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## The Omega Press Trip Report 2: – The new OMEGA Calibre 8500 family and the Deville Hour Vision launch.

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03-02-2007, 11:07 PM

# 1



**Jaw**

Editor and Chief Moderator

Join Date: Nov 2006  
 Posts: 926



**The Omega Press Trip Report 2: – The new OMEGA Calibre 8500 family and the Deville Hour Vision launch.**

*For the first part of this report, please click [here](#).*



*OMEGA CEO Steve Urquhart, Swatch Group CEO G. Nick Hayek & OMEGA VP, Head of Product Development Jean-Claude Monachon.*



*Post Press-Conference exhibition crowd.*

Following the introduction of Omegamania auction speeches by Osvaldo Patrizzi and Brandon Thomas, OMEGA CEO Steve Urquhart, Swatch Group CEO G. Nick Hayek and OMEGA VP, Head of Product Development Jean-Claude Monachon took back the floor to launch the first significant MODERN OMEGA inhouse Calibre 8500 family of movements, which is expected to transform the OMEGA range of mechanical watches in the next 3 years.

Performance comparison : OMEGA 8500 vs X			
	Omega 8500	X	
Escapement	Co-Axial	traditional	-
Winding speed per hour	3.8 h	3.3 h	-
Av. autonomy	62 h	47.5 h	31%
Regulating-power	310 $\mu$ W	299 $\mu$ W	4%
Usable energy	69 J	51 J	35%

*In comparison with a well known basic calibre, according to the launch presentation.*

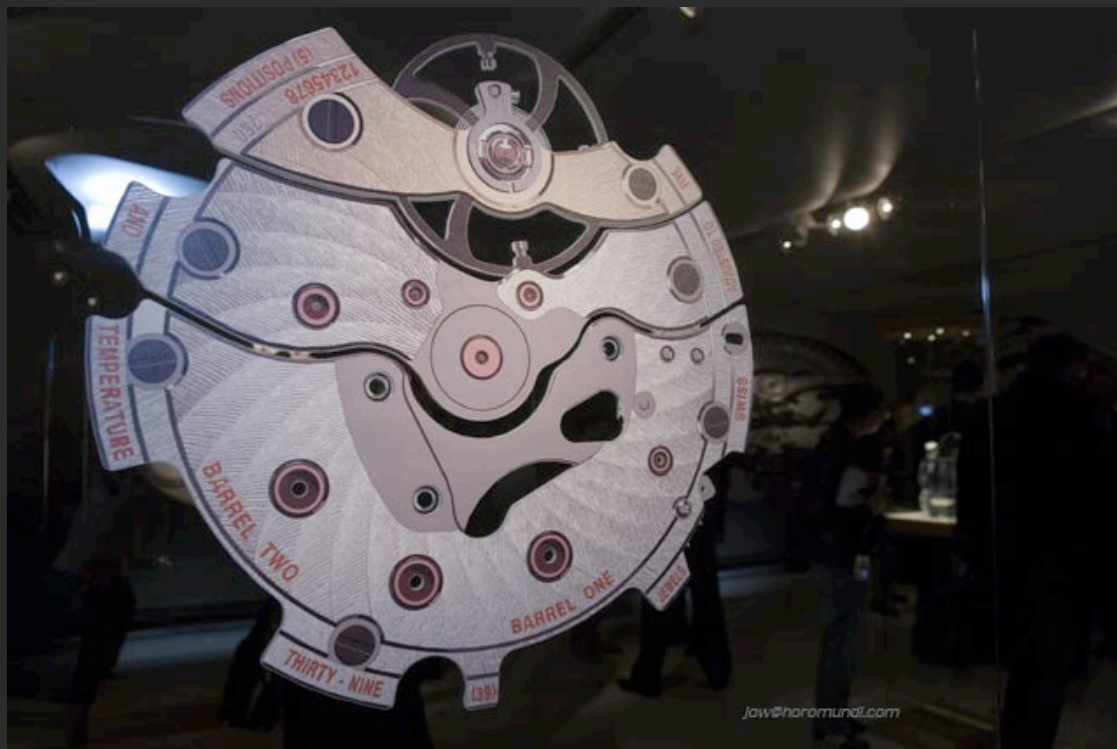


**In a glitz of speeches, video and animated presentation, the international media were treated with the impressive visuals of the new movements, featuring a new high level of industrialised movement finishing made possible by the advance machineries belonging to the Swatch Group.**



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#### Calibre 8500.

