

WATCHES AND JEWELRY

## Ulysse Nardin celebrates sponsorship of solo yachting race in bold campaign

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*Ulysse Nardin is the official timekeeper of the Vende Globe. Image credit: Ulysse Nardin*

By ELLEN KELLEHER

Swiss watchmaker **Ulysse Nardin** is casting a light on the capricious battle between man and nature in a new advertising campaign to showcase its sponsorship of the **Vende Globe**, the hazardous solo sailing race around the world.

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In **#Odyssey**, the drama of the race, known as the "Everest of the Seas," is laid out in a series of six short videos. The footage is aimed at positioning the watchmaker's brand in the dare-devilish realm of extreme sports.

"It's a unique campaign in that it presents a true battle between those featured and the narrator versus the sea and the fact that there is no product placement or mention beyond the fact the clip is presented by Ulysse Nardin and promotes a single hashtag (**#odyssey**)," said Donnie Pacheco, founder/CEO of Donnie P. Consulting, Seattle.

Race in focus

The brief videos explore the high stakes of the race, which runs from November until February, and begins and ends in Les Sables-d'Olonne, a French seaside town in Vende.

The mysterious narrator serves as a modern-day Odysseus who speaks in rhyme.

*#Odyssey is a six-part video series*

"We cannot sail on promises that are empty, frail and weak," he says, as the waves lash the sailboats anchored at Les Sables-d'Olonne. "It's draining but we're strong."

To widen its audience, Ulysse Nardin is also unveiling the footage via its Instagram and Twitter accounts. The series does not focus on the brand's timepieces, instead spotlighting the endurance and precision required for participants to have a successful race.

In the stark black opening shot of the first video, bells ring and crowds cheer as the title **#Odyssey** flashes across the screen in white followed by Ulysse Nardin's name.

Momentum builds as the race gathers pace.

The second video, "Alone Aboard," homes in on a skipper's sense of isolation as he sets his course in the open ocean.

"Now, it's just me against the goaded sea," the narrator says. "There are no borders to this solitude."

In the third video, "Unchained Elements," the seas grow fiercer. It appears as if the sea is winning the battle against the skipper.

"The murky, merciless ravaging tide that have come to destroy, to disrupt as we strive," rhymes the narrator.

The seas appear to be winning the battle. A skipper is rescued by helicopter in the fifth video.

In the final chapter, "Rise from the Storm," scores of boats re-enter the harbor in France and victory is declared.

"It's the thirst to win. The thrill remains," concludes the narrator. "We bask in light, but feel the rain."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Alone, against the elements, no team to talk through tactic,  
sailors are by far the only captain. #VG2020 #VendeGlobe  
@VendeeGlobe2020 #UlysseNardin

A post shared by Ulysse Nardin (@ulyssenardinofficial) on Oc...

*The watchmaker is sharing #Odyssey chapters on Instagram*

The first Vende Globe was held in 1989, and since 1992 it has taken place every four years. The 2020 race is scheduled to begin on Nov. 8.

During the race, monohull yachts sail from the French coast to a north-south circumnavigation of the seas which stretches for 40,075 kilometers. The solo skippers receive no support or technical assistance despite icy conditions, howling gales, torrents of rain and mountainous waves.

At stake this year is the prospect of breaking the record of 74 days 3 hours 35 minutes and 46 seconds set by winner Armel Le Clac'h in 2017.

Established by Mr. Ulysse Nardin in 1846, the Kering-owned watchmaker has developed an extensive line of marine watches and deck chronometers "inspired by the sea," making its sponsorship of Vende Globe a natural fit.

"This brand of Swiss haute horlogerie has been built internationally through its association with the marine world, said Yves Auvinet, president of the Vende Globe, in a statement earlier this year. "It is therefore natural that the Vende Globe, the international reference for solo ocean racing and Uysse Nardin come together to realize this partnership

for the next edition."

### Branding partnerships

It is common for luxury watchmakers to partner with sporting events, teams and athletes as official timing partners and sponsors. This includes sailing events, which attract affluent audiences.

Back in January, Ulysse Nardin also supported the yacht designer Dan Lenard as he crossed from Spain to Miami alone on a 33-foot boat with no modern technology. By making the voyage, Mr. Lenard brought attention to the oceans and documented the pollution in the seas and coastlines ([see story](#)).

In 2017, British watchmaker Bremont was among the luxury brands looking to raise awareness via the Henley Royal Regatta.

It was the first time the event, which dates back to 1839, partnered with a number of brands for the first time, adding a sponsorship element to the sailing competition. As the official timekeeper of the event, Bremont was expected to have an audience of at least 300,000 spectators gathered for the rowing competition on the Thames ([see story](#)).

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