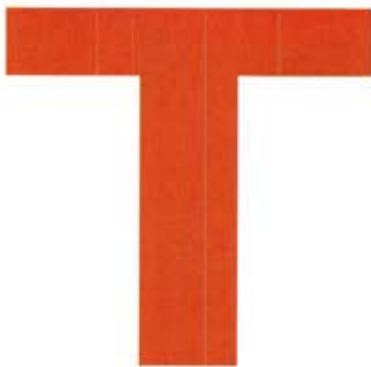




CLASH OF THE CHRONOS



he Tutima M2 Pioneer is a successor to Tutima's well-known NATO pilots' chronograph, launched in 1985, and is the official service watch of German military pilots. The Alpiner 4 Flyback Chronograph Manufacture from Alpina was designed as a watch for adventurers, mountain climbers and winter-sports fans. We pitted these two tough chronos against each other to see which would carry the day.

The Tutima's design fulfills all expectations for a modern pilots' watch: a high-contrast dial with white displays on a black background, red accents, bar-shaped markers and unadorned hands. Everything is laid out for maximum legibility. The matte, titanium case has a truly contemporary look with recessed, neoprene-inlaid pushers, a deep-set, screw-down crown and integrated lugs. The bidirectional bezel, with its minutes track and luminous dots at 5-minute intervals, gives the M2 the appearance of a sophisticated tool watch. The edge of the bezel is grooved with a combination of small notches and arched cutouts. (This bezel is what distinguishes "Pioneer" versions of the M2 from the other models in the M2 collection.) A Kevlar strap with red contrasting stitching and a matte, titanium folding clasp opened by means of push buttons provide the finishing touches.

One can immediately recognize the M2 Pioneer as a pilots' watch, but the Alpina's identity is less easy to pin down. It is sporty-elegant, with a stainless-steel case bearing matte and polished finishes, shaped pushers with polished beveled edges, a generous amount of luminous

material on its hands and markers, and silver-colored tracks around the subdials. It all looks great, but doesn't explicitly say "expedition" or "mountain trek." This could be an advantage, though, since most people don't often find themselves beneath frozen waterfalls or bivouacked on a mountain. The Alpina is available with either a steel bracelet or an alligator strap; the strap version looks right paired with a suit.

Tutima has completed its move from Ganderkesee, Germany, back to its original home in Glashütte, and is producing all of its watches there. The company now proudly prints the Glashütte name on the dial. The requirements for doing so are that the company create 50 percent of the movement's value in Glashütte and assemble both the watch and movement there.

The watch is powered by an ETA 7750 that has been heavily modified so that it has the same display layout as the Lemania 5100, the movement used in Tutima's original NATO Chronograph. (Lemania stopped making the 5100 in 2002. Tutima had stocked up on these movements before production ceased and used them until its supply was depleted.) The layout, with a center-mounted minutes counter, 24-hour subdial at 12 o'clock and 12-hour counter at 6 o'clock, has historically been a popular one. Tutima calls the movement Caliber 521.

Once the fully threaded caseback is removed, the in-house, skeletonized rotor, decorated with a gold seal, jumps into view. The seal bears the Tutima logo, the Greek letter tau. You can also see the refined design of the pusher bearings. They are made of a single piece and move within a precisely shaped opening in the case. The finishing of the bead-blasted case, made of titanium, is superb. The caseback shows an image of a double-decker biplane. The case is water resistant to 300 meters. An inner case made of iron-nickel alloy protects the movement from magnetic fields.

Alpina also gives its movement anti-magnetic protection with a soft-iron inner case liner. The watch is water resistant to 100 meters. Opening the fully

SPECS

TUTIMA M2 PIONEER

Manufacturer: Tutima Glashütte, Altenberger Strasse 6, D-01768 Glashütte/SA, Germany

Reference number: 6451-02

Functions: Hour, minutes, small seconds; 24-hour display; chronograph with center-mounted, 60-minute counter and small 12-hour counter, date

Movement: Tutima 521, based on the ETA 7750, automatic, 28,800 vph, hack mechanism, quick-date adjustment, 25 jewels, Etachron regulator, Incabloc shock absorber, Glucydur balance, 44-hour power reserve, diameter = 30 mm, height = 7.9 mm

Case: Titanium, sapphire crystal with nonreflective coating on both sides, screw-down crown, fully threaded titanium caseback; water resistant to 300 m

Strap and clasp: Kevlar strap with titanium safety folding clasp

Rate results:


Deviations in seconds per 24 hours
 (With chronograph switched off / on)

Dial up	-1 / -1
Dial down	+4 / +4
Crown up	+2 / 0
Crown down	+1 / +1
Crown left	+1 / -2
Crown right	+1 / +1
Greatest deviation of rate	5 / 6
Average deviation	+1.3 / +0.5
Average amplitude:	
Flat positions	297° / 273°
Hanging positions	262° / 238°

Dimensions: Diameter = 46.5 mm, height = 16 mm, weight = 124 g

Variations: With additional titanium bracelet and changing kit (\$6,700)

Price: \$6,100



Removing the watches' casebacks reveals the Alpina's in-house, flyback movement and the Tutima's modified ETA 7750.

threaded caseback reveals a movement that goes beyond Tutima's modified ETA 7750: Alpina has developed its own chronograph movement, a challenge that even large manufacturers often avoid.



