

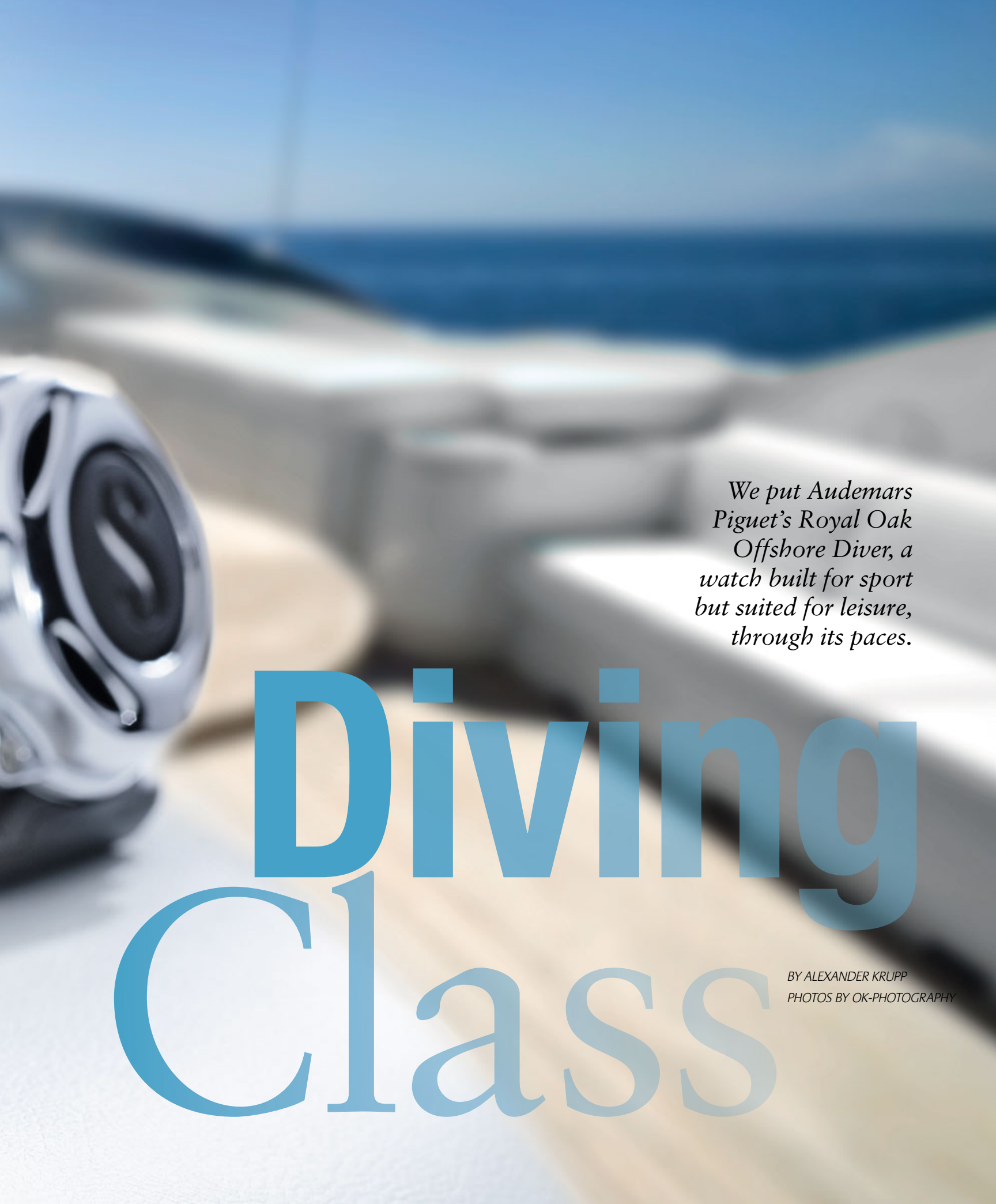
### Pros

- + An attractive variation on the classic Royal Oak design
- + All components are very well crafted
- + Handsome, technically interesting *manufacture* caliber

### Cons

- Setting the dive-time ring is sometimes difficult
- Expensive for a steel watch





*We put Audemars  
Piguet's Royal Oak  
Offshore Diver, a  
watch built for sport  
but suited for leisure,  
through its paces.*

# Divining Class

BY ALEXANDER KRUPP  
PHOTOS BY OK-PHOTOGRAPHY



# D

on't be fooled by its chic styling and *haut de gamme* price tag (\$18,900): the Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore Diver, which was launched in 2010, is a rugged, real-world divers' watch, with all the features a watch needs to survive the rigors of the deep.

