

Space Case

Cartier's Astrorégulateur explores a new watchmaking frontier. | *By Laurie Kable* |

With this year's futuristic, limited-edition Ronde de Cartier Astrorégulateur, Cartier takes a giant step in advancing its watchmaking legacy. The groundbreaking, gravity-defying watch is the brainchild of Carole Forestier-Kasapi, the brand's head of movement development and one of very few women who have reached the pinnacle of the complicated watchmaking field. She insists, however, that being female has nothing to do with her unique perspective on watch design.

Forestier-Kasapi, who also envisioned last year's Astrotourbillon, sought a new approach to minimizing gravity's effect on a watch's performance. To accomplish this goal, the Astrorégulateur's escapement, the watch's timekeeping mechanism, is placed directly on the winding rotor, which was moved to the dial side of the watch. As you move your wrist, the pendulum, with its seconds display, swings back and forth, creating a dynamic effect while powering up the watch and heightening its accuracy.

Rotonde de Cartier Astrorégulateur,

Limited to 50 pieces, \$327,500, at Cartier, Beverly Hills →

Cartier's top watchmakers spent five years developing the piece, which awaits

four patents. "It was a real challenge because it is something brand-new in the industry," says Forestier-Kasapi. "Cartier has us explore new avenues to invent something different, but not only for the sake of being different—it has to be something meaningful."

Long regarded for its elegant designs, Cartier's distinctive aesthetic codes are evident in the stylized cutaway Roman numerals and painstaking hand finishing of the movement's 281 parts—a 60-hour process that involves beveling edges, polishing, and engraving traditional decorative patterns, such as Côtes de Genève striping. Despite its classical references, the Astrorégulateur projects an undisputed cool factor that reinforces the brand's transformation as an innovator. The 50 mm case is made of niobium-titanium, a lightweight, shock-resistant alloy that until now has been used only for the brand's ambitious Cartier ID One Concept watch. The space-age metal seems a fitting choice for the Astrorégulateur, which carries an astronomical price tag of \$327,500. ▲