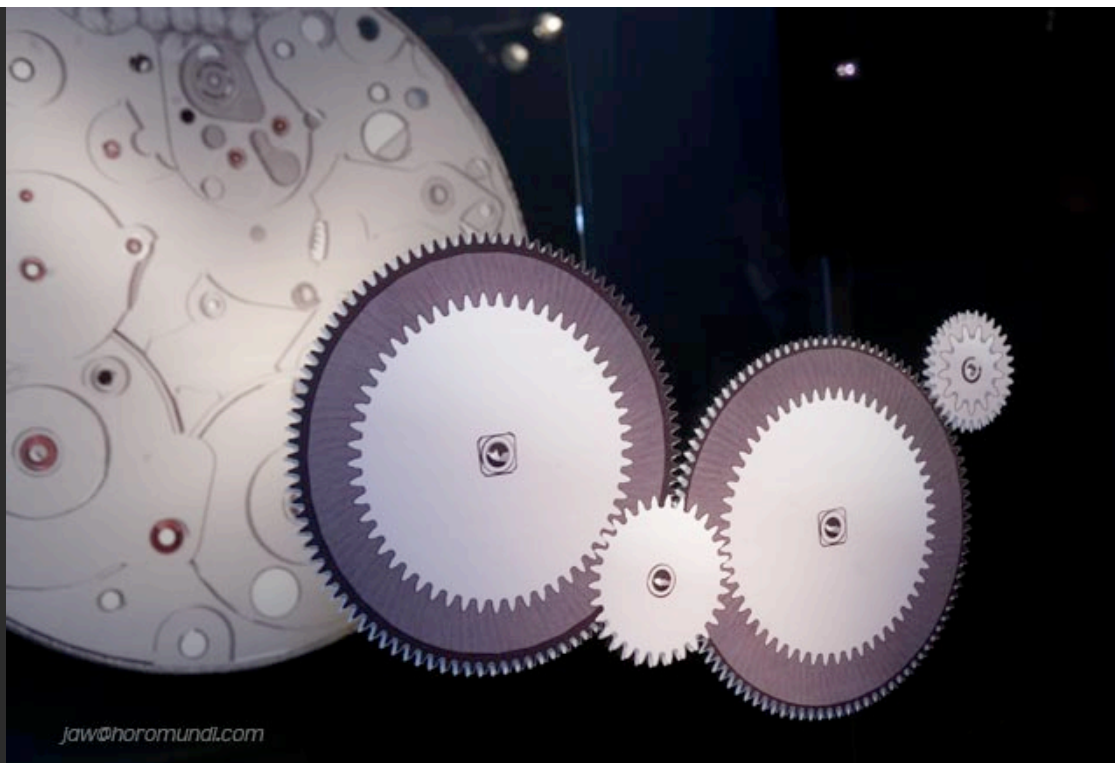


When the Co-Axial concept was first accepted by OMEGA, Jean-Claude Monachon (VP, Head of Product Development) told us in a private interview that the initial Co-Axial escapement was an untested one, made to work because it was finely adjusted and assembled by the highly customised and skilled inventor George Daniels.



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Calibre 8501.



The technical team led by Michael Bourquin (OMEGA, Chef de Project) had to go through a lot of effort, experimentation and modification to make the escapement working, reliable and capable of being industrially produced. In fact, a totally new precision and tolerance has to be imposed on the component making process by Swatch Group to solve the original problem. New machines had to be developed as "the industry is not used to this precise tolerance" in 1999, according to Jean-Claude Monachon.



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*Calibre 8501 on display.*



There was the familiar speculations of how George Daniels' invention didn't totally eliminate the need for lubrication as first suspected. The ability to industrially produce Co-Axial movements was of course critical as OMEGA could not afford to make only a few pieces of prototype. In fact, the brand made some 150,000 Co-Axial OMEGA watches in 2006.