**IT'S BETTER SUITED** for warm climates than cold ones, because the watch's strap has no extension piece to make it long enough to wear over the sleeve of a wet-suit. In all other areas, however, this watch meets the requirements expected of a genuine divers' watch. It is water-resistant to 300 meters, 100 more than the standard 200 meters expected of divers' watches. It also has a rotatable ring with a luminous zero mark to set the dive time, the dial displays glow in the dark, and the hands for hours, minutes and seconds have different shapes for easier reading under water.

The rotatable ring has single-minute subdivisions for the first quarter-hour, which are sufficient for most practical diving situations. Unlike a classic divers' bezel, the ring is positioned underneath the crystal and can be reset by turning the additional crown at 10 o'clock. The ring clicks authoritatively into place in single-minute increments, and its designated

crown can be conveniently unscrewed and easily turned, but only if the diver isn't wearing gloves. This is another hint that this watch is meant for tropical climates. Also, the crown is somewhat difficult to reach if the owner is wearing the watch, as most people do, on his left wrist.

Because the screwed crown prevents the rotatable ring from being inadvertently repositioned, Audemars Piguet designed the ring so that it can rotate in two directions. This makes it easier and quicker to set the zero point of the dive.

**THE ROYAL OAK** Offshore Diver is well suited for diving, but would you really want such a handsome, high-quality and expensive watch to run the risk of rubbing against hard equipment or scraping against the deck when you climb out of the water? You'd probably prefer to wear it while sipping a cocktail on deck or dining at an exclusive seaside restaurant. If so, this watch will look and feel right at home because a Royal Oak always makes a stylish statement — even this model, with its sporty rubber strap. Contributing to its good looks is its perfectly crafted dial, with the trademark “Mega Tapisserie” textured pattern, and its hour hand and minute hand, both made of white gold.

Another ingredient in the Diver's special appeal is its multifaceted and impeccably crafted case. Familiar features borrowed from other Royal Oak models include hexagonal white-gold screws in an octagonal bezel and beautifully alternating satin-finished and polished surfaces. The rubber ring under the bezel is especially thick, as it is on all Offshore models. The Diver also has

## SPECS

### AUDEMARS PIGUET ROYAL OAK OFFSHORE DIVER

**Manufacturer:** Manufacture d'Horlogerie Audemars Piguet, Route de France 16, CH-1348 Le Brassus, Switzerland

**Reference number:**  
15703ST.OO.A002CA.01

**Functions:** Hours, minutes, seconds; date; stop-seconds function; diving-time ring underneath crystal

**Movement:** *Manufacture* Caliber 3120, automatic; 21,600 vph, 40 jewels, freely oscillating Glucydur balance with eight regulating weights, Kif shock absorption, 60-hour power reserve; diameter = 26.6 mm, height = 4.25 mm

**Case:** Stainless steel; flat sapphire crystal, nonreflective on its inner surface; stainless-steel caseback held in place by eight screws; two threaded, rubber-coated crowns; soft iron inner case to protect against magnetic fields, water-resistant to 300 meters

**Strap and clasp:** Rubber strap with stainless-steel pronged buckle

**Rate results:**  
(Deviations in seconds per 24 hours)

Dial up	+12
Dial down	+5
Crown up	-4
Crown down	+5
Crown left	-1
Crown right	+3
Greatest deviation of rate	16
Average deviation:	+3.3
Mean amplitude:	
Flat positions	296°
Hanging positions	250°

**Dimensions:** Diameter = 42 mm, height = 13.8 mm, weight = 168 grams

**Price:** \$18,900






Self-winding Caliber 3120 is based on the hand-wound Caliber 3090.

Royal Oak  
Offshore

N° 2097  
H 20916





THANKS TO ITS RUBBER  
COVER, THE CROWN IS  
EASY TO UNSCREW, PULL  
OUT AND TURN.

