

ADVERTISING

Jaeger-LeCoultre pairs with Mad Men TV series for limited-edition timepiece

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By RACHEL LAMB

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Swiss watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre is pairing with AMC's hit television series "Mad Men" for a limited-edition "Mad about Reverso" timepiece inspired by the show.

Using the brand's iconic Grande Reverso Ultra-Thin watch as the base, Jaeger-LeCoultre is producing 25 limited-edition, engraved timepieces that come with a personalized letter and book from a character on the show. The watch will be available next month.

"I challenge the idea that Mad Men is a TV show - it is, in fact, a documentary in disguise, showcasing the style and culture of a certain place and age," said Manfredi Ricca, luxury sector expert and managing director of [Interbrand Milan](#), Milan. "Mad Men has a double level of reading and the deeper one is all about the background: Kennedy, feminism, divorce, racial integration, Korea and so forth.

"For this reason, a brand's choice to be overtly inspired by Mad Men is a subtler initiative than a mere partnership with a TV show, [rather] a sophisticated study in culture and aesthetics, except it is understandable by everyone thanks to the show's awareness," he said. "Think of Jaeger-LeCoultre developing a limited series inspired by 'New York, circa 1963,' it's the same concept, but less compelling and potentially boring.

"So what the Mad Men brand does is bring it alive, provide the storytelling and make it all relevant."

Mr. Ricca is not affiliated with Jaeger-LeCoultre, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Jaeger-LeCoultre was not able to comment before press deadline.

Face of the company

The Grande Reverso Ultra-Thin is a single-movement, hand-winding timepiece with a rectangular-shaped face.

The 25 limited-edition products will be numbered and engraved with the "Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce" logo, the name of the advertising firm at which the characters on Mad Men work.



Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce logo

The price of the Grande Reverso Ultra-Thin was not disclosed, but a similar version of the timepiece, the Grande Reverso 969, starts at \$7,800.

The timepieces will come in a walnut commemorative box with the Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce logo.

Each piece will include a personalized letter from Roger Sterling, a character and one of the firm's namesakes on the show.



Letter from Mr. Sterling

The letter makes it seem as if the recipient works at the firm and Mr. Sterling gave the watch as a gift.

In addition, buyers will receive pictures of the Grand-Reverso Ultra-Thin tribute to Mad Men and branded ad reproductions.

Consumers will also be given a copy of "Sterling's Gold," Mr. Sterling's book that is autographed by show creator and executive producer Matthew Weiner.



Autographed copy of Sterling's Gold

The Grande Reverso Ultra-Thin tribute will be available in-store Feb. 2012.

"The contrast between Mad Men's huge popularity and the extra-limited availability looks like a smart way into what is increasingly looks like a successful paradigm for global luxury brands in the digital age," Mr. Ricca said "They create mass desire, generate

selective demand and strive to build an individual experience."

Mad for marketing

Since money is not usually a concern for affluent consumers, what they mainly focus on is a product that is one-of-a-kind or limited-edition.

Therefore, the rarity and time-sensitive approach of Jaeger-LeCoultre's Mad Men-inspired watch is something that is likely to get wealthy consumers excited.

This is especially true since the watch comes out just one month before the new season of Mad Men debuts in March.

However, high-end marketers definitely need to be wary when pairing with other corporations.

The golden rule seems to be that the partnership will only work if both companies have the same values and personalities.

That said, Jaeger-LeCoultre is not the only brand to call Mad Men a partner.

"Tying in with a popular TV show also works well – look what Sex and the City did for Manolo Blahnik," said Karen Weiner Escalera, president and chief strategist at **KWE Group**, Miami. "[However], one also needs to keep in mind that you're known by the company you keep, including your partner's other alliances.

"Banana Republic has been advertising a clothing line inspired by Mad Men," she said. "Based on this, if Jaeger-LeCoultre had a bridge-line of watches they were launching, I could see the effectiveness of the alliance with the show," she said.

"But I question if this works based on the price point of this new watch."

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York