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## Tag Heuer puts horologists in driver's seat via NYT VR app content

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Promotional image for Tag Heuer content on NYT VR

By JEN KING

Swiss watchmaker Tag Heuer is crafting a legend with the help of the New York Times' virtual reality mobile application.

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The NYT VR app puts readers at the center of New York Times' content, including what is produced by its brand partners, through immersive 360-degree video experiences that allow for an interactive narrative. LVMH-owned Tag Heuer is using the NYT VR app's storytelling capabilities to share the heritage of its Carrera timepiece with New York Times' audience, showing both its placement within the overall watch industry and its modernity.

"Virtual reality allows brands to tell their stories in an immersive and interactive way, which is exponentially more effective than any 2D medium," said Abi Mandelbaum, CEO and cofounder of [YouVisit](#).

"What separates virtual reality from any other form of communication is the fact that you're giving viewers the opportunity to explore and control how they engage with the experience, making it customized to each person," he said.

"When it comes to bringing awareness to a brand, no other tool makes as massive an impact as virtual reality does because immersive content goes beyond telling a story, enabling viewers to actually explore and interact with it."

Mr. Mandelbaum is not affiliated with Tag Heuer, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Tag Heuer** did not respond by press deadline.

**In the driver's seat**

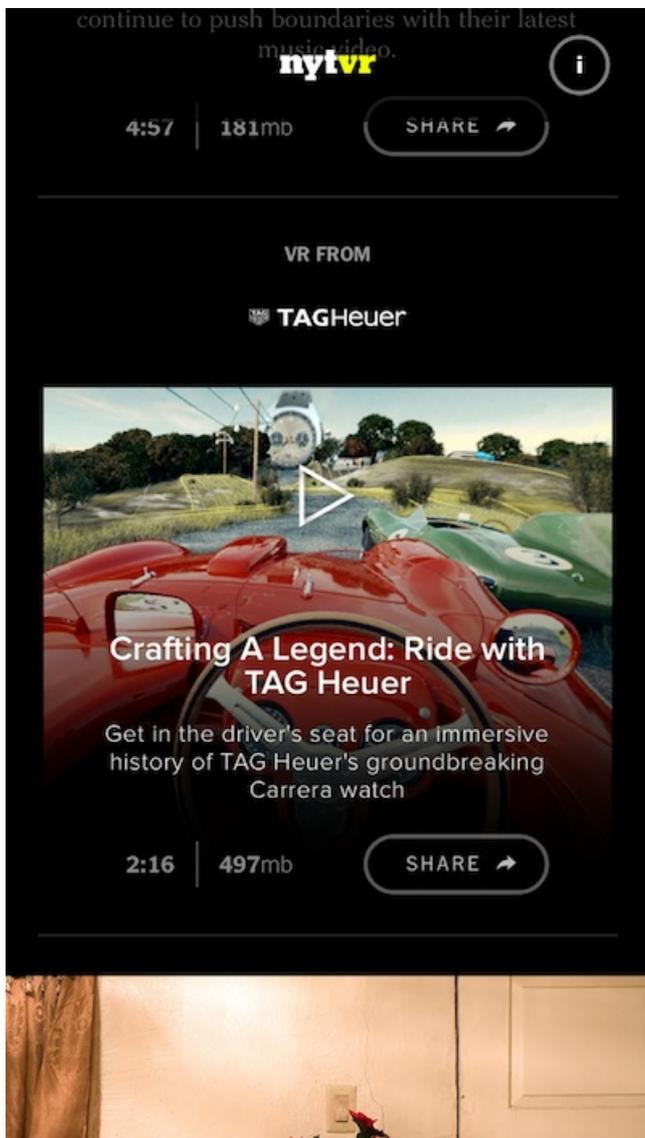
The NYT VR app brings virtual reality to the everyday consumer through the use of their smartphone or Google Cardboard, a virtual reality viewer.

When the app is downloaded, consumers can select from journalistic content provided by the New York Times or choose content created by the newspaper's brand partners. As of press time, the gallery includes sponsored content by Tag Heuer, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, General Electric and BMW-owned Mini.

Tag Heuer's content, titled "Crafting a Legend: Ride with Tag Heuer," puts viewers in the "driver's seat" to learn the history behind the watchmaker's Carrera watches. Once downloaded, the viewer has the option to view using Google Cardboard or their smartphone paired with headphones.

The 2 minute and 16 second virtual reality experience begins with a voiceover setting the stage and introducing the brand's founder, Jack Heuer, who in 1963 developed a watch inspired by the Pan American automobile race, unknowingly designing a "legend."

Soon, the screen shows an auto race with the viewer controlling the perspective. As the race car drives along, the voiceover tells of different facets of the Carrera's heritage such as Tag Heuer being the first watchmaker to sponsor a Formula 1 race.



*Screen shot of Tag Heuer's content on NYT VR*

Fast forwarding to 1985, the virtual reality experience shares details of Heuer's merger with Techniques d'Avant Garde (TAG), and the development of Carrera chronographs. As the viewer steers the experience, various models of Carrera timepieces are shown.

As the experience continues the viewer is taught about the Calibre 1887, an in-house movement. Through virtual reality, the viewer is able to move the screen around to see the movements in a way traditional video does not allow, thus creating a more in-depth experience with the brand's products.

When the virtual reality experience ends, the viewer can select share or visit Tag Heuer's Web site without leaving the NYT VR app. Although the landing page is Tag Heuer's home page rather than its product page for the Carrera range, the watchmaker features current content from Baselworld 2016 and all of its watch offerings for men and women are clearly listed.

The free app, available for Apple and Android devices, can be downloaded [here](#) for iOS, and Google Play [here](#).

NYT VR content can be viewed on desktop on the New York Times' [Web site](#).

Living in a virtual world

As marketers begin to expand their storytelling initiatives beyond social media platforms, virtual reality will become

more influential in advertising, although only certain sectors will make it a priority.

With major brands including Coca-Cola and McDonald's trying their hand at virtual reality in a bid to connect with younger consumers and leverage mobile in innovative ways, companies are sitting up and taking notice. Although the technology may not be well-suited to every brand, executives in the food, retail, automotive and hospitality industries could hit a marketing home run by taking advantage of inexpensive cardboard packaging and mobile apps to create a memorable augmented viewing experience ([see story](#)).

In addition to its embrace of virtual reality, Tag Heuer is among the small number watchmakers that do not shy away from incorporating Swiss watch know-how with modern technology.

For example, Tag Heuer unveiled its smartwatch through a livestream event held on social media after months of anticipation during last year's Baselworld.



### *Tag Heuer Carrera Connected smartwatch*

The watchmaker announced the Tag Heuer Carrera Connected Watch, a collaboration with Google and Intel, during a press conference. Horologists have argued that for brands looking to dive into the smartwatch conversation, an approach that melds analog with wearable technologies may yield the best response from watch lovers ([see story](#)).

Brand use of virtual reality is likely to continue due to reliance on mobile devices by consumers.

"Tag Heuer's 'Crafting a Legend' virtual reality experience is a great example of what immersive content is all about today," Mr. Mandelbaum said.

"Putting viewers in the driver's seat (literally) to get an in-depth look at the history of the brand and its significance enables the viewer to really get to know the company and develop a more intimate relationship with the brand," he said. "However, to remain relevant in the future, Tag Heuer should consider expanding the capabilities of its content, to enable its viewers to actually interact with virtual reality, not just watch it.

"As I mentioned before, virtual reality is moving toward becoming more interactive, truly putting the viewer in the driver seat and allowing them to control and explore immersive content how they want to."