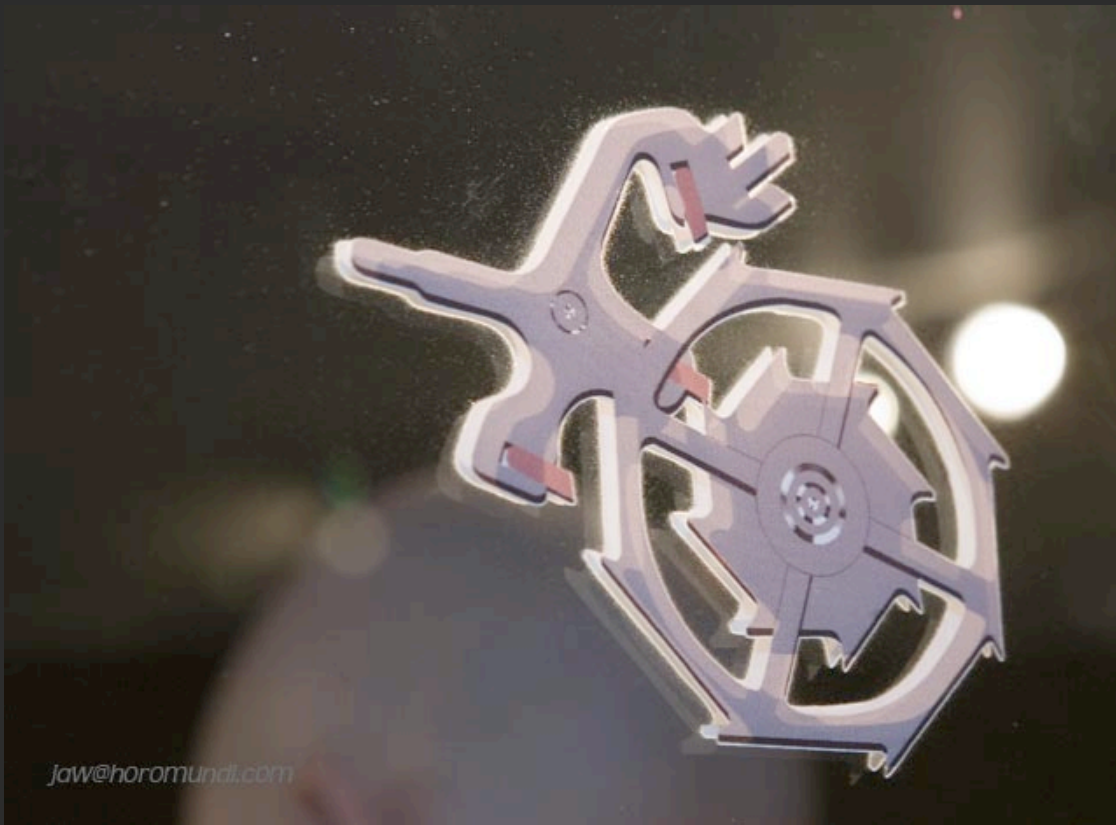




The first OMEGA Calibre 2500 Co-Axial in many ways was a technical breakthrough in 1999-2000 as it requires very little lubrication, very precise, reliable and require much less maintenance than the competitors at that time. While the Co-Axial should impress, the reactions from a few of the more critical journalists were disappointing to OMEGA. Despite totally made within the Swatch Group, Jean-Claude Monachon recalled being questioned as to why OMEGA is using ETA movements.



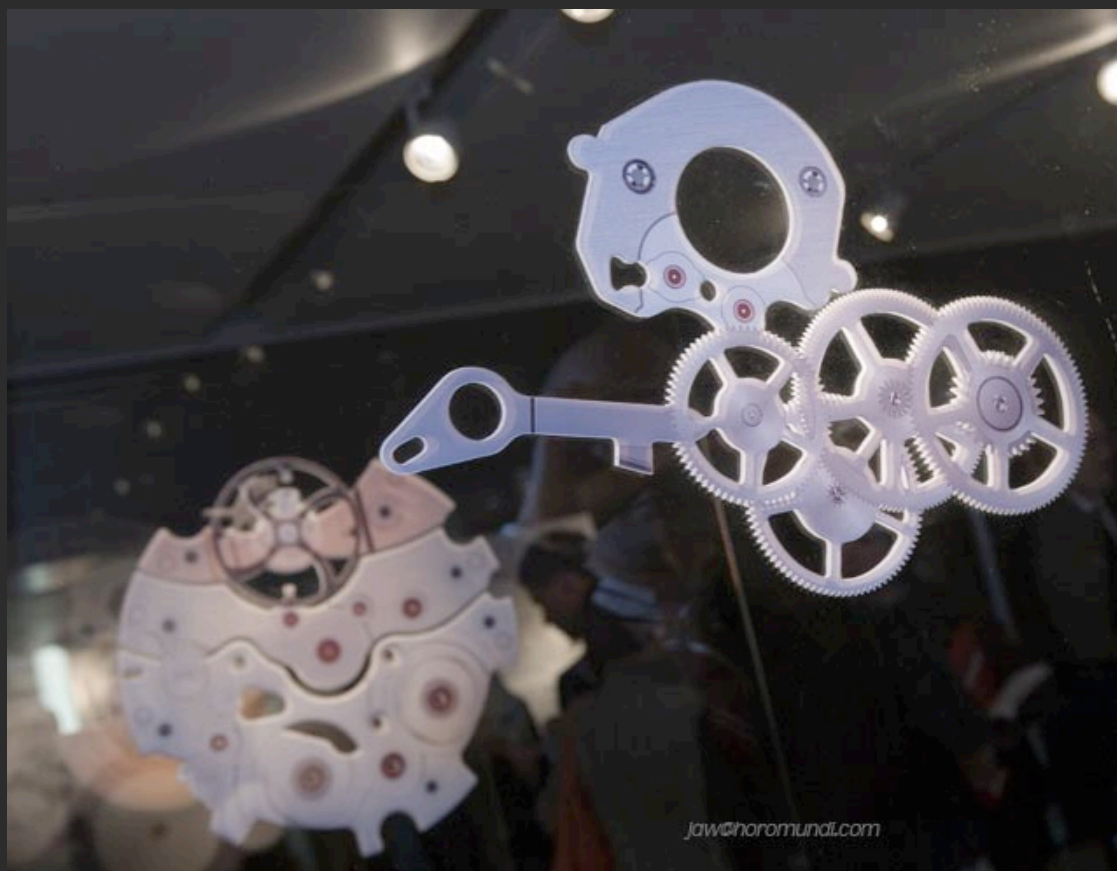
*Sapphire case-back view, note the transparent case side.*



**"It is our philosophy to constantly improve the quality of our watches" said Mr. Monachon, within 7 years from the already reliable and precise Co-Axial, Calibre 8500 family presents a collective improvements of significant proportion in terms of inherent precision, reliability, durability and ease of maintenance of the movements. Unknown to the critics then, the Calibre 8500 project was approved by Hayek since the year 2000.**



Another sapphire case-back view.

