

JEWELRY

Parmigiani opens the book on brand history in digital display

May 23, 2017



Parmigiani Fleurier's Toric Chronometre

By SARAH JONES

Swiss watchmaker Parmigiani Fleurier is inviting consumers inside its founder's mind as it explores the inspirations behind his first timepiece.

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The brand's Toric Chronometre is a modernized recreation of Michel Parmigiani's debut timepiece crafted about two decades ago. Introducing the watches that first premiered during SIHH earlier this year to a digital audience, Parmigiani has created an interactive platform that focuses on the varied influences that shaped the design.

"Parmigiani likely created this interactive exploration of the Toric's inspiration to go beyond simply presenting the information for consumption in an attempt to engage the customer," said Donnie Pacheco, principal at [Clean Channel Consulting, Inc.](#), Seattle.

"Just visiting the page does not provide any information to the customer," he said. "In order to learn more about the design and different elements of the watch and inspiration, a customer must interact with the page and click on different elements and topics to reveal more information and for some, videos.

"This creates a unique experience where the customer seeks out additional information about different elements instead of text or a video explaining everything the brand thinks a customer should know. It allows the customer to explore the novelty in a deeper way."

Mr. Pacheco is not affiliated with [Parmigiani Fleurier](#), but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Parmigiani](#) was reached for comment.

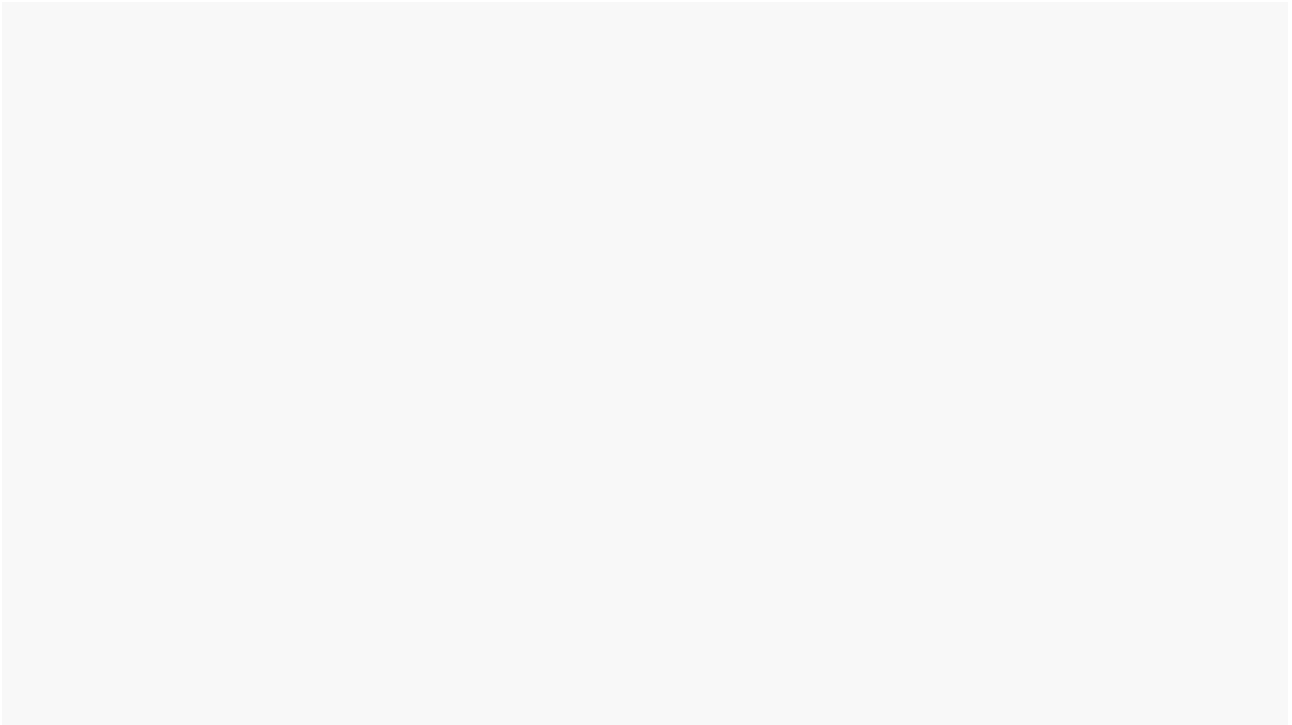
Inspiration board

Mr. Parmigiani began his career in watches as a restoration specialist, founding his own workshop in 1976. Two decades later, in partnership with the Sandoz Family Foundation, the entrepreneur opened his eponymous house.

