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SPOTLIGHT

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**A TEST OF
THE TUDOR
HERITAGE
BLACK BAY,
FROM THE
PAGES OF
WATCHTIME
MAGAZINE**



TUDOR

Pros

- + Attractive retro design
- + Easy to read both day and night
- + Well-made bracelet and extra strap
- + High level of water resistance

Cons

- No date display
- Large daily gain
- The case has a few sharp edges.



BAY WATCH

We train our binoculars on Tudor's Heritage Black Bay, which recalls a Tudor dive watch from nearly 50 years ago.

BY JENS KOCH
PHOTOS BY OK-PHOTOGRAPHY

In 1946, a message from Rolex founder Hans Wilsdorf accompanied an advertisement for the Tudor Oyster Prince: “For some years now I have been considering the idea of making a watch that our agents could sell at a more modest price than our Rolex watches, and yet one that would attain the standards of dependability for which Rolex [watches] are famous.” Wilsdorf, an Anglophile (Rolex was originally based in London), named the brand “Tudor” after England’s royal Tudor family.

In 1964, Tudor launched a model called the Prince Submariner, designed to look like the Rolex Submariner. In 2012, the brand introduced a watch inspired by the Prince Submariner. It’s called the Heritage Black Bay, and is part of the brand’s vintage-inspired Heritage collection.

At first glance, it really looks like a vintage watch. Even its 41-mm case doesn’t seem too large for the 1960s: since its rotating bezel is so wide, it makes the dial appear fairly small. The rose-gold color used for the indices, hands, minutes markers and lettering on the dial adds to the vintage look. So does the crystal, which, although made of sapphire, has the highly domed contour of earlier acrylic crystals. The dial is slightly convex, too, as was the style in older watches. The slim lugs and the typeface used for the numerals on the rotating bezel also recall Tudor’s earlier watches. Tudor even eliminated the date display on this model to complete the vintage look. And the dial bears the original logo: the Tudor rose, an element in the royal family’s coat-of-arms, which Tudor printed on its dials from 1947 to 1969, when the brand replaced it with the Tudor shield logo.

Our test watch has Tudor’s famous “snowflake” hands, so named for the diamond shapes on the hour and seconds hands that look like stylized snowflakes. Tudor divers’ watches with these hands are sought after at auctions.

SPECS

TUDOR HERITAGE BLACK BAY

Manufacturer: Tudor, Rue François-Dussaud 3-5, CH-1211 Geneva 26, Switzerland

Reference number: 79220R

Functions: Hours, minutes, seconds, stop-seconds function

Movement: Automatic ETA 2824, “top” grade, 28,800 vph, 25 jewels, Incabloc shock absorption, Glucydur balance, fine adjustment via regulator arm and eccentric screw, 38-hour power reserve, diameter = 26 mm, height = 4.6 mm

Case: Stainless-steel case, domed sapphire crystal is nonreflective on both sides, screwed crown, fully threaded screw-in back made of stainless steel, water resistant to 200 meters

Bracelet and clasp: Stainless-steel bracelet with secure folding stainless-steel clasp, additional textile strap with pronged buckle

Rate results:

(Deviations in seconds per 24 hours)

Dial up	+15
Dial down	+14
Crown up	+11
Crown down	+16
Crown left	+11
Crown right	+14
Greatest deviation of rate	5
Average deviation	+13.5
Average amplitude:	
Flat positions	289°
Hanging positions	265°

Dimensions: Diameter = 41 mm, height = 12.8 mm, weight (with textile strap) = 93.5 g

Price: \$3,425 (on leather strap, \$3,100)

DETAILS LIKE ROSE-GOLD-COLORED LETTERING AND A HIGHLY DOMED CRYSTAL GIVE THE WATCH A VINTAGE LOOK.



The watch contains the ETA 2824.

Pale beige, like the patina on antique watches, was used for the luminous material on the dial. The bezel is the same Bordeaux color first seen on Tudor watches in the 1970s. This hue is also inset into the Tudor rose on the crown. All in all, Tudor’s new timepiece is an attractive retro watch that is faithful to the original model.

It’s also quite user-friendly. Large luminous indexes and plenty of glow-in-the-dark material on the hands ensure outstanding legibility at night. The crown is easy to grasp. When it is screwed shut, it automatically uncouples from the winding mechanism, reducing wear and tear on that device. You can set the time easily and accurately thanks to a stop-seconds function. Because the watch has no date display to set, there is no first pulled-out position for the crown.

The bezel snaps into place in one-minute increments. It functions adequately, but it has a bit too much play and it can’t compare with a Rolex bezel, which snaps forcefully into each position. Slim fluting along the rim makes the Tudor’s bezel easy to grasp and turn. For safety when diving, the bezel can be turned in only one direction. The luminous indices assure that the diving time can be read in the dark. The case is water-resistant to 200 meters, and hence the Black Bay can be worn scuba diving.