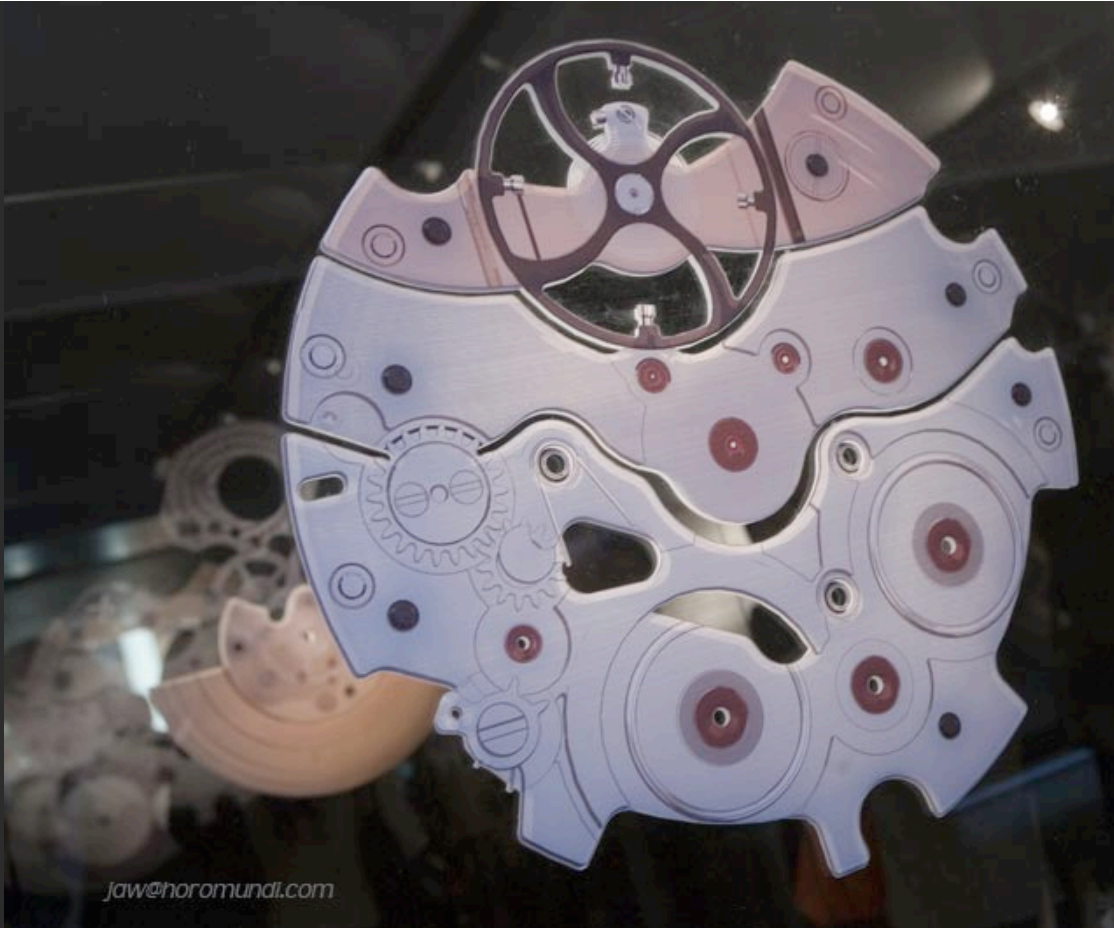


Perhaps not acquainted with more detailed technical disclosure for fear of imitation, OMEGA did not disclose the exact changes and improvements of the new calibre but experience enthusiasts should have no problem noticing the new look Free Sprung

variable inertia balance wheel, more sturdy bridges housing the escapements and overall improvements in movement layout and general aesthetics of the movements. On the precision side, Michael Bourquin (Chef de Projects) told Horomundi/Revolution that return from COSC testing is no longer a problem for the new calibre, OMEGA used to test for a maximum of 10 seconds variation in all 6 positions and daily accuracy, now nothing left the OMEGA factory unless it has a maximum RANGE of 4 seconds, which sets a very tough tolerance to the competitors.



*The bracelet.*



**OMEGA has ambitious plan for the 8500 family of movements, first used in Deville Hour Visions to be delivered in limited quantities as early as March-April 2007, the calibre will be used as a base ebauche for more complicated OMEGA, the tentative product launch schedule of the smaller complications in the next three years is as listed below: -**



*Calibre 8501 on display.*



*Co-Axial inventor George Daniels.*

#### **MEN's OMEGA:**

**- Annual Calendar, Calibre 8601 and 8611**

- Day/Date, Calibre 8602 and 8612
- Big Date, Calibre 8603 and 8613
- Power Reserve/Small Seconds, Calibre 8604 and 8614
- GMT, Calibre 8605 and 8615
- 14 lignes Chronographs, calibre 9300 and 9301



[jaw@horomundi.com](mailto:jaw@horomundi.com)

*The incredible 3 layered case structure.*



Swatch Group CEO Mr. G. Nick Hayek.

