

Tudor Black Bay 36 long-term review

Six months on the wrist

Willem L. Middelkoop

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For the past six months I have been wearing the same watch, pretty much every day and night. It's a Tudor Black Bay 36 watch in steel, with a black dial. I like minimal (yet functional) design that lasts, this watch certainly ticks the right boxes. Read along to find out how wearable a smaller watch is in daily practice.

Tudor

Tudor is the secondary brand of Rolex, it's founder Hans Wilsdorf was very clear that the purpose of the Tudor watch company was about "making a watch that our agents

could sell at a more modest price than our Rolex watches, and yet one that would attain the standard of dependability for which Rolex is famous”.

Introducing . . .
The Tudor Oyster Prince



“In its field an outstanding achievement,” says Mr. H. WILSDORF, Governing Director of the Rolex Watch Company of Geneva.

The story behind the Tudor Oyster Prince

FOR SOME YEARS Mr. H. Wilsdorf, Governing Director of the Rolex Watch Company, had been considering marketing a wrist-watch that would compare with Rolex in dependability and accuracy, yet sell at a more modest price.

He formed the Tudor Watch Company to make this new watch.

Outstanding Success

Mr. Wilsdorf and his Rolex experts recently examined the watch this company produced—the Tudor Oyster Prince. Said Wilsdorf: “It has surpassed all our expectations in the most unforeseen way.

“The instructions I gave have been magnificently carried out. It is my considered opinion that, for its price, the Tudor Oyster Prince is

the most outstanding value I have ever seen.


“Independent experts, whom I have consulted at every stage in the development of the Tudor, confirm this judgment unhesitatingly.”

Big Decision


He went on to say: “As a result of its outstanding success, I have decided that the Tudor Prince

deserves to share with Rolex two advantages I would allow no other watch to use—the famous and unique waterproof Oyster case and the original self-winding Perpetual “rotor” mechanism.

“All Tudor Oyster Princes will have these two exceptional features, previously exclusive to Rolex. This indicates, I think, the measure of our faith in this new watch.”




THE TUDOR OYSTER PRINCE, commissioned by Rolex to meet an urgent need for a wrist-watch of the highest quality that could be made to sell at a medium price, surpasses the highest expectations of its sponsor. It is waterproofed by the famous Oyster case, self-wound by the unique Perpetual self-winding “rotor,” and its performance, in the words of Rolex’s founder and Governing Director, Mr. H. Wilsdorf, is “magnificent!”



TRIAL OF DESTRUCTION

NEW, specially grueling tests were devised for the Tudor Oyster Prince. In this one, the “Trial of Destruction,” six Tudors were worn, one after the other, by a workman operating a pneumatic drill. Each watch underwent over one million tremendous shocks as the chisel of the drill battered on granitic rubble. It is the hardest test watches have ever been put to—yet all these Tudor Oyster Princes emerged unharmed and functioning perfectly.



THE TUDOR WATCH COMPANY LIMITED · GENEVA · SWITZERLAND

1698 K&C Rolex Army Times 1952 7810

Final Proof K10309

Tudor Oyster Prince ad (1952)

Fast forward to today and you'll find the Tudor brand very much alive, refreshed and fully firing on all cylinders. Modern Tudor watches provide excellent value, with quality fit and finish.

Tudor Black Bay 36

If you are a regular visitor of this website, you'll know that [I like minimal design](#). Things that are designed like this don't scream for attention, they'll fade into the background in a reliable, predictable, functional way. The Tudor Black Bay 36 is very much like that: unremarkable on a photo, yet very dependable and practical on the wrist.



Tudor Black Bay 36 (photo by Tudor)

The watch features a glossy black dial and a non-rotating smooth bezel. It gives it a smooth appearance, devoid of visual clutter and unnesecary decoration. There is subtle silver printing on the dial, and the indexes are composed of a triangle at 12, batons at 3/6/9 and dots for the rest. The watch features the so-called "snowflake" hands that have a cult following thanks to legendary historic timepieces worn by special units in various militaries. It's a subtle hint to Tudor's heritage. The watch strikes a very nice balance between elegance and sportiness. I think it is a timeless timepiece.



The pitch black dial, smooth bezel and high contrast indexes come alive under daylight

Just like early Tudor watches, this Black Bay 36 follows the classic lines of the (Rolex) Oyster case - which is heralded as a masterpiece in horological design. It gets its name from the waterproofness, like an oyster shell closing itself to protect its innards against the sea. It sits beautifully on the wrist.



Tudor Black Bay 36 on the wrist

Although 36MM could be considered a small watch size for men by modern standards,

the watch's incredible balance makes you forget about millimeters once you'll start wearing it. Yes, it is smaller, but it makes the watch unobtrusive in a way that few modern timepieces are.



Black Bay 36MM size compared to a Whoop bio sensor



In my average-sized hands, the watch is just the right size

The Black Bay 36 is powered by the ETA 2824 automatic movement. For those

unfamiliar with mechanical movements, this means that the watch runs without batteries. It's one of the [advantages over modern smartwatches](#). The watch 'charges' by your body's movement. It has been calibrated by Tudor to keep time accurately (my watch has a -1.5/2.0s a day). Some watch enthusiasts are favouring inhouse movements these days. Yet, owning a watch with a very common movement, like the ETA 2824, has the practical advantage that you pretty much have the guarantee that somebody will be able to service it in the future. This ensures longevity and future reparability, and I really like that - as [I hate planned obsolescence](#).



The Black Bay 36 is powered by the ETA 2824 movement (photo by Zeitauction GmbH) - a well known mechanical calibre with a trustworthy trackrecord

In practice

For the past six months I have worn the watch during pretty much everything I do:

- typing
- visiting customers
- sleeping
- cycling
- swimming
- being a daddy



The watch feels at home in and around the pool

Thanks to the legendary Oyster case you can be very comfortable when you take this watch in or near a pool. The metal bracelet is perfectly waterproof, too. Other models in Tudor's Black Bay watch lineup are dive watches; this watch carries the same pedigree in a compact package.



The 36MM size is really very comfortable

Because of the watch being a little smaller than most contemporary men's watches, it wears a little lighter on the wrist, too. This is especially nice when you wear your watch while sporting. Don't worry about sweating, it's easy to clean as you can simply keep it on when you take your shower. During my bike rides I really didn't mind wearing the little Tudor.



It's light enough to be comfortable while cycling...



... and when eating ice-creams afterwards :-)

The Oyster case is accompanied by the Oyster bracelet. It fits the watch perfectly. Unlike most Rolex bracelets that feature shiny polished center links, this Tudor's bracelet is fully brushed. When you wear it, you immediately feel why Rolex is famous for their bracelets: they are comfortable, yet very strong and precisely engineered.



The Oyster bracelet - precisely engineered to be both comfortable and strong



The steel bracelet fits the watch perfectly



But the Oyster case is beautiful on other straps, too, like on this gray NATO



The Black Bay works well on other straps, too

Conclusion

If you are looking for a perfect everyday watch, a reliable timepiece that strikes a nice balance between formal and sporty? Look no further, the Tudor Heritage Black Bay 36 is it!

While wearing it for six months I really learned to appreciate it's understated appearance. Don't let the small(ish) 36MM size hold you back: there is greatness in this fine little watch!



This is what 6 months of continuous wear look like on a Oyster bracelet!