The pusher action on the Alpina is very smooth; the reset pusher on the Tutima requires a lot of pressure.

chronographs. First, the engineers were able to incorporate a pointer-type date display rather than a date disk, which in most modular chronographs is sunk deep beneath the level of the dial and can be hard to read. Second, the pushers are in line with the crown. In most modular chronographs, the crown and pushers are on different horizontal planes. Very little can be seen on the movement side, but the embellishments that are visible – the asymmetrical, blackened rotor, côtes de Genève decoration and blued screws – make up for what is hidden.

The case, which features polished, beveled edges and trapezoidal pushers, is superbly made even though its design is not as unusual as that of the Tutima.

Since 1938, the “4” in the Alpiner 4 name has stood for four distinct sportswatch properties: antimagnetism, water resistance, shock absorption and resistance to rust. Naturally, these features are still found in the new Alpiner 4. But it also boasts excellent high-contrast legibility, contrasting subdials and luminous

material on its hands and markers. The Tutima M2 Pioneer offers even more. It glows even brighter than the Alpina does, thanks to the full Super-LumiNova coating on markers and hands and luminous dots on the bezel. The chronograph hands are also visible in the dark: on the Alpina, they aren't.

In terms of ease of use, the Alpina has a jump on the Tutima. The crown is large and easy to grip and unscrew. The pusher action is exceptionally smooth. On the Tutima, the pushers are easier to operate than you'd expect, given that they're recessed, but the reset pusher requires a lot of pressure. The crown can be diffi-

SCORES

TUTIMA M2 PIONEER

Strap and clasp (max. 10 points): The good-looking, practical, leather-lined Kevlar strap and easily adjustable, titanium folding clasp are welcome features. **9**

Operation (5): Helpful to have a hack mechanism and quick-date adjustment, but the crown is difficult to access and use. **4**

Case (10): Lightweight titanium, high water resistance, refined pushers, antimagnetic protection. Good finishing throughout **9**

Design (15): Tutima's new interpretation of a classic watch is well done. **13**

Legibility (5): Is it Christmas already? Everything's so bright! **5**

Wearing comfort (10): Low weight, recessed crown and pushers and a comfortable bracelet make it easy to forget there's a watch on your wrist. **9**

Movement (20): Tutima modifies the mass-produced ETA 7750 considerably to duplicate the dial layout of the brand's NATO chronograph. **14**

Rate results (10): Satisfactory rate with low average gain. **8**

Overall value (15): The extensive modifications to the movement are reflected in the price, but the price-performance ratio is still appropriate. **12**

TOTAL: 83 POINTS

ALPINA HAS DEVELOPED ITS OWN CHRONOGRAPH MOVEMENT, A CHALLENGE THAT EVEN LARGE MANUFACTURERS OFTEN AVOID.

The Tutima, far right, comes on a leather-lined Kevlar strap with an additional titanium bracelet. The Alpina has a steel bracelet with a clasp operated by push buttons.



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cult to unscrew, and despite its ridges is hard to pull out to the second position – it's good that you need do so only every two months to correct the date.

The M2 runs with great accuracy. The timing machine recorded an average daily deviation of +1.3 seconds. When the chronograph was running, the gain was reduced by just under a second per day.

The Alpina showed similar results. Its average deviation was somewhat higher (+3 seconds per day without the chronograph running and +2.5 seconds with it). The positional deviations were small for both watches – an important criterion, since positional errors cannot be as easily corrected as the average deviation.

With its leather-lined Kevlar strap and low weight, the Tutima was much more comfortable to wear. The Alpina's steel bracelet, large caseback surface and crown that touched the wrist resulted in minor subtractions in the comfort score.

The Alpina wins on the value front. At \$4,750, it is the most economical

Swiss *manufacture* chronograph on the market and is very well made. The Tutima costs \$1,350 more but has no prestigious *manufacture* title (even though Tutima does make in-house movements for other models). But the buyer gets an exclusive, practical chronograph display with an easy-to-read, center-mounted minutes counter. Both watches have their advantages and drawbacks: which one you prefer depends on whether you want a dyed-in-the-wool tool watch or a sporty-elegant one you can wear almost anywhere. ○