**WOMEN's OMEGA:**

- Automatic Chronometer, Calibre 8520 and 8521
- Annual Calendar, calibre 8621 and 8631

- Big Date, calibre 8623 and 8633
- Power Reserve/Small Seconds, Calibre 8624 and 8634

More exciting complications are of course possible after 2010.

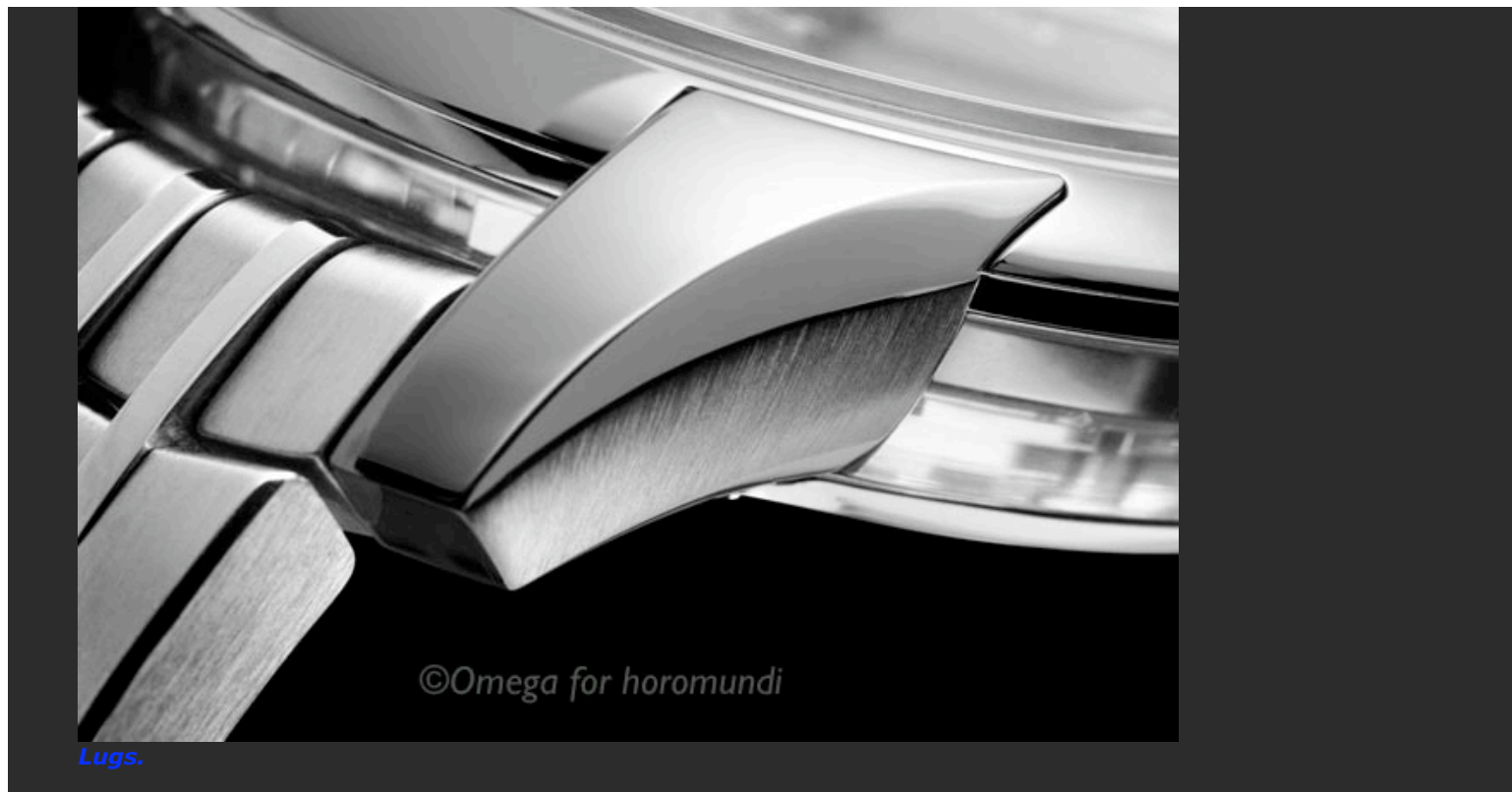


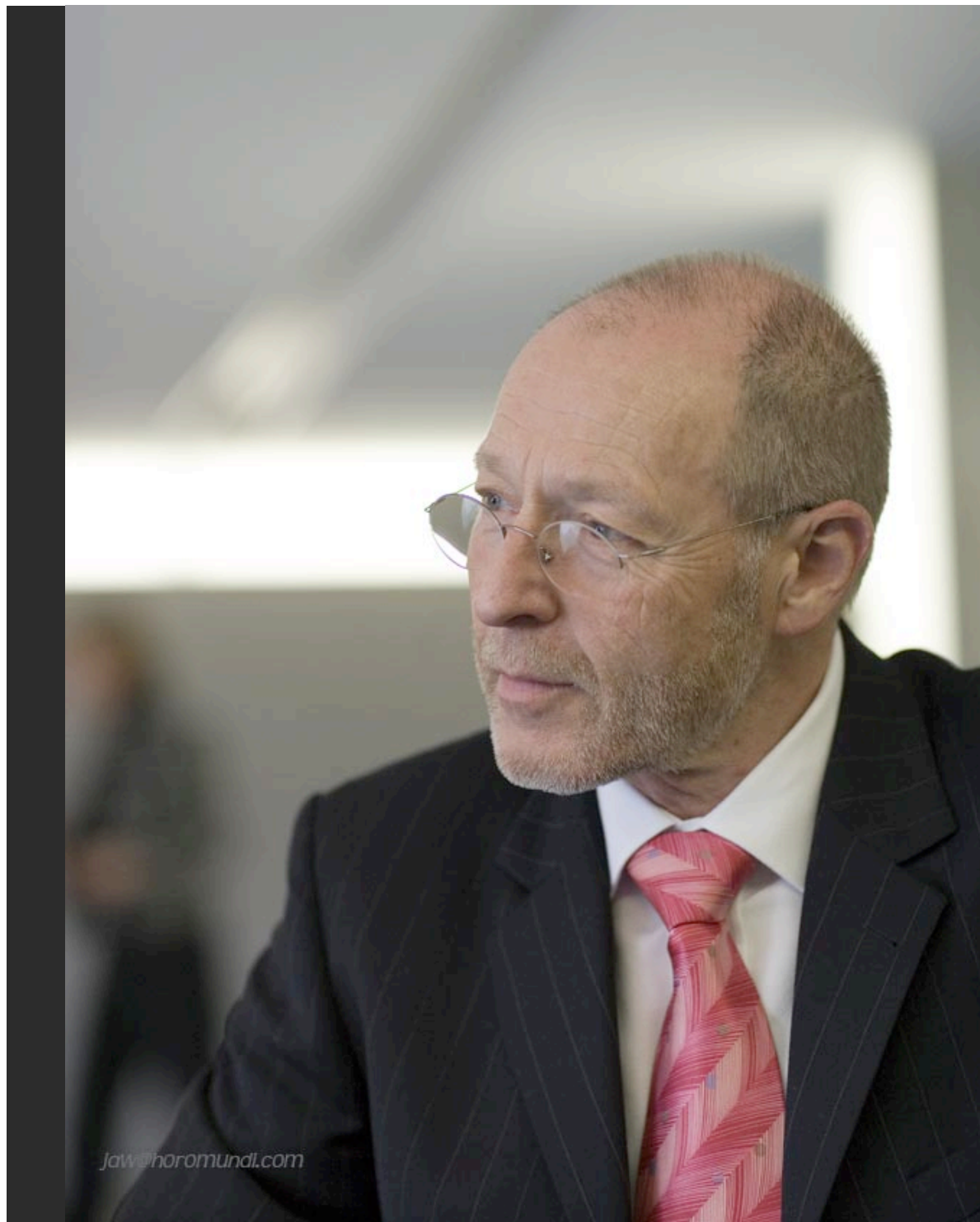
*The black dial on display.*



*OMEGA VP, Head of Product Development Jean-Claude Monachon.*

**The new Deville Hour Vision is quite stunning for a watch of this price range (not fixed, estimated around CHF6K for Stainless Steel and CHF 13-14K for Pink Gold). especially one with several breakthroughs in case and dials technology.**





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**OMEGA Chef de Project, Michael Bourquin.**

The odd ring shaped mid-section sapphire crystal case body fitted between the top and bottom case sections (with several cut-out shapes and holes for the winding crown etc) was simply stunning. As late as a few years ago, sapphire crystal can only curve in one direction and odd shape crystal glass production was impossible. "Comadur S.A. from Swatch Group made this sapphire glass today" said Swatch Group CEO G. Nick Hayek, and he firmly believes no one has the ability to produce this sapphire crystal ring yet. "Of Course, the Chinese will be able to imitate it with plastic shortly" added the CEO jokingly.



*Calibre 8501 on display.*

The whole idea of using the sapphire crystal mid section Case body is to allow light to pass through the watch from the case-sides in practically all directions (except where it is blocked by crown, metallic case segments and lugs). The movement is well lit when viewed from the case-side and from the sapphire case-back, and it caused a subtle stir of emotions when viewed with ambient light from the windows, as if the lighted movement with oscillating balance wheel is somewhat alive. The fact that the 3 parts watch case with crystal mid-section is water resistant to 100M and shock-proof to 5000G added to the lustre of the watch.



