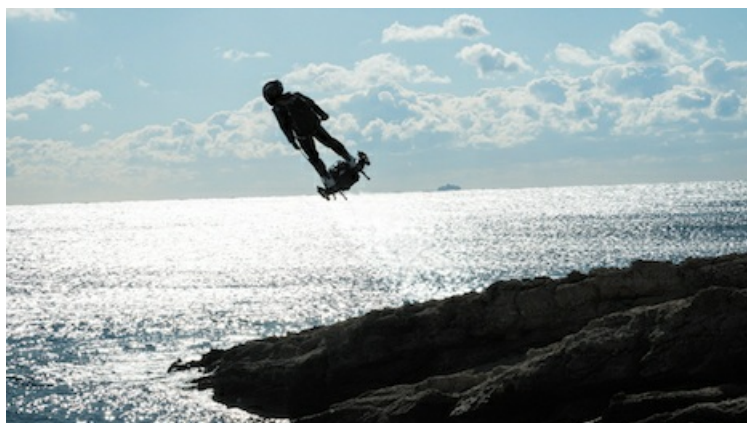


JEWELRY

Breitling redefines aeronautical heritage by sponsoring flying machine

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Mr. Zapata riding his Flyboard Air

By STAFF REPORTS

Swiss watchmaker Breitling is writing a new chapter in its support of aerodynamic accomplishments through a partnership with the maker of a flying hoverboard.

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The brand is sponsoring athlete Franky Zapata's Flyboard Air, an autonomous propulsion unit that allows a rider to soar over water while standing upright on an engine-powered craft. Aviation is at the heart of the Breitling brand positioning, as the watchmaker looks to associate itself with airborne individuals who require technical precision in their timepieces ([see story](#)).

Up in the air

Mr. Zapata began jetskiing at the age of 16, and went on to compete and win many European and global championships.

Desiring a new flying experience, he invented a hydro-propulsion board named the ESH Flyboard that would connect to a jetski, giving the rider the impression of flying. This creation sparked a new sport, which hosts international competitions.



Franky Zapata

The athlete's Zapata Racing company makes a number of hydro-propulsion engine devices.

Taking this idea further, Mr. Zapata launched the Flyboard Air in April. Currently only a prototype model, the hoverboard is able to soar above water independently.

Weighing a little over 40 pounds, the Flyboard Air is powered by six engines, four of which are located under the board and two of which sit on the sides for balance. The rider maneuvers the device, which is slightly larger than a drone, by shifting their body, much like they would steer a Segway.

An additional joystick allows the boarder to adjust the engines' thrust.

Breitling takes to the skies with Franky Zapata on Flyboard Air

On the Flyboard Air, Mr. Zapata holds the Guinness World Record for the longest distance traveled on a flying hoverboard. Despite this accomplishment, he has bigger plans for the board, looking to get the vehicle to travel at almost 100 mph and reach an altitude of about 9,800 feet.

Outside of its use as a recreational device, Mr. Zapata believes the Flyboard Air could have implications for the military, construction jobs and oil rigs.

With hoverboards becoming a trendy item in recent years, innovators have sought to take the transportation device to the next level.

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus continued its "Amazing in Motion" campaign by bringing science fiction alive with a new type of vehicle a hoverboard.

Hoverboards have been part of pop culture since the release of the "Back to the Future" films, and their existence in the real world has been attempted several times, but rarely successfully. Experts in super-conductive technology teamed with Lexus to craft this space-like vehicle for technology-crazed consumers ([see story](#)).