

The Watch That Does Everything, Plus Tells Time

Franck Muller's Aeternitas Mega 4 gives new meaning to the word 'complicated'

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There's a silly ongoing joke in the 2002 family film *Spy Kids 2* (a movie that I'm admittedly not very proud I've seen, but hey, I was 12 at the time) involving a super advanced secret agent watch that does everything but tell time.

Well, Franck Muller's Aeternitas Mega 4 is exactly like that — except it tells time, too.

The Aeternitas — named after the divine personification of eternity in ancient Roman religion — has been proclaimed the “pinnacle of success in the art of watch-making in terms of complexity.” That name is certainly appropriate, because if you attempt to count all the watch's components you'll be toiling away at your abacus until the end of days.

Luckily, the good folks over at Franck Muller counted for you: 1,483.

That's a ton of horsepower. Pop the hood of this bad boy and find an endless mass of teeny tiny metal mechanisms — most of which are gears — whirling and churning and spinning about like a steampunk wonderland.

According to Franck Muller, “the basic movement has a Cintrée Curvex shape. It's an automatic movement with a micro-rotor placed at 6 o'clock and visible through the open-back. It has a grand tourbillon with a balance wheel with adjustment screws in platinum and no index.

“It has a Breguet spiral and a Franck Muller conception escapement. The movement is equipped with a double barrel: the first barrel guarantees a power reserve of about three days; the second barrel provides energy for the Sonnerie. Each barrel has its own power reserve displayed on the dial.”

If nothing else, this watch seems to be a perfect example of what people can accomplish when they have too much time on their hands (see what I did there?). See, nothing that the Aeternitas does is *necessary* — but it's definitely *impressive*, in the most superfluous way possible.

Let's start with the alarm. Your watch probably makes some sort beeping or ringing noise, right? How quaint. When the Aeternitas's Grand Sonnerie strikes the hour, it chimes the same notes as the clock tower of the Westminster cathedral.

Alright, but what about the date, you may wonder? So happy you asked. The Aeternitas “has a perpetual calendar that indicates the day, the date and the month. It takes into account the length of each month and doesn't require any manual intervention. This mechanism also takes into account the leap years, but it needs to be adjusted three times in a row every 100 years.”



If that wasn't enough, the watch (I'm not even sure if it's fair to call it that anymore) also displays the moon phases on the dial. The error is “only 6.8 seconds per lunar month, which represents a deviation of only one day every 1,000 years, whereas in a traditional system the error is of one day every four years.”

Oh yeah, *and* it displays the time — in *two* time zones. It seems to me Danny Trejo's inventor character in *Spy Kids* needs to go back to the drawing board.

All in all, the Aeternitas has 36 complications.

With 99 rubies thrown in for good measure.

And it costs \$2.7 million.

Before you break out your abacus again and start bashing your head against it, let me crunch the numbers for you: That comes out to roughly \$72,000 per complication (something tells me that the Aeternitas won't be featured on too many Christmas lists this year).

When Franck Muller began the long, unwieldy and pointless task of creating the Aeternitas, the primary aim was to produce a watch that was “extremely complex.”

Well boys, go ahead and give yourselves a pat on the back.

It's about time. ⚙️