

JEWELRY

Audemars Piguet embraces haute couture with limited-edition Royal Oak

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Limited to 102 pieces, the limited-edition drop is the designer and horology label's second collaborative effort. Image courtesy of Audemars Piguet

By ZACH JAMES

Swiss watchmaker Audemars Piguet is partnering with a well-known name in design to present its latest creation.

The "Royal Oak Concept Flying Tourbillon Tamara Ralph" was revealed at Paris Fashion Week during the spring/summer 2024 runway show of the eponymous apparel brand, Tamara Ralph. Fusing the worlds of horology and haute couture, the bespoke drop is a celebration of the titular Australian creative director and designer.

"Tamara's endless quest for perfection perfectly echoes our watchmakers' dedication to pushing their craft to the limit," said Illaria Resta, CEO of [Audemars Piguet](#), in a statement.

"We are delighted to start 2024 in collaboration with such an inspiring woman, and it is only the beginning."

Return to haute couture

The limited-edition, 102-piece drop is the designer and horology label's second collaborative effort since 2020.

Unveiled Jan. 22, the "Royal Oak Concept Flying Tourbillon Tamara Ralph" watch is made of 18K pink gold, and features yellow gold and bronze detailing. Each of the distinct metallic hues is showcased in its own layer of the watch face, each with a frosted finish.

Ms. Ralph briefly speaks on her collaboration with the brand

Utilizing a diamond-tipped tool, the maison created small indentations in each of the limited collection's respective surfaces, making it appear as if it has a sparkling surface in the light.

"My intention for the design of this piece is for it to capture the spirit and craftsmanship of both my brand, as well as Audemars Piguet," said Ms. Ralph, in a statement.

"The complications of watchmaking orchestrate a foundation which can be played with in terms of textures, colors and designs, allowing for the savoir-faire of couture to shine through," she said. "Rich materials, unique color palettes and ultimate precision are combined, creating an exquisite limited edition of the 'Royal Oak Concept Flying Toubillon,' inspired by haute couture."

An octagonal frame holds everything in place, including the hand-wound "Calibre 2964" movement, one of the most intricate in

the company catalog. Only the most practiced craftspeople able to produce it.

Introducing our new collaboration with designer Tamara Ralph. The Royal Oak Concept Flying Tourbillon "Tamara Ralph" limited edition pays tribute to her unique creative universe.

Discover more: <https://t.co/Q1pvClIGmA> #AudemarsPiguet #APxTamaraRalph pic.twitter.com/y8NWS4u6W6

Audemars Piguet (@AudemarsPiguet) January 22, 2024

The caseback's sapphire crystal allows the wearer to see into the watch's inner workings, showcasing the complex micro-machinery. It also comes with a brown, alligator-skin strap.

With a direct influence on the design, the release directly ties into Ms. Ralph's world of high fashion.

In accordance with the core tenets of her self-titled label, the watch merges "femininity with modernity." Diamond inlays within the dial's surface also involve this principle, as the creative wished to play with light and reflections, which are highlighted in the aforementioned small divots in its surface.

Seventeen jewels on the body add sparkles to the neatly crafted variety on the outer shell. All of the facets, materials and themes are meant to appeal to an audience of "feminine" clientele.



Ms. Ralph brings her pink world of fashion into the realm of fine watchmaking. Image courtesy of Audemars Piguet

The 36.5mm timepiece is [available](#) by appointment. Pricing is available with a purchase request.

"This timepiece is the feminine expression par excellence of the flying tourbillon, whose lightness, precision and elegance merge with a quality of execution that symbolizes its values," said Anne-Galle Quinet, head of complications at Audemars Piguet, in a statement.

Making it big

With the launch of the new collaboration, Audemars Piguet is entering a new generation.

Ms. Resta, the maison's newly-installed CEO ([see story](#)), is witnessing the first release of her tenure with the "Royal Oak Concept Flying Tourbillon Tamara Ralph." The torch has been passed on from longtime CEO Francois-Henry Bennahmias, who spearheaded the effort to make the Royal Oak a highly sought-after watch for collectors and consumers.



The release is the second between Ms. Ralph's label and the watchmaker. Image courtesy of Audemars Piguet

Since making the model one of the most in-demand accessories in the segment, a variety of limited-edition drops have been created by a selection of notable designers and artists. American rapper Travis Scott is just the latest collaborator([see story](#)).

In general, the luxury category engages with those from the art world on a consistent basis, as the injection of fresh ideas and the reinventions of longstanding brand icons can reinvigorate product lines and customers' interest. The horology label made a move such as this last year, enlisting Givenchy creative director Matthew Williams to create four, limited-edition chronometers ([see story](#)).

Ms. Ralph's new entry in Audemars Piguet's catalog stands in as yet another page in this book.

Having previously worked with the watchmaker in 2020, pairing a selection of its timepieces with looks from her spring/summer 2021 Prt--Porter collection, the duo have begun a narrative that continues to develop.

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