©Omega for horomund

*OMEGA Deville Hour Vision, Ref. 431.63.41.21.13.001, Pink Gold with Dark Brown Dial.*



*Faces in Geneva.*

The Dial with machine applied solid gold hour indices and grooved rhodium hour track, gold date frame and gold OMEGA logo also appear to be of highest quality. "Nivarox has to develop a new machine from scratch just to make machine applied indices of this quality" claimed Mr. G. Nick Hayek. When inspected using a loup, the applied indices do look impeccable, even though they weren't applied by hands.



*OMEGA Deville Hour Vision, Ref. 431.60.41.21.02.001, Pink Gold case with silver dial.*



*Faces in Geneva.*

**Aesthetically, the blackened screws, balance wheel and main spring barrels contrasted well with the rhodium plated movement plates and bridges. According to Monachon, it is nickel-black on the screws, chromium black on the balance wheel and Diamond like Coating (DLC) on the barrels.**



*jaw@horomundi.com*

*The amazing sapphire crystal case body, produced by Swatch Group owned Comadur S.A., it also the supplier of Golden Bridge watch case to Corum, according to G. Nick Hayek.*

When asked why Silicium components are not used in the Calibre 8500 family, Monachon told us that the Silicium parts development is at full intensity within OMEGA but is far from being reliable today. OMEGA imposes very high standards in terms of watch reliability, "we do not want any component which doesn't work 100% or being unreliable". Monachon reminded us that "there is no watch with silicium component that is 100% working with tested reliability" when asked if he includes watches already in the market signed with famous brands, Jean-Claude Monachon confirmed positively.



*Another view of the Sapphire crystal case body.*

**In an admirable show of honesty, Mr. Monachon also cautioned us that although the calibre 8500/8501 are completely designed and developed within OMEGA Granges, it is dangerous to call the movement completely in-house manufactured. Without the help and assistant of Comadur, Nivarox, ETA and Frederick Piguet - all within the Swatch Group, the success of this calibre and the Deville Hour Vision model would not have been possible. The objective is to manufacture the complete movement and watch within OMEGA premises but at the moment, only assembly is done within the OMEGA compound.**



*Faces in Geneva, OMEGA Japan, Sachiko Yokoyama.*

## Specifications:

### Movements:

Exclusive OMEGA manufacture calibre 8500 (SS) or 8501 (RG)

Diameter 13'''', 29mm, thickness 5.5mm

Self winding (dual direction) movement

Co-Axial Escapement, Free-sprung balance.

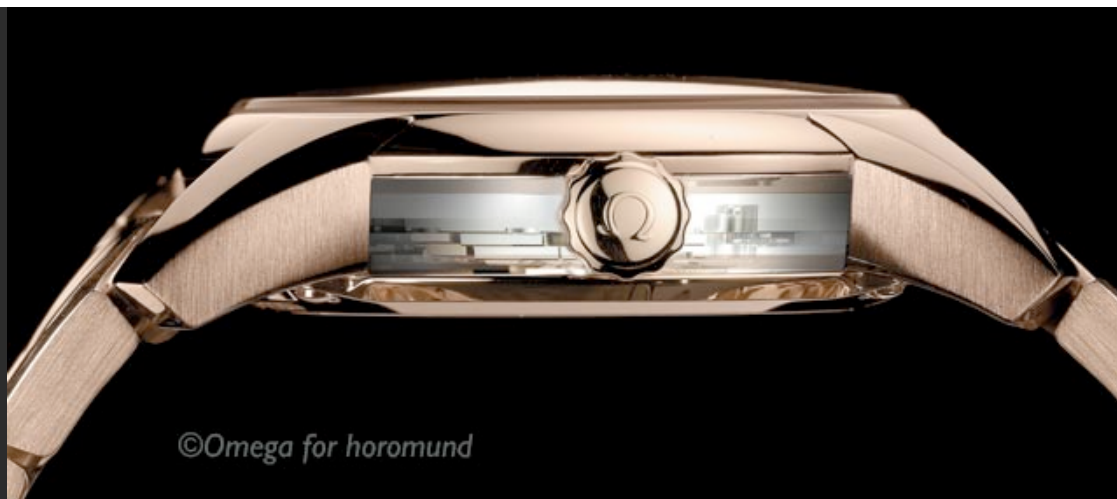
**Timezone function (Jaw note, not second time zone, this refers to the ability to wind the hour hands without changing the minute indications)**  
**Officially certified (COSC) chronometer**  
**Blackened screws, barrels and balance wheel**  
**Exclusive OMEGA decoration and finish with special "Cotes de Geneve" in arabesque (Cal 8501 only, 18 ct red gold rotor and balance bridge)**

**Cal. 8500 (8501)**  
**202 parts (201)**  
**39 jewels**  
**60 hours power reserve**  
**frequency 25,200 vph/**  
**Lift angle 38 degrees.**  
**(For Cal 8501 only, 18ct red gold rotor and balance bridge)**



