My Dude Watch

Case Materials Explained

Case material affects durability, weight, scratch resistance, and long-term wear. Here's a simple breakdown so you know what you're really getting — especially under $500.

316L vs 904L Stainless Steel

316L: The industry standard. Strong corrosion resistance, affordable, easy to machine, and used by most brands. 904L: Higher corrosion resistance and slightly brighter polish. Harder to machine and more expensive. For most wearers, the real-world performance difference is small.

Titanium Grades Explained

Grade 2 Titanium: Lightweight, strong, and corrosion resistant. Softer than steel and can show surface marks more easily. Grade 5 Titanium: Alloyed for greater strength and scratch resistance. Often used in higher-performance sport watches. Both grades are significantly lighter than stainless steel.

Bronze Cases

Bronze develops a natural patina over time, darkening and changing color with exposure to air and moisture. Highly corrosion resistant but visually evolves. Ideal for collectors who enjoy character and aging.

DLC (Diamond-Like Carbon) Coatings

DLC is an extremely hard carbon-based coating applied to steel cases. It increases surface hardness and provides a deep black finish. Very scratch resistant, but deep impacts can reveal steel underneath.

Hardened Steel Treatments (Traska-Style Hardening)

Some brands use proprietary hardening processes that strengthen the surface of the steel itself. This improves scratch resistance without adding a coating layer. Unlike coatings, hardened steel treatments won’t chip because the material itself is strengthened.