## SCORES

AUDEMARS PIGUET  
ROYAL OAK OFFSHORE DIVER

**Strap and clasp (max. 10 points):** The solid rubber strap and massive, pronged buckle are very well crafted, but there is no extension piece for wearing the watch over a wetsuit. **8**

**Operation (5):** The time and the date are more convenient to set than the dive-time ring. **3**

**Case (10):** The octagonal case is multifaceted, very water-resistant and excellently constructed. **10**

**Design (15):** A perfect translation of the legendary Royal Oak design into a divers' watch. **15**

**Legibility (5):** Because of the many details on the dial, it is hard to read the time at a quick glance. **4**

**Wearing comfort (10):** The heavy case, the broad strap and the massive clasp fit quite comfortably around the wrist. **8**

**Movement (20):** The freely oscillating Glucydur balance is borne under a bridge rather than a cock; the power reserve is an impressive 60 hours; and all bearing parts are decorated. The movement's construction and embellishments are impeccable. **18**

**Rate results (10):** The average values on the timing machine and on the wrist are good, but the deviation among the various positions is too high. **6**

**Overall value (15):** It's plenty of wrist-watch, but buying it requires plenty of money. **11**

**TOTAL:** **83 points**

rubber covers on both crowns. The elaborately crafted caseback has no sapphire window, but its grained center bears the words "Royal Oak Offshore" as a relief engraving; each letter boasts polished upper surfaces. Two particularly fine details are the tapered and polished edges along the upper surfaces of the lugs and the even slimmer beveling on the crown protector. The case is among the best to be found anywhere, although the wearer might have a little trouble slipping the watch under a long-sleeved shirt or sweater because of the case's angular construction. (Yet another sign that this watch is suited for milder weather.)

The strap connects seamlessly to the large, heavy case thanks to two movable brackets that are meticulously satin-finished on both their front and back surfaces. The strap's styling is sleek and simple, but the solidity of its craftsmanship will appeal to connoisseurs, as will the graining on its upper surface (which resists dust) and on its inner surface (which minimizes perspiration). Wide holes in the strap easily accommodate the massive prong on the stylish clasp, whose large dimensions make it a perfect match for the strap and the case.

The watch's large, main crown is very convenient to use. Thanks in part to its rubber cover, it is very easy to unscrew, pull out and turn. Winding the watch, which is done with the crown fully extracted, is smooth as silk, as is resetting the date. We found a bit too much play in the hands when setting the time, but this

is not a problem if you abide by the Golden Rule of hand-setting, and turn the minute hand just slightly forward past the correct time before moving it backward to the proper minute.

The dial's legibility is essentially very good, although the many indices, the tripartite hour hand and the textured surface can create confusion at a quick glance. Fewer of these elements are visible in the dark, so the overall picture is clearer: the dive time is clearly legible under water and the hours and minutes are easy to read at night.

**THE ONLY NEGATIVE** comment we can make about the 278-part, automatic Caliber 3120, which is based on Audemars Piguet's hand-wound Caliber 3090, is that it's not in plain sight. If you want to see the movement, with its bidirectional, ball-borne rotor, you must remove the eight screws that hold the back in place (mating threads connect each of these screws with corresponding screws in the bezel). Doing so, however, will jeopardize the case's water-resistance and the protection against magnetic fields provided by the soft-iron inner case.

The movement has an unusually long power reserve of 60 hours. If the power runs down and the watch requires manual winding, the clever winding mechanism minimizes resistance and is protected against excessive wear or potential damage by a decoupling system. The escapement has an elegant, freely oscillating hairspring and eight adjustable weights, six of which are for pre-regulation and two for fine adjustment. The balance copes well with shocks and blows because it's held by a bridge (which is affixed at both ends) rather than by a cock (which is affixed at only one end).





Noteworthy among the movement's numerous decorations, most of which are done by hand, are the beveling and polishing on the bridges and plates, as well as the inset sinks for the ruby bearings and screws. The heads and the slits of the screws are polished; other parts are adorned with Geneva waves, sunburst patterns and various types of large circular graining. The rotor is another visual highlight: crafted from 22k rose gold, it's decorated with the brand's insignia and logo, as well as with the coats-of-arms of the Audemars and Piguet families.

Considering all this attention to detail, we were surprised to discover that the movement in our test watch didn't run with impeccable regularity. Although the average gain across all six positions was a reasonably small 3.3 seconds, the

**THE WATCH IS  
EXPENSIVE BUT  
WELL-CRAFTED  
AND HAS AN  
IN-HOUSE  
MOVEMENT.**

values in the "dial up" and "crown up" positions differed by a full 16 seconds. Of course, most people who wear this watch will be concerned primarily with the daily average. But here, too, we noticed deviations among the various positions. In our wrist test, during which we wore the watch almost constantly for days, the Diver performed excellently, with a gain of just one second. When the watch was left motionless with its crown up, its rate strayed into the minus column, losing 2.5 seconds per day.

When deciding whether to purchase the Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore Diver, you'll have to decide if the price is worth it for a steel watch, even one with a *manufacture* movement. If you decide that it is, you can be confident that it will make an equally good impression on land and in the water. ○