

Traditional Chinese Calendar: an exceptional timepiece bearing the emblem of an ox

Blancpain celebrates Chinese New Year with a limited series of 50 watches dedicated to this tradition and its festivities. The Year of the Metal Ox begins on February 12th 2021 and ends on January 31st 2022. Housed in a precious platinum case, the Traditional Chinese Calendar bearing the emblem of the ox features an exclusive complication appearing on an elegant Grand Feu enamel dial.

Forged in noble platinum, the 50-piece limited-edition Traditional Chinese Calendar watch pays homage to the age-old culture of the Middle Kingdom. The Grand Feu enamel dial of this exceptional timepiece reveals the complexity of a display combining Chinese calendar indications with those of the Gregorian calendar and moon phases – all specialities of the Manufacture Blancpain.

Unlike the Gregorian calendar, whose unit of measurement is based on the solar day, the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar is based on the lunar cycle as well as exact astronomical observations of the sun's longitude. Thus, in addition to the hours and minutes, date and moon phases, Blancpain's Traditional Chinese Calendar watch offers the main indications of the traditional Chinese calendar: double hours, days, months and leap months, zodiac signs, five elements and ten heavenly stems. The latter, combined with the 12 earthly branches – symbolised by the animals of the zodiac – produce 60 different pairs forming the sexagesimal cycle of the Chinese time measurement system.

Despite their complex combination, these functions are clearly displayed on a dial with Roman gold numerals and hollowed-out sage leaf-shaped hands. The ox, the animal of the year 2021, appears in an aperture at 12 o'clock above the double-hour counter. Symmetrically positioned at 3 o'clock and 9 o'clock, two subdials respectively indicate the celestial stems and the five elements, as well as pointer-type month and date indications and leap months through a round aperture. In a manner typical of Blancpain's Complete Calendar watches, the moon phases that determine the months of the Chinese calendar can be read off at 6 o'clock, while a blued serpentine hand sweeps over the date numerals around the dial circumference.

This innovative complication, a genuine mechanical challenge whose development required five full years to master, is incorporated into the self-winding 3638 calibre. Endowed with a seven-day power reserve, this Haute Horlogerie movement is housed in a 45 mm case featuring a crown set with a cabochon-cut ruby. It is equipped with Blancpain's patented under-lug corrector system allowing easy function adjustments. The sapphire crystal case back enables one to admire the finishing of the movement and its white gold oscillating weight, engraved with the Chinese zodiac sign of the year.

Blancpain's Traditional Chinese Calendar is also available in a non-limited version in red gold with a finely *guilloché* oscillating weight.