

COMMERCE

Ulysse Nardin collaborates to create new powerboat

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Ulysse Nardin's Marine Diver Midnight Express

By KAYSORIN

Swiss watch manufacturer Ulysse Nardin is branching out in a new direction with the release of a powerboat in collaboration with extreme-performance boat maker Midnight Express.

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The brand unveiled the new boat along with a special-edition, nautical timepiece to match. Citing its dual inspiration of the need to innovate and the majesty of the sea, Ulysse Nardin announced that it is excited to make this foray into a new field.

"It might not be exciting, but it is unusual," said Al Ries, founder and chairman of [Ries & Ries](#), a Roswell, GA-based marketing strategy consultancy. "Normally these things work in reverse.

"Expensive brands like automobiles are used on relatively inexpensive products to give the inexpensive products a "high-end" image. Ferrari perfumes and colognes, for example," he said.

"Midnight Express powerboats are usually more expensive than Ulysse Nardin watches. I suspect that Midnight Express felt their brand needed some additional firepower, so they

did the deal with Ulysse Nardin.”

Mr. Ries is not affiliated with Ulysse Nardin, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Ulysse Nardin was unable to respond by press deadline.

Time for change

Ulysse Nardin is well known in the world of horology for its impeccably crafted nautical watches. The decision to move into a different industry was inspired by both brands dedication to improving marine technology.

Additionally, the brand remarked in its press statement that the owners of Midnight Express are fans and collectors of Ulysse Nardin who were thrilled to work with the watchmaker. Both Ulysse Nardin and Midnight Express are at the top of their respective industries, and the pairing makes sense in that way.



Ulysse Nardin's powerboat in collaboration with Midnight Express

“In one sense they are a good fit,” Mr. Ries said. “Expensive products for consumers with a lot of money.

“Nobody really needs an expensive watch or an expensive boat. These are playthings for the rich and famous.”

One of Midnight Express’s flagship 43’ Open model was chosen for the partnership. The boat will use a Quad high performance GT 577 motor and will be painted Ulysse Nardin’s signature blue and gold.



The inside of the boat is decorated with the Ulysse Nardin logo

The Ulysse Nardin logo will cover the hullsides, upholstery and flooring of the boat, giving the brand some added publicity for this endeavor. Ulysse Nardin also shared the announcement of the new boat on its Facebook page and Web site, helping fans get the information first hand.

In addition to the boat itself, Ulysse Nardin is also releasing a special-edition nautical timepiece inspired by Midnight Express and the collaboration. It is called the Marine Diver Midnight Express and is crafted in stainless steel with rubber straps.



The Marine Diver Midnight Express watch was created to accompany the powerboat

The watch has a nautical theme with wave patterns and seafaring stripes to give it a distinct marine style. It has a Seven Marine logo on the dial at 7 o'clock.

This collaboration will likely bring Ulysse Nardin to the attention of more people throughout the world. By partnering with another brand from a different industry, the watchmaker is appealing to a new range of consumers.



The Ulysse Nardin logo also decorates the sides of the powerboat

Partner up

The Swiss watch manufacturer has been getting out its name with other exclusive collections and special initiatives. Ulysse Nardin celebrated the yachting and competitive sailing industry with the creation of a limited-edition timepiece commemorating the sailing competition that launched America's Cup.

The timepieces reflect the unique design of the schooner sailing vessel, "America", the namesake of the America's Cup sailing competition. Ulysse Nardin was able to tout its own innovations in watchmaking by paralleling its timepieces to advancements in sailing technology ([see story](#)).

Ulysse Nardin has also used collaborations to gain publicity and create interesting new products. The brand upped its appeal to timepiece enthusiasts and baseball fans by tapping Randy Johnson as its new ambassador in 2012, a partnership that will bring about a limited-edition timepiece called The Big Unit.

The Big Unit, taken from Mr. Johnson's nickname on the field, was available in late 2012 or early 2013. The partnership was officially announced in Phoenix ([see story](#)).

It is important for Ulysse Nardin to continue with these initiatives. Partnerships can provide much needed publicity to increase brand awareness.

"It helps to build the Ulysse Nardin brand name which is not very well known," Mr. Ries said. "It doesn't do much for Midnight Express though.

"I would think Midnight Express needs a good marketing strategy to build its brand into a dominant position."

Final Take

Kay Sorin, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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