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Chopard champions French filmmakers for digital film festival

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Logo for My French Film Festival 2016

By JEN KING

Swiss jewelry brand Chopard is strengthening its ties to cinema through a sponsorship role for My French Film Festival.

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Opened as of Jan. 18, My French Film Festival is the first film festival to be conducted online rather than in theaters, making Chopard's involvement a nod toward innovation. Luxury brands often serve as patrons to artistic happenings such as film festivals and art exhibitions as a way to connect with consumers through the humanities instead of product pushes.

"Timepieces are complicated, hand-crafted and need to be 'just right,'" said Dave Meeker, vice president at **Isobar US**. "Aficionados know the difference, and Chopard's brand is all about the nuance of craftsmanship and luxury.

"Every component, every part of the process Everything they do leads to an exceptional product," he said. "This is not dissimilar to films and those that really love filmmaking from an intellectual perspective and have an appreciation for the complexities in storytelling, set design, character development all of the elements that comprise excellence in cinema.

"What might seem unrelated is actually related quite a bit the mentality of the aficionado spans subject matter, and Chopard's involvement makes a lot of sense to that degree."

Mr. Meeker is not affiliated with Chopard, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Chopard did not respond by press deadline.

In the director's chair

In the days following the Golden Globe Awards on Jan. 10, Chopard took to social media to showcase the jewelry and watches worn to the ceremony by Hollywood celebrities. Those who wore Chopard jewelry included Jennifer Lawrence, Julianne Moore, Michael Fassbender, Jane Fonda, Lola Kirke and Saoirse Ronan, among others.

On Twitter, seen among Golden Globe recaps, Chopard shared a promotional post for My French Film Festival, but did not share its role as sponsor. Prior to this post, Chopard had staged a brief countdown to the start of the online film festival.

In one such countdown post, Chopard linked to a Vimeo-housed preview for My French Film Festival. In the teaser,

international directors partaking in the film festival attempt to quickly say "My French Film Festival," in English, which proved for many to be a humorous tongue-twister.

My French Film Festival - 6th edition - official trailer from Unifrance Films on Vimeo.

Now in its sixth edition, My French Film Festival begins on Jan. 18 and runs through Feb. 18. The online-only film festival will screen 10 French feature films and 10 French short films in 10 languages. Unlike traditional film festivals held in Cannes, France or New York, My French Film Festival online access allows international film enthusiasts to attend and become a part of the festivities.

But, for film lovers who do not want to sacrifice the in-theater experience, My French Film Festival will also hold screenings in venues around the world. Likewise, the My French Film Festival has also partnered with international airlines to screen the featured films throughout the year as on-board entertainment.

Viewing of the short films is complimentary in all countries. The viewing for a feature film is \$2.18, with a festival pack offered for \$6.56, if viewers are located outside of France.

My French Film festival is the 1st film festival to be online <https://t.co/sOAC38tINM>. Opening next Monday [#MYFF pic.twitter.com/gzagQOU8ti](https://twitter.com/gzagQOU8ti)

Chopard Official (@Chopard) [January 14, 2016](#)

Each year My French Film Festival offers specific countries and regions free viewing access. This year, My French Film Festival has extended this offer to Latin America, India, Poland, Russia, Africa and Romania.

At the conclusion of My French Film Festival in February, three prizes will be awarded to filmmakers participating. This includes the Chopard Filmmakers' Prize, the Lacoste Audience Prize, voted upon by international Web viewers, and the International Press Prize,

The Chopard Filmmakers' Prize and the International Press Prize will be determined by a jury held in Paris. The prize-winning films will be screened by Air France on-board for a period of six months beginning in July 2016.

Chopard loves cinema

During the Cannes Film Festival, Chopard serves as an official partner of the event and is responsible for the creation of the handcrafted Palme D'Or trophy, made by the jeweler since 1998. Last year, Chopard also put together a blog post dedicated to the Palme D'Or, the most prestigious award given at the film festival ([see story](#)).

The film festival has also given Chopard a platform to show off its jewelry in a way that does not seem overtly branded or staged.

In 2013, Chopard feted its sustainable luxury initiative called "The Journey" by releasing the first two ethically made pieces on the red carpet at the 66th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes.

The Swiss jeweler worked with consultancy firm Eco-Age founder Livia Firth and the organization's Green Carpet Challenge program to kick-start its sustainable line. Chopard unveiled the first two pieces during a celebrity-packed event while consumers followed along on the brand's Cannes Film Festival Tumblr account ([see story](#)).

As for digital film festivals, the concept is gaining ground with brand's organizing their own initiatives.

For instance, LVMH-owned Champagne house Mot & Chandon called on filmmakers to celebrate its 25th anniversary with the Golden Globes.

For the last 25 years, Mot has been the official Champagne of the Golden Globes, positioning the house as the celebratory beverage and furthering its shared mantra of #MoetMoments. The Champagne house often asks consumers to document their own #MoetMoments, and now Mot hosted its first Mot Moment Online Film Festival ([see story](#)).

The online film festival model may be a nod toward the future of brand sponsorships.

"What Myfrenchfillmfestival.com has been doing is interesting, and with online video streaming now being ubiquitous many of the challenges of delivering high-quality video content globally have been ironed out," Mr. Meeker said. "Its concept is to take a localized, exclusive event and open it to the world but not lowering the bar on

the content they provide. Sponsorship of the event includes both Lacoste and Renault as well as Chopard brands that are well positioned to be of interest to this audience.

"How effective will this sponsorship be? That really depends on the amount of investment and creativity that Myfrenchfilmfestival.com puts into their awareness and online marketing campaigns. Clearly the audience to 'attend' this virtual event will be more tech-savvy and quite possibly skew younger, but reaching them and getting them to participate is the challenge," he said. "What would be interesting to see is how Chopard and the festival marketing teams could incorporate Chopard's brand into the festival.

"If we think back to the very first television commercial in the United States (July 1, 1941), where Bulova took the risk to promote its watches within an unproven medium, it could be an exciting opportunity for Chopard to get really creative and serve as more than a logo tacked onto Web pages."

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