

OBSCURA / LIMITED EDITION OF 40 / MANUAL WIND – HOURS, MINUTES & SUB SECONDS



The Obscura – a watch that began in 2017 and then constantly adjusted and refined. A project of self-indulgence. It is my best work and finally I can retire, happy. I am not retiring of course and probably never will, the point being the Obscura is unfettered by expense, detail, materials and craftsmanship. A watch that could only ever be made now, with the experience, team and makers accumulated over the last 15 years.

In summary the Obscura is an artefact. It was designed specifically within all the normal watch constraints, i.e. a round watch that tells the time with central hour and minute hands but manipulated to look less conventional and more like a mysterious timing device. Something (when housed in its canister), that if discovered in the undergrowth should probably be left alone, or handed in. This is a watch of suspicious origins, perhaps military, perhaps alien. It is obscure, subtly so and definitely more than the sum of its parts, the details of which tell the Obscura's story.

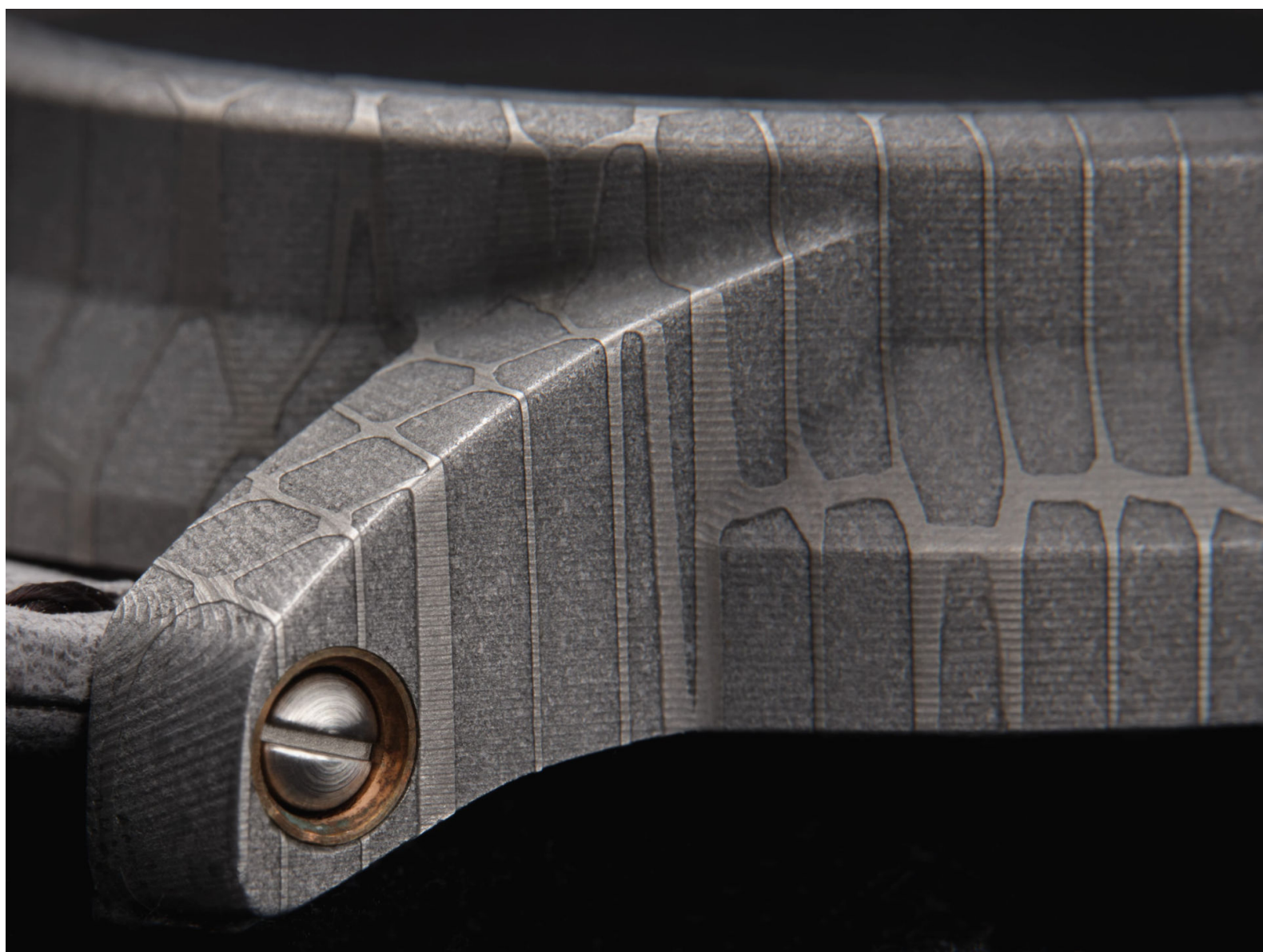


Price is £9558 including VAT (UK / free shipping) or £7965 excluding VAT (US, Canada, Europe ROW + shipping). Exclusively at schofieldwatchcompany.com

WHY IS IT CALLED THE OBSCURA?

Obscura because it is obscure like some of my designs can be, or at least parts of them. Nothing is done without reason but sometimes those reasons are hard to articulate in words. So, this watch is explicitly obscure where a list of bullet points outlining design choices, materials and finishes would belie a watch with too much going on - something I generally dislike. The Obscura had to work regardless of this, which is why it took so long.

The watch was designed as a whole and if one element changed, everything had to follow. It is obscure because we use Damascus steel but unlike anything used before in watchmaking. However, the watch is not about it being Damascus, that is just a part of it. It is not about the triple glazed case back or the lume tracks in a rhodium dial, the odd hands and a statement crown. All obscure choices on paper perhaps, but here as a whole, not at all.



THE CASE

