



# GRAF VON FABER-CASTELL

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## The Aztecs

### Pen of the Year 2022

*The Graf von Faber-Castell Collection has presented a Pen of the Year fountain pen made from especially exclusive materials every year since 2003. The edition has now taken a special place in the hearts of luxury writing culture aficionados. Each limited edition tells the tales of eras and peoples whose deeds shaped the development of humanity.*



The Pen of the Year 2022 is inspired by the culture, aesthetics and religious rites of the Aztecs. Their mighty empire was based on the Aztec alliance of three city states, created in 1428 in what is now Mexico. It produced impressive works of art, a modern political system and a creation myth full of legends that still fascinates people to this day.

The metal barrel of the Pen of the Year 2022, with its anthracite grey Diamond Like Carbon coating, showcases a skull pattern reminiscent of the walls made of rows of skulls in the Templo Mayor – a place where the Aztecs offered up human sacrifices to their gods in order to ensure the sun still rose.

The writing instrument's grip is made of dark, smooth obsidian. This volcanic rock, which was used to make arrowheads and swords, also had a spiritual meaning for the Aztecs and was used as protection against evil spirits, for example.

Turquoise adorns the end caps of the Pen of the Year – a gemstone honoured by the Aztecs as one of their most valuable treasures. The engraved relief in the stone depicts the eagle, or possibly the feather-clad god of the underworld, and embodies the power and aesthetics associated with it.

The grooved cap, reminiscent of the shape of the cactus, also resurrects the spirit of the Aztecs: according to the prophecy, the Aztecs were to find their new home in the place where an eagle sitting on a cactus was eating a snake. Thus, the cap is evocative of the place where the people settled around 1320 in accordance with the prophecy: what is now Mexico City.

The 18 carat magnum gold nib of the fountain pen, coated with ruthenium and run in by hand, promises a unique writing experience. This year's Pen of the Year exclusive edition 2022 "The Aztecs" is limited to 375 fountain pens and 125 rollerball pens. Each one is presented in a black, highly polished wooden case. The individually numbered unique pieces come with a certificate signed by Count Charles von Faber-Castell to certify the limitation.

## Aztec history and culture



### **SUN STONE**

*Numerous Aztec creation myths revolve around the creation of the Earth. One of them involves the historic 24-tonne Stone of the Five Suns, which was found near the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlán, the capital city of the Aztec Empire. The symbols on it divide the cosmic age into five cycles, each of which was ruled by a “sun”: the Jaguar Sun, Wind Sun, Rain Sun, Water Sun and – our current world – the Earthquake Sun.*

### **WRITING AND CULTURE: Codices**

The Aztecs used codices to record their artistic pictorial manuscripts which children were taught at an early age in school. Boys and girls, regardless of status, could attend school. The People of the Sun documented historical events, calendar dates, information about tributes and ancestries as well as the Earth’s creation myth in the form of recurring colourful pictographs.

### **BEGINNING OF CREATION**

*According to the Aztec creation myth, since the beginning of time there were four worlds, and therefore four suns, before the world we have today. They were all created and destroyed by divine power. In the beginning, Ōmeteōtl (OME), known as the ‘mother and father of the gods’, created the first four deities, Xipe Totec (XIP), Tezcatlipoca (TEZ), Quetzalcōātl (QUE) and Huītzilōpōchtli (HUI), from the void of the universe. Each one of them was expected to rule over a point on the compass. In the myth, Tezcatlipoca (TEZ) and Quetzalcōātl (QUE) join forces to kill the crocodile earth monster Cipactli (CIP). Heaven, Earth and the Underworld ultimately emerged from this deed. Quetzalcōātl (QUE) and Huītzilōpōchtli (HUI) were destined to rule this new world.*

## **VOLCANIC AND GLASSY: Obsidian**

Dark, glassy and smooth – obsidian is a naturally occurring volcanic glass created when lava cools rapidly. The grip of the Pen of the Year 2022 is made of this cool, matte stone. Aztec commoners made swords, spearheads and arrowheads out of this sharp-edged matter. In mythology, Tezcatlipoca (TEZ), the god of the north, wears jaguar garments and carries an obsidian mirror and a tecpatl knife made of black obsidian.

### *JAGUAR SUN*

*Human giants populated this first world in the era of the Jaguar Sun, which was personified by Tezcatlipoca (TEZ). These human giants could tear out trees with their bare hands. New gods were created, including the water gods Tlaloc (TLA), the god of rain and earthly fertility, and Chalchiuhtlicue (CHA), the goddess of lakes, rivers and oceans. However, a fight erupted between Quetzalcōātl (QUE) and Tezcatlipoca (TEZ), during which Quetzalcōātl (QUE) knocked Tezcatlipoca (TEZ) out of the sky and into the sea. In his fury, Tezcatlipoca (TEZ) transformed into a mighty jaguar and commanded his pack of jaguars to devour all human giants, thus ending the world of the Jaguar Sun.*

## **TURQUOISE AND FEATHERS: The world of the dead**

Mictlāntēcutli (MIC) – the god of the dead – adorns the end piece of the Pen of the Year 2022. According to myth, when the world was created, the gods divided it into the heavens, the Earth and the underworld. Depictions of Mictlāntēcutli (MIC) portray him as a skull wearing a headdress adorned with owl feathers. Skeletons were considered a symbol of fertility, health and excess. Decorated skulls still play a key role in Mexican culture today, particularly on the Day of the Dead. Feathers, especially from owls, hummingbirds and parrots, were even more highly valued than gold. The engraved turquoise set into the end piece represents this god of the dead and the power and look associated with him.

