

# СОСКРИТ





# COLOSSUS

*Breitling's massive Chronomat GMT features the next generation of its first in-house movement. We take this versatile pilots' watch on a test flight.*

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## Breitling Chronomat GMT

At first glance, the Breitling Chronomat GMT reminded us of an imposing SUV, like the Porsche Cayenne. Looking at the watch's highly polished, 47-mm-diameter case, one can only admire its bold design while at the same time being stunned by its immodesty. One thing is clear: *no one really needs* this much watch. But if that's what you like, why not? And, unlike with an SUV, you won't go broke filling up its tank.

The Chronomat clearly belongs in the high-end segment of the watch market. The rotating bezel, with 12 carefully polished screws along the edge; the highly detailed, exquisitely finished dial; and the precisely fitting folding clasp with Breitling logo are signs of excellent quality and execution. The polished elegance of the case, bezel, clasp, markers and hands complements the many sporty features, like the screw-down pushers, the perforated rubber strap and, of course, the watch's sheer size.

**THE WATCH CONTAINS** Breitling Caliber 04, the next generation of the company's first in-house movement, Caliber 01, introduced two years ago. Caliber 01, which has a chronograph function, made its debut in another Chronomat model and in a handful of limited editions, and now powers another Breitling model, the Navitimer, as well as the new Transocean, which shows off the movement through a sapphire caseback. Caliber 04, which includes a dual-time-zone complication as well as a chronograph, makes its first appearance in the Chronomat GMT.

The Chronomat GMT demonstrates Breitling's ability to link functionality with contemporary design. The richness of detail is especially noteworthy. For example, at the dial's center is a square whose edges are defined by the centers of the subdials. The applied markers also point toward and help define these edges as they spread along the square's periphery. The subdial hands repeat the square shape at their centers. Even the raised indices on the bezel echo the square shape. The typography of the numerals on the subdials and the bezel, with its rectangular zero, also fits the pattern. A total of three different numeral fonts are used on the watch for the tachymeter track, the subdials and the 24-hour track (which mirrors the typography on the bezel). Although the font on the bezel is rather unorthodox, it contributes to the watch's overall feeling of boldness.

Reading the time and date from the dial of our test watch was, unfortunately, difficult. The contrast between the silver hands and the silvery beige color of the dial is very minimal. The

## SPECS

## BREITLING CHRONOMAT GMT

**Manufacturer:** Breitling Chronometrie, allée du Laser 10, CH-2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland

**Reference number:** AB0410

**Functions:** Hours, minutes, seconds, date, chronograph with seconds, 12-hour and 30-minute totalizers, second time zone, unidirectional bezel

**Movement:** Caliber 04, automatic; 28,800 vph; 47 jewels; Kif shock absorber; Glucydur balance; fine regulator with eccentric; diameter = 30 mm; 70-hour power reserve

**Case:** Stainless steel, sapphire crystal with double-sided nonreflective coating, fully threaded stainless-steel caseback, screw-down crown and pushers, water-resistant to 500 meters

**Strap and clasp:** Rubber, with stainless-steel folding clasp with two deployant buttons

**Rate results:** (Deviations in seconds per day, without/with chronograph switched on)

Dial up	3	5
Dial down	5	6
Crown up	3	7
Crown down	3	0
Crown left	5	-2
Crown right	0	11
Greatest deviation:	5	13
Average deviation:	+3.2	+4.5
Average amplitude:		
flat positions	272°	243°
hanging positions	248°	217°

**Dimensions:** Diameter = 47 mm, height = 18.7 mm, weight = 200 grams

**Variations:** Stainless steel bracelet (\$9,820), calfskin strap (\$8,635)

**Price:** \$8,570



### Pros

- + Well-designed in-house movement
- + Useful pilots' functions
- + Very high-quality clasp

### Cons

- Low-contrast dial
- No exhibition caseback

*The polished safety folding clasp and adjustable extension strap are attractive, sturdy and practical.*



TEST  
*Breitling Chronomat GMT*

*The case is carefully polished and boasts a highly detailed rotating bezel.*

*THE WATCH'S  
ENORMOUS SIZE  
MAKES IT EITHER  
IMPRESSIVE OR  
OVERWHELMING,  
DEPENDING ON  
THE WEARER'S  
PERSONAL TASTE  
AND THE SIZE OF  
HIS WRIST.*



delicate chronograph hand is even harder to see. The date and the 24-hour hand, with its large red tip, are easier to discern. The dials on all the other versions of this model (a total of six are available) are in darker colors, and thus easier to read.

The light color of the dial presents no problem in the dark. The hour and minute hands glow brightly, as do the hour markers (12 o'clock is indicated by two squares) and the zero marker on the rotating bezel. Even the chronograph seconds hand has a small triangle of luminous material and is a quick way to check that the watch is still running.

**BEFORE STARTING** the chronograph function you first need to unscrew the pushers, a step many will find inconvenient. However, this feature allows Breitling to guarantee a water-resistance level of up to 500 meters for this watch. The start pusher is not much easier to push than one on a chronograph with a standard cam system, like the Valjoux 7750, even though Caliber 04 has a column wheel, which means it should require less force to start and be easier to operate. The stop and reset functions work more smoothly.

