



JAEGER-LECOULTRE

COMPRESSOR DIVING  
984 ft - 300 m


SWISS MADE

25

30

15

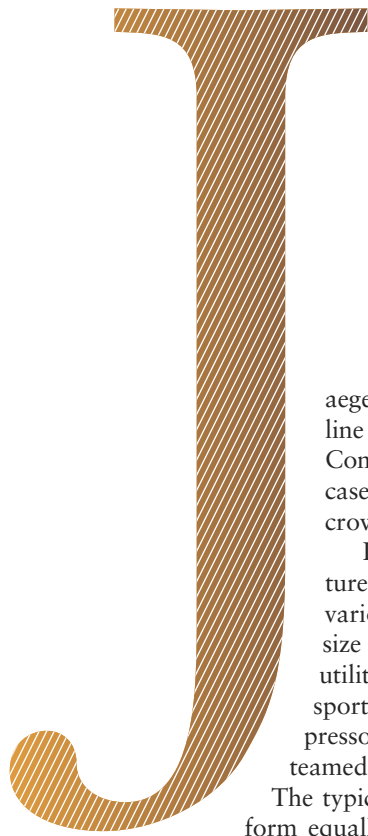
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# Send 1 in the SEALS

BY ALEXANDER LINZ  
PHOTOS BY NIK SCHÖLZEL

*Jaeger-LeCoultre has introduced a limited-edition Master Compressor Diving watch designed with the input of United States Navy SEALs. We put it through the WatchTime gauntlet.*



Jaeger-LeCoultre introduced a new line of sports watches called Master Compressor, characterized by round cases and distinctive protruding crowns, in 2002.

In recent years, watch manufacturers have taken to partnering with various elite military units to emphasize the toughness and professional utility of even their most luxurious sport models. For this Master Compressor Diving watch, Jaeger-LeCoultre teamed up with the U.S. Navy SEALs.

The typical Navy SEAL is trained to perform equally effectively in the air, on land, and in the water (hence the acronym, which stands for Sea, Air and Land). His equipment must be rugged and always reliable. At the start of the project, Jaeger-LeCoultre outfitted several SEALs with Master Compressor divers' watches and took note of their feedback. For example, the testers remarked that the cases and rotating bezels reflected light too strongly and that the surfaces of the watches should be less shiny and more matte. The SEALs also suggested that the construction of the bezels needed rethinking, because they sometimes separated from the cases when the watches were subjected to the SEALs' tough daily regimens. Jaeger-LeCoultre created a modified version of the Master Compressor, based on their suggestions, at its headquarters in Le Sentier, Switzerland. Called the Master Compressor Diving Automatic Navy SEALs, it is limited to 1,500 pieces, and engineered to be tough and sturdy under all conditions, including under water, to depths of 300 meters. We got hold of one to test.

In addition to toughness and absolute reliability, the legibility of its time display is the single most important aspect of a divers' watch. Jaeger-LeCoultre deserves praise in this area, because it would be difficult to imagine better styling for the dial and hands. The high contrast between matte black and white, the clear typography of the numerals, and the shape of the hands combine to ensure perfect legibility of the time under all conditions — even without nonreflective treatment on both surfaces of the sapphire crystal. In the dark, the watch glows so brightly and for such a long time that it almost seems as though there were a light source behind it. Jaeger-LeCoultre has applied