### *WIND SUN*

*In the second sun cycle, ruled over by Quetzalcōātl (QUE), the Earth was populated by people who were not very civilised. They even stopped worshipping their gods. In response, the god Tezcatlipoca (TEZ) transformed these animalistic beings into monkeys. However, his former adversary Quetzalcōātl (QUE), also known as the feathered serpent, had truly adored the flawed people. So much so that, in a fit of rage, he unleashed a mighty whirlwind that blew all the monkeys away, thus ending the world of the Wind Sun.*

## **TEMPLES AND SACRIFICES: Skulls**

The charcoal-grey barrel of the Pen of the Year, which has a diamond-like carbon coating, has a military look to it. The walls found in Templo Mayor, which were made of rows of skulls, are the inspiration behind this design. These human sacrifices came from the flower wars – planned and coordinated battles in which Eagle warriors and Jaguar warriors were the elites. The Aztecs held ceremonies to offer the sacrifices to their gods, especially Tlaloc (TLA) and Huītzilōpōchtli (HUI), who both have shrines in a pyramid at Templo Mayor dedicated to them. To this day, “tzompantli” (skull racks) can be found in many historical buildings throughout Central America.

## ***RAIN SUN***

*In the third sun cycle, it was the turn of Tlaloc (TLA), the powerful god of rain, to rule. He decided whether to bestow plentiful harvests or droughts that plagued the land upon Earth. Crestfallen because Tezcatlipoca (TEZ) seduced and stole his wife Xochiquetzal (XOC), Tlaloc sank into deep anguish. He left plant life to wither and a huge drought swept across the world. People begged for rain, which stoked Tlaloc's anger. He sent a fierce rain of fire, which scorched the entire world. Nevertheless, some people shape-shifted into birds and were able to flee. This marked the end of the Rain Sun cycle.*

## **GEMSTONE AND WATER: Turquoise**

As one of their most valuable treasures, the Aztecs adored the rare turquoise gemstone. It is set into the Pen of the Year 2022 in the form of small discs, one in the cap top and one in the barrel's end piece. The blue-green stone was highly prized by the Aztecs, who used it to decorate masks, knives and shields as well as for ritual purposes. The Aztecs worshipped the god Xiuhtecuhtli (XIU) as the "Turquoise Lord". He was married to Chalchiuhtlicue (CHA); goddess of lakes, rivers and oceans. Water was the most valuable commodity for the Aztecs, whose culture was considered highly advanced: They built dams, aqueducts, canal systems and planted artificial islands called "chinampas". This was how they supplied their huge population with food and drinking water.

## ***WATER SUN***

*In the fourth sun cycle, Chalchiuhtlicue (CHA) ruled, the wife of Xiuhtecuhtli (XIU) and Tlaloc (TLA). The water goddess was concerned with the welfare of the Aztecs. However, the treacherous Tezcatlipoca (TEZ) wounded her by alleging she was faking her benevolence for her own personal gain. Crushed, Chalchiuhtlicue (CHA) exacted her revenge by unleashing 52 years of rainfall, which caused a devastating flood in which everyone on Earth either drowned or turned into a fish. This marked the end of the fourth sun cycle.*

## **EAGLE AND CACTUS: Mexico City**

The god Huītzilōpōchtli (HUI) decreed that the Aztecs should seek a new home in the place where an eagle sits on a cactus devouring a snake. After 200 years of exploration, they spotted the prophesied image in the marshy Lake Texcoco. The grooved shape of the cap on the Pen of the Year 2022 represents that prickly pear cactus, which was growing on stony ground in the middle of the lake. The eagle is engraved in the turquoise disc in the end of the cap. The place where the Aztec people settled in around 1320 after following the prophecy is now one of the largest cities in the world: Mexico City.

## ***EARTHQUAKE SUN***

*Quetzalcōātl (QUE) would not accept the destruction of his people and created new ones. Huītzilōpōchtli's (HUI) "Earthquake Sun" illuminated the sky. Ever since, he has been engaged in a battle with Coyolxāuhqui (COY), the goddess of the moon and stars. To offer Huītzilōpōchtli (HUI) strength, the Aztecs brought him human sacrifices to eat. If the sacrifices did not happen or the people fell from grace, this fifth sun would turn black, and the world would be destroyed by a major earthquake.*

## ***LASTING RELICS***

*Once the Aztecs found the prophesied island in Lake Texcoco, they took on the name Mexica at the behest of Huītzilōpōchtli (HUI) and founded their capital city, Tenochtitlán, in what is now Mexico City. With the Aztec Triple Alliance, they established the Aztec Empire in the 14th century, which lasted until it was conquered by the Spanish in 1521. The eagle from the prophecy, who sits on a cactus devouring a snake, still adorns the Mexican flag to this day.*





## **The Aztecs**

### **Pen of the Year 2022**

#### **Fountain pen technical data**

<b>Introduction and delivery</b>	from 02 May 2022
<b>Metal parts</b>	Diamond Like carbon coating
<b>Nib</b>	18 carat magnum gold nib with black ruthenium coating
<b>Nib widths</b>	M, F, B, BB
<b>Mechanism</b>	Plunger mechanism
<b>Weight</b>	approx. 83 g
<b>Total length</b>	approx. 135.6 mm
<b>Production</b>	375 pieces
<b>Price</b>	€5,800.00



**The Aztecs**  
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**Rollerball pen technical data**

<b>Introduction and delivery</b>	from 02 May 2022
<b>Metal parts</b>	Diamond Like carbon coating
<b>Lead</b>	Magnum format, ruby ball M
<b>Weight</b>	approx. 85 g
<b>Total length</b>	approx. 135.6 mm
<b>Production</b>	125 pieces
<b>Price</b>	€5,500.00