*The Sapphire crystal case body, viewed from the side.*

**Case:**  
**Polished Stainless Steel (SS) 18ct Red Gold Case (RG)**  
**sapphire case body**  
**diameter 41mm**  
**total height 12.2mm**  
**size between lugs 20mm**  
**water resistant to 100M**  
**Domed scratch resistant sapphire crystal with anti-reflective treatment on both sides**  
**Case back with sapphire crystal, fixed with screws.**



*OMEGA Deville Hour Vision, Side view.*

**Bezel:**  
**Polished Stainless Steel (Red Gold)**



©Omega for horomundi

*sapphire case-back view.*

**Dial:**

Silver Dial or black dial

(Red Gold, Silver dial or Dark Brown dial)

with 18ct gold indexes, date frame and OMEGA logo.

Grooved rhodium plated hour track with brushed and polished finish.



©Omega for horomund

*OMEGA Deville Hour Vision, Ref. No. 431.30.41.21.01.001, Stainless Steel, with black dial.*

**Hands:**

**18ct white (SS) red (RG) gold faceted diamond-polished "parform" hour and minute hands with brished finish on top.  
Blued steel central seconds hand.**



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*OMEGA Deville Hour Vision, Ref. 431.33.41.21.02.001, Stainless Steel case with silver dial.*

**Bracelet or straps**

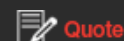
Matt black alligator leather strap with polished stainless steel foldover clasp or polished and brushed stainless steel (red gold) bracelet with safety butterfly clasp, polished red gold (white gold for the red gold watch case) OMEGA logo encrusted in the clasp, new screw and pin system for adjusting.



Tray of OMEGA Deville Hour Vision.

**Next, we ask Mr. G. Nick Hayek if there is a war going on between OMEGA and Rolex?**

**Jaw**



04-02-2007, 12:31 AM

#2



**watchculture**  
Moderator

Join Date: Nov 2006  
Posts: 289

**Impressive sapphire crystal.....**

case technology. Most likely using the state of the art single-point diamond turning tool. The common BK7 and Fused Silica glass (5-6 on the Mohs hardness scale) takes a long time to mill. Sapphire crystal (9 Mohs) is a nightmare to machine, just look at the profile. The coating is entirely another difficult operation altogether. Hmmm...It will be interesting to see the actual watch. Thanks for the report, Jaw.

**>>>>>Zach T**



04-02-2007, 01:28 AM

#3



**Jaw**  
Editor and Chief Moderator

Join Date: Nov 2006  
Posts: 926



**Yes Zach,**

**I must say I am completely floored by the sapphire crystal case body.**

**I hope that the OMEGA authorised retailers and boutiques personnels understand and able to explain its significance to the potential buyers.**

**Jaw**

**Jaw**



04-02-2007, 08:07 PM

#4



**vlkong**  
Member

Join Date: Nov 2006  
Location: Singapore  
Posts: 94



**Jaw, thanks for the detailed writeup!**

**The crystal case is amazing and it still specs to water-resistance to 100m!  
Wow, have they tested it?**

**The lugs dual-finishing is very nice. Impressive!**

**Any indication will the watch be here in Singapore soon (Omegamania) ?**

**Kong**

**Is the lugs soldered on or a single machined-out piece?**



04-02-2007, 09:36 PM

#5



**Jaw**  
Editor and Chief Moderator

Join Date: Nov 2006  
Posts: 926



**Thanks Kong,**

**I didn't ask, but from the look of it, it is soldered.**

**And actually nicely done.**

**BTW, there is no Deville Hour Vision for auction in Omegamania. The watch however will be delivered to OMEGA boutiques and selected authorised retailers as early as March-April 2007 onwards.**

**Check out your local boutique or authorised retailers, soon 🇸🇬**

**Jaw**



08-02-2007, 12:16 PM

#6



**Jaw**  
Editor and Chief Moderator

Join Date: Nov 2006  
Posts: 926



 Please see Part 3 of this Report.

We spoke to Hayek at part 3 of this [coverage](#).

 Quote

 12-02-2007, 04:20 AM


#7

ausrandoman

Posts: n/a

 I'm very impressed by the sapphire case

Quote:

**Originally Posted by watchculture**   
*case technology. Most likely using the state of the art single-point diamond turning tool.  
 The common BK7 and Fused Silica glass (5-6 on the Mohs hardness scale) takes a long time to mill. Sapphire crystal (9 Mohs) is a nightmare to machine, just look at the profile. The coating is entirely another difficult operation altogether.*


Perhaps the case is injection moulded, a common process in ceramic manufacturing. That glassy smooth finish on a complex shape is an impressive technological tour-de-force.

 Quote

 12-02-2007, 08:41 AM

#8



**Jaw**   
 Editor and Chief Moderator

Join Date: Nov 2006  
 Posts: 926



OMEGA has been rather quiet about this, generally and not referring to this case, sapphire crystal has to be grown and cannot be molded, but we are not sure what Comadur has achieved until OMEGA can be more forward.

Thanks  
 Jaw

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