

MULTICHANNEL

Omega renews Golf in Dubai partnership to support sport in Middle East

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Omega's Seamaster Aqua Terra "Golf" models

By JEN KING

Swiss watchmaker Omega is continuing to support the golfing industry in the Middle East by extending its partnership with Golf in Dubai.

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Through the partnership, Omega will act as the title sponsor of the Dubai Desert Classic and the Dubai Ladies Masters through 2017. Omega's renewal of its partnership shows consumers that the brand is invested in developing golf in the region.

"Omega is demonstrating a very discerning approach with its continued investment in this particular event," said Sophie Terrisse, CEO of [STC Associates](#), New York.

"It sets the brand apart as a region-focused ambassador contributing to the endorsement of UAE as a destination, but also further carved its presence in one of the fastest-growing sports in the Middle East, while countering Rolex omnipresence in the sport and in the region," she said.

Ms. Terrisse is not affiliated with Omega, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Omega was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

Teeing off

The watchmaker shared its partnership agreement with Golf in Dubai using its social media accounts. Postings on Facebook and Twitter announced the news to ensure that Omega's core consumers are kept up-to-date about the watchmaker's happenings.



Omega tweet announcing the renewed partnership with Golf in Dubai

Omega included a link on the postings that landed on an information page regarding the Golf in Dubai partnership. Although not all Omega fans are golfers, sharing the news may generate increased interest in the watchmaker's involvements in the sport's world.

Best known as the official timekeeper of the Olympic Games ([see story](#)), Omega's three-year agreement with Golf in Dubai touts the watchmaker's support of golf through its tour sponsorships and brand ambassadors.

According to a statement made by Raynald Aeschlimann, vice president and international sales director of Omega, "golf is one of the fastest growing sports in the Middle East, where the number of courses and the number of rounds played each year have gone up exponentially." He also noted that in March 2012, the United Arab Emirates recorded 54,365 rounds play in that month.



Branded Omega and Golf in Dubai golf balls

With the popularity of golf growing in the region, Omega's announcement is relevant to market trends. Also, the announcement is timely as Golf in Dubai's Omega Desert Classic celebrated its 25th anniversary earlier this year.

Omega's history with golf includes matches during the Olympics and European and Asian tour and tournament sponsorships, including the PGA Championship and the Ryder Cup in the United States. Omega has also endorsed professional golfers such as Greg Norman, Rory McIlroy and Stacy Lewis.

In addition to Omega, Golf in Dubai is supported by co-sponsors CNN, Mercedes-Benz and Dubai Duty Free.

To further strengthen its commitment to the world of golfing, Omega is promoting its Seamaster Aqua Terra “Golf” timepiece to celebrate brand ambassador Ms. Lewis’ achievement of securing a leading spot in the LPGA rankings.



Facebook post congratulating Stacy Lewis and promoting the Omega Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf

The post includes a computer rendering of golf clubs draped with two Omega Seamasters. A click-through on the link lands on an introduction page for the Golf edition.

Omega’s Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf was created to “celebrate [the watchmaker’s] expanding presence in the world of golf.” The second section delves into the watch’s characteristics such as a minute track with a central seconds hand of green varnish and a black dial with the “Teak Concept” pattern.

The Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf also includes a stainless steel bracelet or a brown Barénia leather strap. To highlight the use of Barénia leather, the site includes a simulator to show the consumer how the strap’s colors change with wear.

When first bought, the strap will be light brown, but overtime and through use, the leather will darken. A slide bar allows the consumer to show the natural aging process.



Slide bar simulator for the Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf strap

Omega’s golf series also includes a Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf created for the Ryder Cup. Since it takes place in the U.S., Omega designed the timepiece with blue hour and minute hands, 18 karat yellow gold seconds hand and red designed elements with a

caseback engraving of the Ryder Cup emblem.

Both watches are shown in greater detail through a 35-second video included on the site.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/ULzjsBK5WAQ](https://www.youtube.com/embed/ULzjsBK5WAQ)

Omega Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf Master Co-Axial collection

The final aspect of the site shows all three versions of the Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf edition with mention of Omega's involvement in golf "on practically every continent." Each watch includes a link to discover the model, which redirects to a product page that does not allow for ecommerce.



Omega's Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf series of three timepieces

Simultaneously introducing the Seamaster Aqua Terra Golf with the renewal of the partnership with Golf in Dubai will likely spark interest in the timepiece and result in sales in the region.

"Omega's Seamaster is a classic," Ms. Terrisse said. "The Aqua Terra is a perfect interpretation of the golf course and its water pounds, but the model itself doesn't make as much of a statement as the brand commitment to the sport does.

"However, it addresses how Omega applies its craftsmanship and innovation to create a purpose-tailored horologic experience for the golfer worldwide," she said. "The representation of the natural aging of the Barénia strap is an interesting take on 'maturing your skin in the game.' It's a smart and light note that makes the product less predictable. Smart."

On the green

Sports sponsorships create an opportunity for brands to be visible to a mixture of affluent and aspirational consumers. Golf, in particular, lets brands interact with fans for sustained periods.

For example, BMW of North America increased excitement for the Professional Golfers' Association's BMW Championship by incorporating the i3 model into different areas of the event Sept. 10-15.

Golfers Rory McIlroy and Gary Woodland competed in an i3 driving challenge and the first player to hit a hole-in-one on the 17th hole received an i3. Since the i series will play a primary role in the brand's future, finding ways to incorporate it into traditional projects and events is helping the brand get the word out ([see story](#)).

Also, U.S. fashion label Ralph Lauren created a golf travel package for its Father's Day gift guide to offer consumers a branded experience.

Ralph Lauren's Ultimate Polo Father's Day Gift, valued at \$9,000, included a round of golf with professional golfer Jonathan Byrd and a stay at the Sea Island Resort & Spa in Georgia. For fashion labels, providing an experience beyond apparel and accessories allows a brand to connect on a deeper level with consumers ([see story](#)).

A market specific endorsement can create localized brand awareness.

"Visibility is key, but Omega has also wisely set itself apart by associating the brand with some of the most fascinating women in the world," Ms. Terrisse said.

"Extending this approach by hand picking events like the Dubai Desert Classic and Ladies Masters highlights Omega's strategy to only associate with the most exclusive, but also the most boundary-breaking," she said.

"It's an intelligent balance – which probably has great impact in market."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/PU6L3aUJSYg](https://www.youtube.com/embed/PU6L3aUJSYg)

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