Our test watch came with a stainless-steel bracelet fitted with a secured folding clasp. A water-resistant black textile strap was also included. The watch is available in a leather-strap version (which also comes with the additional fabric strap). The textile strap is lightweight and tough. It has a pronged buckle, which lets the wearer make large size adjustments, and a some-



The crystal is highly domed; the crown is adorned with the rose from the Tudor coat-of-arms.

SCORES

TUDOR HERITAGE BLACK BAY

Bracelet and clasp (max. 10 points): The steel bracelet is well constructed, user-friendly and strong. The sturdy and adjustable textile strap allows air to penetrate for added comfort. **9**

Operation (5): The screw-down crown is simple to operate; a stop-seconds function makes it easy to set the time with to-the-second accuracy; the readily grasped bezel rotates easily. **5**

Case (10): The neatly crafted case has a few sharp edges, but it is very water resistant and has a crown that uncouples from the winding mechanism when the crown is screwed shut. **8**

Design (15): The retro design is very attractive and includes characteristic Tudor elements from various decades. **14**

Legibility (5): Plenty of luminous material and high contrast between the hands and the dial ensure that the time is easy to read both day and night. **5**

Wearing comfort (10): The textile strap makes this watch feel airy and light on the wrist; the steel bracelet is comfortable, too. **9**

Movement (20): The workhorse among time-honored ETA calibers, the 2824 is robust and reliable, but its rate isn't quite as accurate as the rates of other ETA calibers. **12**

Rate results (10): The watch that we tested had been adjusted to gain strongly, but the greatest deviation among the several positions wasn't too large and the amplitude was very stable. **6**

Overall value (15): The price is appropriate. **12**

TOTAL: 80 POINTS

THE WATCH HAS TUDOR'S WELL-KNOWN "SNOWFLAKE" HOUR AND SECONDS HANDS, NAMED FOR THE DIAMOND SHAPES THEY BEAR.

what complicated clamping system (like the strap on a shoulder bag) that lets you lengthen it even more. This assures that the watch will fit over the sleeve of a wetsuit. The textile strap allows air to penetrate, which makes it more comfortable to wear. It is held in place by spring bars. Because the strap runs under the case, you won't lose the watch if one of the spring bars is compressed accidentally. The Heritage Black Bay's textile strap complements the case and completes the vintage look.

The steel bracelet is handsome, too, with shaped lugs that make it look more modern. It's very well made and designed so that narrow gaps always remain between the links, which prevent it from pinching or tugging at the hairs on your wrist. The links have a convex shape to conform to the natural curve of your wrist, adding to the wearing comfort. The folding clasp, which has a safety bracket, is decorated with the shape of the shield of the Tudor coat-of-arms. This emblem makes it easier to use your fingernail to open the safety bracket and the clasp. The

components are solidly constructed, and the sprung ceramic balls that fasten both the safety bracket and the clasp leave no doubt that this mechanism has been designed for maximum longevity. However, you can't change from the bracelet to the strap yourself because the milled openings in the steel bracelet are too narrow to use a conventional spring-bar tool and the danger of scratching the case is too great.

The caseback screws into the case – which has a few sharp edges, but is of high quality – and is made of steel. When the back is lifted off, a familiar caliber comes into view. It's the automatic ETA 2824, which could be called the Land Rover Defender of watch movements: robust, reliable and built to run for many years. But the movement isn't known for extreme accuracy, although ETA makes a version that has earned COSC certification. Tudor opted to use the technically identical "top" version. (There are two less expensive versions, "standard" and "elaboré.") The movement in our test watch seemed to be in a hurry; Tudor remains quite far from equal-

ing the renowned accuracy of its parent brand. Our tested watch's daily gain was 10 seconds on the wrist and 13.5 seconds on the timing machine. The greatest deviation among the various positions was a moderate five seconds. The decline in amplitude between flat and hanging positions wasn't excessively large: 24 degrees.

The price, \$3,425, is reasonable given the watch's high quality. Tudor's watches are more costly now than they were in the past, when the brand's advertisements featured construction workers and miners, signifying that its watches were both robust and affordable.

The Tudor Heritage Black Bay achieves its handsome vintage appearance without sacrificing comfort or ease of use. The only compromise made was the elimination of a date display. If you buy this watch, you'll get a timepiece with a scratch-resistant sapphire crystal, lots of luminous material on the dial and hands, excellent water resistance, and plenty of user-friendliness. ○

The edge of the buckle is shaped like the top of the Tudor shield.

