

JEWELRY AND WATCHES

Omega shows off exploration, innovation pedigree in deep-dive campaign

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Omega developed the Seamaster Planet Ocean to reach the deepest point of the planet. Image credit: Omega

By ELLEN KELLEHER

Swiss watchmaker **Omega** is highlighting its reputation as a watchmaker for adventurers with a campaign that chronicles its sponsorship of Victor Vescovo's exploration of the deepest points in each of the five oceans.

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Omega produced a Seamaster Planet Ocean watch in support of Mr. Vescovo's Guinness World Record attempt to be the first man to plummet to a depth of 10,925 meters and reach the bottom of the Pacific Ocean's Mariana Trench. Crafted partly from bits of titanium from the capsule that carried Mr. Vescovo, the watch is the first to descend to the deepest point on earth.

"The campaign reflects Omega's long commitment to historic human feats," said Chris Ramey, founder of **The Home Trust International**, Palm Beach, Florida. "Omega watches have long been defined by their presence at iconic moments in history."

Solid partnership

The 2019 and 2020 dives to the Challenger Deep, the deepest point of the Mariana Trench, form part of Mr. Vescovo's Five Deeps expedition to explore the deepest points in each of the world's five oceans. On his journey, he brought along a trio of Omega's Seamaster "Ultra Deep" watches, which all made it back to the surface in working order.

During the descent, Mr. Vescovo spent four hours exploring the bottom of the Pacific Ocean's Mariana Trench. This expedition took Mr. Vescovo further underwater than the height of Mt. Everest.

In June, Mr. Vescovo notched another historic first when he brought Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, a former NASA astronaut and the first American woman to walk in space, on the same voyage to the Mariana Trench in the "Limiting Factor," the small submarine designed for the descent.



Dr. Sullivan is the first woman to walk in space. Image credit: Omega

As well as a Seamaster Planet Ocean, Dr. Sullivan wore her Speedmaster X-33 Skywalker, a timepiece designed for astronauts and now ocean explorers.

Omega has established itself as a backer of exploration since Buzz Aldrin wore the Omega Speedmaster on his first moonwalk in 1969.

In a short documentary titled "Ultradeep: Exploring the Deepest places on Earth," Omega cast a light on its partnership with Mr. Vescovo and Dr. Sullivan.

The footage in the documentary short takes place mostly at sea

Filed largely at sea, the footage presents the raw difficulty of Mr. Vescovo's and Dr. Sullivan's achievements.

A private equity investor and retired naval officer from Dallas, Mr. Vescovo describes his first descent to a depth of 10,925 meters below sea level on April 28, 2019. A veteran explorer, he previously climbed the highest peak on seven continents and skied the North and South Poles before turning to the ocean.

"I couldn't believe the fact that we as human beings had not been to the bottom of four of the world's five oceans," he says. "And we know less about the oceans than we do about the surface of Mars."

The short combines details of Mr. Vescovo's adventures with interviews with the executive team of Omega who were responsible for developing the watches that accompanied him.



The Seamaster Planet Ocean used on the expedition. Image credit: Omega

Accompanied only by a support ship, Mr. Vescovo chronicles his attempts, which included stops at the bottom of the Southern Ocean as well as the mapping of the Diamantina Fracture Zone in the Indian Ocean.

"As we went through the expeditions, we saw there were scientific advances we could actually make in terms of mapping," Mr. Vescovo says. "We were discovering new species and new subterranean features.

"It all started to blend together, a mixture of technological innovation, science and human adventure," he says.

In an interview, Raynald Aeschlimann, Omega's president and CEO, suggests the decision to back Mr. Vescovo's mission was impulsive.

"I was very impressed about his incredible spirit and determination," Mr. Aeschlimann says. "I knew that Omega must play a very important role in this project."

Also making an appearance is Gregory Kissling, head of product management at Omega, who oversaw the testing of the watches to a depth of 15,000 meters.

"Only in real life conditions, do you know if something is a success," he says. "I knew it was a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Mr. Vescovo points out that the Seamaster Planet Ocean was subjected to some of the harshest environmental conditions, facing pressure of 16,000 pounds per square inch in frigid water.

"The fact that they could fashion a watch that could survive repeatedly in that environment is just an extraordinary technical achievement," Mr. Vescovo says.

The final portion of the film introduces Dr. Sullivan, astronaut and oceanographer. After her June 7 dive with Mr. Vescovo, she is the first woman to dive to the deepest spot in the world's ocean.

"Back in Columbus, Ohio, my irreverent friends now call me the most vertical girl in the world," she jokes.

Adventurous past

Omega has a record of putting itself on the side of adventure and exploration through campaigns and product launches.

Earlier this year, Omega introduced the Speedmaster "Silver Snoopy Award" 50th anniversary timepiece, which symbolizes Omega's shared history with space exploration and the famous animated beagle ([see story](#)).

Its introduction came a year after the Swiss watchmaker marked the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing with the release of a timepiece that points to its history with space exploration.

Omega's Speedmaster Moonwatch is the first to house its reconstructed Calibre 321 movement, which was originally used on a number of watches that astronauts wore into space ([see story](#)).

"Luxury brands don't brag functionality," Mr. Ramey said. "Instead, they align with the values underscoring the achievement."