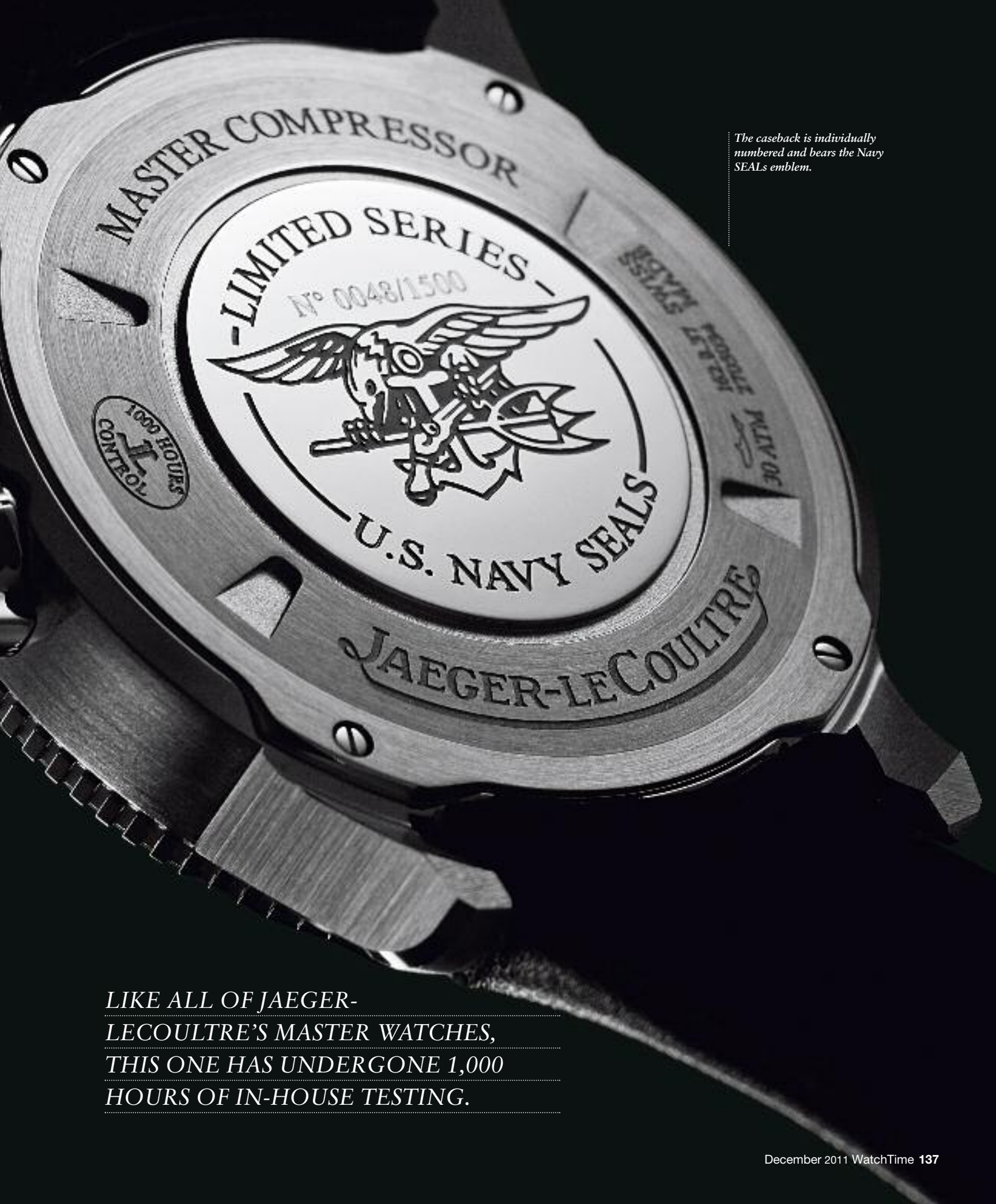
### Pros

- + Well-equipped for diving
- + Dial is easy to read
- + Bright, long-lasting luminosity in the dark
- + Very comfortable on the wrist

### Cons

- Sharp-edged lugs
- Large rate variations between the various positions
- Leather strap is not seamlessly integrated into the case





*The caseback is individually numbered and bears the Navy SEALs emblem.*

*LIKE ALL OF JAEGER-LECOULTRE'S MASTER WATCHES, THIS ONE HAS UNDERGONE 1,000 HOURS OF IN-HOUSE TESTING.*

## SPECS

JAEGER-LECOULTRE MASTER  
COMPRESSOR DIVING NAVY SEALS

**Manufacturer:** Manufacture Jaeger-LeCoultre, Rue de la Golisse 8, CH-1347, Le Sentier, Switzerland

**Reference number:** 162.8.37

**Functions:** Hours, minutes, central seconds, date

**Movement:** JLC Caliber 899, automatic; diameter = 26.6 mm; height = 3.3 mm; 32 jewels; screw balance with four weights; self-compensating Nivarox-1 flat hair-spring; 28,800 vph; Kif shock absorption; angle of lift = 48°; rotor winds in one direction of rotation and has a segment made of 22k gold; one barrel; 45-hour power reserve; 219 components

**Case:** Massive, tripartite, steel case with four screws in threaded back; screwed crown; sapphire crystal with nonreflective treatment on one surface; water-resistant to 300 meters

**Strap and clasp:** Leather with pronged buckle

**Rate results** (Deviations in seconds per day, fully wound/after 24 hours):

Dial up	+7	+2
Dial down	+8	+4
Crown up	-2	-1
Crown down	+3	-1
Crown left	+2	-1
Crown right	-4	-5

Greatest deviation of rate: 12 9

Average deviation: +2 0

Mean amplitude:

Flat positions	320°	261°
Hanging positions	270°	216°

**Dimensions:** Diameter = 42 mm, height = 14.2 mm, weight = 102 grams

**Limited edition of 1,500 pieces**

**Price:** \$8,800


a new, extra-powerful Super-LumiNova to the numerals, indices, and hands, as well as to the little marking triangle on the rotatable ceramic bezel, which clicks cleanly into place in one-minute increments. Each click is rich and resonant, a contrast with the weak clicks of so many other divers' watches.

The surface of the steel case is entirely matte finished and embellished with a longitudinal, abraded pattern. This gives the watch an attractive technical look and helps to reduce glare. The only downside to the case, from a comfort standpoint, is that the lower edges of the lugs are a bit too sharp. The play between the lugs and the leather strap could also be improved. When the watch is strapped onto the wrist, an unattractive crevice appears between the flank of the case and the matching shape of the strap: an automotive journalist would probably complain about the gap dimensions. If the strap fit more neatly into the case, it would probably be somewhat stiffer, but after a few days of wear it would develop the necessary "give," and the crevice would be much neater and more narrow.