Now, Parmigiani is delving into Mr. Parmigiani's inspirations through a microsite dedicated to its Toric timepieces.

The microsite opens on a short film, which shows the watchmaker drawing in a notebook. As he does, sketches

appear on the frames beside him, allowing the viewer to see his work.



Lose yourself in the universe of the #Toric Chronomtre and explore Michel Parmigiani's notebook of inspirations. Visit the #ToricExperience at toric.parmigiani.com (link in the bio) #ParmigianiFleurier #weretheretobeonlyone

A post shared by Parmigiani Fleurier (@parmigianifleurier) on May 22, 2017 at 5:55am PDT

After Mr. Parmigiani closes his notebook, the consumer is given the chance to peek inside through a digital wall of his inspirations.

By clicking and dragging, the user can navigate the inspiration board.

Included are references to Fibonacci's golden angle, which makes an appearance in nature, such as the spiral nautilus shell, plants and architecture. Consumers can explore a film that demonstrates the way in which the Parthenon's statue of Athena is translated into the timepiece.



Parmigiani Fleurier's Toric microsite

For those who marvel at mechanics, the microsite includes a document on the technical specifications of the Toric. Also sharing visible details of the timepiece, the brand relays the process by which its white-grained finish is applied to dials by hand using horsehair brushes.

Other references include nods to ancient architecture, a fitting inspiration for the watchmaker who almost became

an architect.

While Parmigiani does not operate its own ecommerce, the brand provides a link to request an in-store appointment, guiding them down the purchase path.

"Opening the lid on the origins of the Toric is an attempt to greater engage the customer and to create a sense of history and story," Mr. Pacheco said. "The interactive exploration invokes Roman Gods, Greek mathematicians and great artists such as Dali.

"The Parmigiani brand may not be that well known to many customers and by sharing the inspiration of the components and design that come from such rich history, it in a way, ties itself to this history," he said. "It takes the customer beyond a simple novelty introduction and gives them the sense that the Toric and brand itself have a long, rich history."

Research development

Forty-five percent of luxury purchases are influenced by what the consumer has discovered digitally, according to a report by WBR Digital.

The "Digital Advantage for Luxury Brands - Director's Report: Luxury Interactive 2015" found that consumers are now using digital channels to peruse brand offerings more than ever before. The consumer journey that begins online has also affected in-store margins with 13 percent of offline luxury sales being generated from digital activity ([see story](#)).

Watches and jewelry in particular tend to see longer decision times than some other hard luxury goods categories. As consumers are conducting their research, providing the backstory behind a particular design or collection can help to create more context.

For example, French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels gave consumers an inside look at its oceanic-inspired Seven Seas high-jewelry collection through a Flipboard story.

The brand used the September 2015 issue of its "A Quest for Beauty" Flipboard magazine to compile imagery, multimedia and text about the line, allowing consumers to pick their own path of exploration. While Van Cleef & Arpels' high-jewelry is not available for purchase online, having this rich content experience may have helped spur in-store visits from consumers ([see story](#)).

"Brands such as Parmigiani that lack a path to purchase through a brand-operated ecommerce site, must understand that while they may not have a direct purchase path, the purchasing journey starts online," Mr. Pacheco said. "The majority of today's customers start their purchasing journey online with research, even though the purchase may ultimately occur offline.

"It is critical for all brands to not only market online and use digital channels in ways that not just present information, but engage customers," he said. "While this digital platform does engage the customer in a unique way, there is no path to purchase clearly stated.

"It is one thing to engage a customer and create an interesting experience, but brands still must let them know how to learn more or where they can see it in person. There is a form that a customer can fill out to learn more, but this creates an unnecessary additional step and simply creates more work for the customer when they could easily be directed somewhere to learn more."