The case is Damascus steel made for us by the lads at Vegas Forge in the States that uses enormous Nazel Hammers to smash the different steels together. The design chosen for the Obscura moves away from the ubiquitous wavy form that so many associate with Damascus and appears more cellular. Akin to Super Conductor material but timeless, traditional and artisan.

The recognisable Schofield case shape is fully machined and finished in Sussex by acid etching the surface, less for colour but more for texture. In a more recent update we added bronze bushings around the strap bar holes. This contrasting material acts like a friction bearing but also frames the steel strap bar screws, creating an obvious boundary and shadow line.



THE CASE BACK

The case back is built around the three smoked sapphire crystals in the centre. We use a grey PVD coating to partially obscure the manual wind Uritas movement beneath. These crystals slightly magnify elements on the movement, like the blued screws, which scintillate as they catch the light. The three circles in a triangle is a classic Sci-Fi meme - think Predators tri-beam laser sight or a UFO undercarriage, but they also represent planets among the stars.

The fonts are interesting, obscure, one that could be Mayan, Witcher or Incal – who knows? It does not rank for legibility but is still cool. The other shows semaphore flag positions - a contracture of the N and the D in this alphabet makes the CND logo, a masterpiece of design by Gerald Holtom done in 1958. It is worth noting that all the detail on the case back is letters up, not down, meaning that it is the background that is machined away. It is then DLC coated and the top surface ground back to give contrast.



DIAL & HANDS

The Obscura dial is an extremely complex, multi-levelled affair with runnels of Super-LumiNova in different colours and different emissions (the glow colour). Schofield has mostly been 'business at the front, party at the back', and lume design is no different - austere in the day and a laser show at night. Some of the Super-LumiNova was developed for us, not pigmenting which we and many others have done, but the emission colours. Concept luming is something we know a thing or two about. The dial base is dark grey rhodium-plated with a fine matt texture.