The choice of a pronged buckle over a folding clasp was a wise one for this watch. The former provides greater security and also makes it simpler to adjust the strap's length. The high-

*The watch's pronged buckle offers more security and is easier to adjust than a folding clasp.*



A detailed close-up photograph of a mechanical watch movement. The central focus is the balance wheel, which is a semi-circular component with a fine, radial texture. It is mounted on a pivot and is surrounded by a complex assembly of metal parts, including the rotor and various gears. The rotor is a circular component with a textured surface and four blue screws arranged in a cross pattern. The movement is intricately designed with various metal components, including a large gear with a black silhouette of a bird or animal. The overall appearance is highly technical and precise.

*The rate can be finely adjusted via four setting screws along the balance's rim; the rotor winds the mainspring in one direction of rotation.*

The rotating ceramic bezel clicks neatly into place in one-minute increments.

## SCORES

### JAEGER-LECOULTRE MASTER COMPRESSOR DIVING NAVY SEALS

**Strap and clasp (max. 10 points):** Well-crafted leather strap. The matte pronged buckle, with its striped pattern, perfectly matches the case; the clasp is secure and easy to operate. **9**

**Operation (5):** Screwed crown; open or closed status of crown is shown by white or red mark. When open, time and date are easy to set. **5**

**Case (10):** Except for the somewhat sharp lower edges on the lugs, the steel case is impeccably made. The high-quality, neatly crafted ceramic bezel snaps cleanly and firmly into each increment. **8**

**Design (15):** Utilitarian design without many frills. The matte, non-reflective case does justice to this watch's intended purpose. **12**

**Legibility (5):** The time is easy to read under all conditions. Highly and lastingly luminous in the dark. **5**

**Wearing comfort (10):** A diameter of 42 millimeters, relative slimness, and comparatively low weight are an ideal combination for a sporty watch. This one fits very well around the wrist. **10**

**Movement (20):** *Manufacture* Caliber 899 is a solid base caliber and is highly resistant to shocks. The plates and bridges are handsomely decorated. **16**

**Rate results (10):** The overall results indicate that this watch had been properly adjusted, but the rate differences between the flat and hanging positions were too large, which caused us to subtract a few points. **7**

**Overall value (15):** No mere wannabe sport watch, this well-made divers' watch is as handsome as it is tough. Its price is reasonable. **12**

**TOTAL: 84 POINTS**





*THE AVERAGE DAILY RATE WAS GOOD, BUT THERE WERE LARGE DEVIATIONS BETWEEN THE FLAT AND HANGING POSITIONS.*

quality leather strap on our tested watch sheds water, but if you're looking for even greater water resistance, you can swap it for an optional, linked rubber strap, which gives the watch a very different look.

**JAEGER-LECOULTRE** Caliber 899 ticks beneath the black, galvanized dial. This movement represents a further development of the well-known and time-honored Caliber 889/2. Jaeger-LeCoultre no longer uses the 889/2, but Audemars Piguet uses a reworked version of it as a base caliber for its Royal Oak Offshore modular chronograph. Like that of its predecessor, the 899's balance completes 28,800 semi-oscillations per hour, but the newer caliber also boasts various improvements. The rotor, which winds the mainspring in one direction of rotation, is borne on ceramic bearings and requires neither maintenance nor lubrication. The gears for the rotor have been newly developed: specially shaped teeth reduce friction and increase efficiency. The barrel has been enlarged and the gear train has been reworked. The teeth on the gears have been given a different profile that improves the transmission of energy and reduces play, thus saving energy and increasing the power reserve to 45 hours. Four screws along the rim of the balance are used to finely adjust the rate. The stud is welded to the hairspring by a laser. All of these details increase reliability and guarantee a more regular rate. Furthermore, like all of Jaeger-LeCoultre's Master watches, this one has undergone 1,000 hours of in-house testing.

Surprisingly, Caliber 899 didn't entirely live up to our lofty expectations when we tested the watch on an electronic Witschi timing machine. We discovered large deviations between the flat and hanging positions, both when fully wound and after 24 hours. And its maximum difference of 12 seconds among the six tested positions isn't anything to brag about.

To determine whether these results were an aberration, we tested two additional models, each also containing Caliber 899, and found similar problems: the greatest deviation, the so-called "delta," was very large. The average daily rate, however, was good, and this was confirmed on the wrist, where the watch gained very slightly — just a few seconds per day.

All in all, the Master Compressor U.S. Navy SEALs deserves a good report card. The dial's legibility is especially top-notch, and we loved its appealingly understated look. Thanks to the input of actual Navy SEALs, the watch is well equipped for underwater use, and is thus unlikely to disappoint professional divers, whether or not they are in elite military units. ○