The crown must also be unscrewed before using it; its fluted exterior makes this easy. In its initial position, the crown is used to wind the movement. In its first pulled-out position, it adjusts the hour hand in hour increments and easily sets the date backward or forward. It's not quite as direct as a quick-date adjuster, but still quick. This function also allows the wearer to easily set the time to a new time zone when traveling. The crown's last pulled-out position operates the 24-hour hand, which pilots will set to UTC (the standard time used for all aviation-related information); a hack mechanism ensures exact synchronization. Return the crown to the first position to set the hour hand to local time. Pilots will find the second-time-zone indication to be extremely helpful.

The rotating bezel can also make a pilot's time in the cockpit simpler. At the start of the flight the zero marker on the bezel is lined up with the tip of the minute hand to record the exact start time. When flying according to visual flight rules, this makes it easier to see the length of the flight in minutes and show when the pilot should be on the lookout for the next visual landmark on the calculated route. As on a divers' watch, the bezel can only be turned in one direction. This is of no use to a pilot, but because of the Chronomat's high level of water resistance, it can also be used for diving. The bezel ratchets in 240 increments; the noise it makes as it turns is somewhat scratchy, but it's easy to turn and ratchets securely with no play.

In addition to the bezel, we found another detail usually found only on divers' watches — the finely adjustable strap extension integrated in the clasp. Even though it doesn't expand very far, it still allows the wearer to adjust the strap to the perfect length. The strap can even be shortened while on the wrist by simply pushing an end of the strap into the clasp and gradually tightening it. To extend the strap, open the clasp and push down the strap lock to release.

The folding clasp has two deployant buttons and is also very attractive, easy to operate and superbly executed. The rubber

## SCORES

### BREITLING CHRONOMAT GMT

**Strap and clasp (max. 10 points):** The perforated rubber strap is well made and the clasp is attractive and sturdy, with a complex design and perfectly polished finish. **9**

**Operation (5):** Easy to operate, with a fluted crown and rotating bezel, hack mechanism, and hour hand adjustable in hour increments. Chrono pushers must be unscrewed before using. **4**

**Case (10):** Rounded and carefully polished sides, high degree of water-resistance. The execution of the rotating bezel and caseback deserves special mention. **9**

**Design (15):** Contemporary, striking Breitling pilots'-watch design with various tracks and polished surfaces. Impressive size. **13**

**Legibility (5):** Somewhat low contrast between hands and dial, but all essential elements are highly visible at night. **4**

**Wearing comfort (10):** Comfortable for its size, thanks to the supple rubber strap and smooth case. The adjustable strap extension in the clasp makes it simple to find an exact fit. **8**

**Movement (20):** Caliber 04, with column wheel, vertical clutch, jumping date and long power reserve, is state-of-the-art and nicely decorated. **18**

**Rate results (10):** Minimal gain in most positions. Rates are poorer when the chronograph function is engaged. **8**

**Overall value (15):** Priced fairly for a big pilots' watch with a *manufacture* movement from a respected, well-known brand. **13**

**TOTAL: 86 POINTS**



*Breitling Chronomat GMT*

strap with perforations goes well with this style of watch, making it more of a versatile sports watch than strictly a pilots' watch. Thanks to the suppleness of the strap and the variable extension feature, the Chronomat GMT is surprisingly comfortable to wear despite its impressive size and weight (200 grams). However, even by today's standards, the case is extra-large and must be worn snugly on the wrist to avoid slipping.

**THE BEAUTIFULLY** engraved caseback, with its Breitling logo, contributes to the overall impression of high quality, although a sapphire window to provide a view of this still-rare chronograph movement would surely have had greater appeal for mechanical-watch fans. The movement's decorative finishes are certainly not overdone, but they include côtes de Genève on the automatic bridge, polished levers and screws, and a sunburst finish on the rotor.

The ball-bearing rotor is bidirectional. The watch has a power reserve of almost three days. An elegant column wheel controls the chronograph functions. The modern vertical clutch ensures that the chronograph seconds hand starts immediately. Breitling has improved the reset function with a patented, automatic centering system for the hammers. The date display jumps instantaneously. The escape wheel is supported by conical pivots and cap jewels to reduce friction in the horizontal positions.

*For Caliber 04, Breitling added a second time zone to its first manufacture movement, Caliber 01.*

Breitling also matches the hairspring to the balance wheel in order to produce greater rate accuracy — an important goal for Breitling, whose policy is that every movement in its watches must meet COSC's specific quality standards for chronometer certification.

With this in mind, our expectations for the rate results were high. On the Witschi Chronoscope X1 timing machine, the greatest deviation between the various positions was measured at five seconds. The average deviation (the mean value of all positions) was +3.2 seconds per day, which still falls within the acceptable range of a chronometer. When the chronograph function was engaged, the rates were slightly less impressive and the amplitude decreased considerably, but overall the rate results were good.

The Chronomat GMT costs \$8,570. A Chronomat 44, without a dual-time-zone function and with the same strap, costs only \$8,010. This means an additional charge of \$560 for the second timezone and a case whose diameter is 3 mm larger. Still, the overall value remains high. Prices can be much higher for a chronograph with a *manufacture* movement and the range of functions offered here.

Even with this watch's many positive aspects, its enormous size may frighten away some potential customers. On the other hand, others will undoubtedly love it for the same reason. ○

