

JEWELRY

Cartier celebrates 100 years of Tank via historical account

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Cartier's Tank turns 100 this year. Image credit: Cartier

By DANNY PARISI

Richemont-owned jeweler Cartier is celebrating one century of its iconic Tank watch with a collection of newly designed timepieces as well as a series of videos highlighting the pieces' history.

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Designed in 1917, the iconic watch was inspired by the silhouettes of French Renault tanks used in World War I. This history is deeply entwined in Cartier's marketing for the watch, highlighting some of the figures from history who have famously worn the watch since its debut a century ago.

History of Tanks

Cartier, like many legacy brands, has used its own long and illustrious history as a marketing tactic time and time again.

As an historic brand, Cartier has decades of history to dip into for nostalgic campaigns centered on the French jeweler's presence at notable events and the historical figures associated with the brand.

One of its most iconic pieces, the rectangular Tank watch, turns 100 this year and Cartier is embracing the nostalgia to promote a new collection of Tanks.

The watch was designed Louis Cartier in 1917 and was inspired by military technology from WWI.



Two of Cartier's Tank lines. Image credit: Cartier

After the war, the watch became incredibly popular, being sported by figures from Princess Diana to Andy Warhol.

In its campaign, Cartier has released a series of videos highlighting some of the influential people who wore Tanks and moments in the watch's history.

For example, one video highlights the watch's debut on the silver screen when actor Rudolph Valentino wore one in the final scene of the 1926 film "The Son of Sheik."

Another video points to the watch's popularity with movie star Gary Cooper, who was often seen wearing a Tank Basculante at public appearances.

The campaign promotes new collections of Tank watches, which currently come in six lines for both men and women ranging from traditional Tanks in line with Mr. Cartier's original design and more modern takes on the classic style.

Nostalgia mining

Cartier Tank's popularity with the Hollywood elite of a bygone era is a well of inspiration the brand has gone back to multiple times.

Recently, Cartier looked to Hollywood for a retro-themed campaign that brings back the 1980s along with its watch, an icon from the decade.

Oscar winner and 2017 Best Director at the Cannes International Film Festival, Sofia Coppola, directed Cartier's latest advertisement in which the eighties decade is rampant. The ad brings back the Panthre de Cartier watch, which was discontinued by the jeweler, but recently reintroduced citing consumer demand ([see story](#)).

Additionally, Cartier's history has made a valuable product in itself as the personal collection of a former owner was recently auctioned off.



Gary Cooper wearing a Tank. Image credit: Cartier

Bonhams New York has been appointed by the former owners of Cartier Paris to auction a collection of fine jewelry during its September sale.

During Bonhams' sale Sept. 19 in New York, the auction house will put the personal collection of Gloria "Gigi" Guggenheim Danziger under the hammer. Due to the lots' connection to Cartier's heritage and the collection's provenance, Bonhams expects the pieces to capture buyers' interest, as those with interesting backstories often sell best ([see story](#)).

Cartier's 100th anniversary of the Tank watch shows that legacy brands can always mine their pasts for inspirations in the future. While Cartier is relying on nostalgia and recognition of past watches, the new collections show that it is unafraid of experimenting with the designs to offer modern takes on the classics.

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