



## 950 PLATINUM

### AND THERE WAS LIGHT

Rare and precious, considered the noblest of metals, platinum is striking for its silvery whiteness and its vibrant luminosity. Known to the ancient Egyptian and pre-Columbian civilizations, it was not discovered by the Europeans until the 18th century, and only later still did the secrets of shaping it, which are linked to its very particular physical properties, come to light.



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Mined in only a few regions of the world, such as South Africa and Russia, platinum belongs to the family of platinoids, which also includes palladium, rhodium, ruthenium, iridium and osmium. It is among the densest and heaviest metals in the world, and is distinguished by unique chemical and physical properties such as exceptional corrosion resistance. Paradoxically, it is also soft, elastic and highly malleable, which makes machining and polishing especially difficult. At Rolex, the men and women who carry out the finishing of the bracelets and middle cases are well aware of the degree of experience required to master the fine art of polishing platinum.

### PRECIOUS STONES AND SOUL

Beyond its corrosion resistance, the exceptional luminosity of platinum gives it its special status. Whether in the form of a finished component or as a semi-refined raw material, platinum produces a white glow which gives it soul. For this reason, it is the jewellers' metal of choice; like no other, it enables precious stones to gleam in all their splendour.

Rolex uses 950 platinum, an alloy consisting of 950‰ (thousandths) platinum generally combined with ruthenium. At Rolex, platinum is above all used for the Day-Date, the most prestigious watch in the Oyster collection. The practised eye immediately recognizes a Day-Date or Daytona with an ice blue dial as a platinum model. Platinum is also used for the graduated bezel and dial of the Rolesium version of the Yacht-Master and for the bezel of the 18 ct white gold Yacht-Master II. When a Rolex watch equipped with a monobloc Cerachrom bezel or Cerachrom bezel insert is made of Oystersteel or 18ct white gold, it is again platinum that is used to coat the numerals, graduations and inscriptions via PVD (Physical Vapour Deposition).

### A LONG HISTORY

While its use in jewellery and later in watchmaking in the West is very recent, dating from the 19th century, platinum in fact has a long history. It was known in ancient Egypt and also used by pre-Columbian civilizations, but only rediscovered many centuries later.

Platinum takes its name from the Spanish word platina, meaning "little silver". It was the Spanish who, in the 17th century in South America, discovered this "unknown" white metal, whose future value they could little imagine.

Introduced in Europe a century later, platinum quickly aroused the interest of scientists by virtue of its physical and chemical properties. However, it was only in the early 19th century that pure platinum could be obtained. Due to its very high melting point – above 1,700 °C – complex transformation



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techniques were only mastered at the end of that century, enabling platinum's production and its subsequent use in jewellery and watchmaking.