to introduce the new Manufacture Roger Dubuis' tourbillon. However, it is this intangible verticality that is one of the most important features of the watches that will house the movement. Of course, none of the above is relevant if there is nothing special about the end product. The RD-03 Flying Tourbillon *is* something special. Partly because it was designed and built at Roger Dubuis alone (which really *is* a feat given the complex interplay of the forces and stresses involved in making a tourbillon) and partly because of the attractiveness of the movement and its first setting, the Golden Square case.

As these computer-rendered images show, the movement is both sober and refined, with only

the tourbillon revealed through the bridges – at the 7 o'clock position once fitted in the Golden Square watch. This still leaves a great number of different surfaces requiring treatments such as anglage, which is applied to all the edges – just one of the requirements demanded by the Geneva Canton for watches to carry the Poinçon de Genève (Geneva Seal). In itself this elevates the Roger Dubuis tourbillon into highly select company, including the likes of Patek Philippe and Vacheron Constantin.

Without verticality built into the model, Roger Dubuis Haute Horlogerie would exist more in name than substance, as it is only by having the resources and expertise on-site that the company can develop and make movements that match their ambition. ◉

Further information:

Asprey London. Tel: 020 7493 6767, www.asprey.com

Boodle & Dunthorne at Harrods. Tel: 020 7730 1234

www.rogerdubuis.ch