When designing the Obscura dial the question was how can it be more interesting and moderately obscure within the constraints of using 'normal' hands that rotate around a central point? To start with the hour and minute hands are different colours, the minute hand skeletonised, the hour hand lumed. At 12 o'clock the hands align to reveal the lume strip of the hour hand through the window of the minute hand. The minute hand obscures the lume ring on the dial beneath, thereby marking time at night with an absence of luminescence. The sub seconds 'dial' is again a milled pocket of Super-LumiNova and unusually the seconds hand sweeps beyond its boundary. The sub-dial is white, the hand blue and the dot - red, white and blue - just a nod to our British manufacture.



CROWN

The crown is oversized like all Schofield crowns, better for leverage and easier to handle. A DLC coated pull out type, best for manual wind movements. It has fine knurling and our nail groove, multiple steps and different finishes but the real fun is with the red/pink Super-LumiNova fill in the engraved front face. A glowing dot under your cuff, a concept we introduced with the Blacklamp in 2013. The DLC crown colour matches the minute hand and the buckle, the crown lume colour with the red flanks in the dial. The dial base with the case back.



STRAP, BUCKLE & CANISTER

The exclusive Obscura strap is a high quality Italian tanned and British finished grey calf with a mottled and matt finish (called Cloud leather). The underside is our bark calf with green foiled logo. All other Schofield straps will fit the Obscura. The box is not a box - but a canister. Made specifically for the Obscura and expanding the idea of dubious providence. An object of beauty in its own right, designed to be displayed. Inside the watch spins on a gimbal, negating the need for upholstery. The design is based on Japanese tea caddies and military ordnance with the stainless steel bolt resembling a percussion cap of sorts. This buckle was also designed for the Obscura and retro-fitable to all other Schofields, this is why the Obscura buckle is not Damascus, that was too obvious and watch specific. Overall, it is slightly bigger than the old types, an appropriate shift in the visual balance of weight. The buckle uses a blued pocketed strap bar that prevents accidental skidding-off with a screwdriver. Engraved and paint-filled with a negative meniscus reminiscent of steam engine name badges.

ABOUT SCHOFIELD

At the outset Schofield Watch Company was not a commercial venture but a personal endeavour carried out by one man who wanted to design and build a luxury watch to his own style and requirements. The Company evolved (and got quite out-of-hand) as the project grew in scale. Giles’ obsession with detail ensured that the design process encompassed not only the watches but also the accessories, packaging, graphics, websites, photography, and an endless chorus of variables that go into the creation of something that is made with passion and vision. The Company prides itself on the subtle, understated and precise design behind its products. Within this field Giles has given numerous seminars and talks to universities and businesses and is currently an associate lecturer at the University of Sussex on Industrial design. Schofield resides next to the River Adur, a stone’s throw from the sea in the bucolic Sussex countryside.

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

Movement	Unitas 6498-2, Geneva stripes, blue screws. Manual wind
Functions	Hours, minutes, sub seconds
Power reserve	46 hours
Diameter	36.6mm/1.65"
Height	4.50mm
Jewels	17
Frequency	18,000 VPH
Case	Damascus steel. Stainless
Diameter	44mm
Crystal diameter	35.5mm
Height not including lugs	15mm
Width between lugs	24mm
Lug length	52.7mm
Weight with strap and buckle	128 grammes
Crystal	Double dome sapphire, Swiss AR coatings in green or red
Case Back	Text-up, three window - smoked grey sapphire crystals, DLC coated and brushed finish
Crown	Double o-ring pull out type with nail groove, Super-LumiNova filled, DLC
Dial	Multi-level, electro-plated, machined grooves of Super-LumiNova
Date	None
Luminescence	Super-LumiNova C3, pink/red with green, blue, purple and orange emissions
Hands	Machined hands (thick) Sage green, blue (seconds) and DLC
Strap	24/22mm Cloud grey leather
Buckle	Obscura Best Ever type, DLC with red paint fill. Brushed and bead blast, laser engraved
Box	Polyester and steel canister
Serial	Limited to 40 watches not individually numbered
Water resistance	200m
Warranty	2 years