



Why 'Breguet Type XX' is the biggest cheat code in fine watches

Want to buy a sought-after timepiece from one of the world's most historic, rarefied watchmakers? The third-generation Breguet Type XX is almost laughably good value, and it will set you apart from the next guy...

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Steel sports watches from luxury brands seem to be the must-haves for modern collectors, but with everyone harbouring the same aim, demand has pushed prices out of reach for all but the most affluent. So what options are there for a collector who hasn't got £10,000 or even £5,000 to spend? If I were to tell you that you could buy a steel sports watch from a top-level, historic, luxury marque for the same price as a second-hand [Rolex Datejust](#), and more, that it would have a complication, you might think me mad. But to prove my sanity, allow me to introduce you to the Breguet Type XX chronograph.

Breguet may not hold as many auction records as some manufacturers, although the pocket watches have hit the million-pound mark a number of times, but no-one beats their history. Breguet's life story reads like the exciting parts of an Alexandre Dumas novel. Now, you may argue that the Type XX collection doesn't represent '*haute horlogerie*', and that may be true – but these watches have a legitimate place in Breguet's long and illustrious history, with a cool military back story to boot.



Breguet Type XX ref. 3820

Inspired by the watches supplied to the French Air Force in the 1950s (a rich and rewarding niche to explore should more sizeable funds become available), the most recent generation of the Type XX was launched in 1995, pre-dating Swatch Group's ownership of Breguet. Offered both with and without a date window as the Transatlantique and Aéronavale respectively, the modern Type XX has a 39mm case and vintage-style syringe hands over a black dial. Under that dial is the automatic calibre 582, which is a Lemania 1350 with an additional 'flyback' function. As Lemania has now been absorbed into Manufacture Breguet, you could even argue that it is an in-house movement – if such things are important to you. Either way, this is a tried and tested movement, versions of which date back to 1972.



Breguet Type XX ref. 3800

No longer in Breguet's retail collection, the Type XX can only be found on the pre-owned market. For canny collectors, this is good news as you can benefit from Breguet's wholly undeserved levels of depreciation. Head to auction and you should be paying around £3,500 largely irrespective of whether it has a date (or not) or a steel bracelet (or not). A pre-owned watch dealer, who should be selling with some level of warranty, will charge about £1,000 more for the no-date ref. 3800 and up to £1,500 more for the ref. 3820 with date.

As an opportunity to join the distinguished ranks of Breguet ownership, this watch is almost laughably good value, while its distinctive styling details will set you apart from all the other mass-market steel chrono wearers as an owner of elevated knowledge and taste.