

WATCHES AND JEWELRY

Sustainability, digital headline brand efforts at Watches and Wonders

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Tag Heuer its first watch using lab-grown diamonds. Image courtesy of Tag Heuer

By KATIE TAMOLA

Sustainability has set the stage for the Watches and Wonders Geneva 2022 event.

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This year's in-person event, held from March 30 to April 5 with additional online offerings, includes almost 40 fine watchmaking and jewelry brands, such as Chanel, Gucci, IWC Schaffhausen, Tag Heuer and Zenith among others. Thoughtful and sustainable materials are woven throughout this year's offerings, as jewelers and watchmakers are more actively engaging contemporary consumers.

"Sustainability, ethics, chain of custody transparency and ESG are all strong value/purchasing drivers for next-gen consumers of all luxury goods, and watches are no exception," said Marty Hurwitz, CEO of MVEye Marketing, Austin.

"Recent research has shown that consumers will pay a premium for brands and products that are third-party certified to be sustainably produced."

New classics

Luxury watchmakers are working to reach consumers during Watches and Wonders, whether in-person or online. The event has returned to a physical salon at Palexpo, a convention center in Geneva, after two years of prioritizing digital events.

Every day will include a live panel at 1 p.m. GMT of experts and leaders in the watchmaking industry, discussing topics not limited to transparency, sustainable sourcing, digitization and the circular economy.

IWC is ready to greet consumers in-person or in the metaverse

The event space will also host the lab, a large space dedicated to innovative and sustainable initiatives from the exhibiting brands, and a time design exhibition exploring various aspects of watch design from the 20th and 21st century.

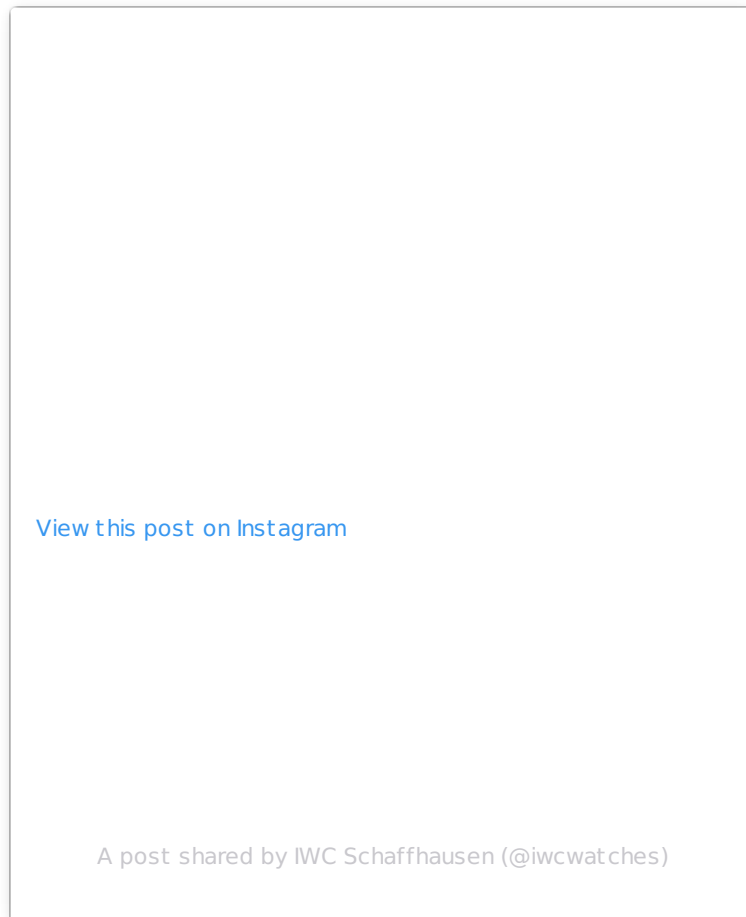
Brands are also releasing content and announcements on their native digital channels in conjunction with the

event.

Swiss watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen released a vignette on its YouTube account entitled "IWCTopGun." CEO Christoph Grainger-Herr presented and discussed new timepieces from the brand's booth in Geneva.

Mr. Grainger-Herr began by reflecting on the history of the IWC brand, recalling that the popular Top Gun timepieces hold more than 70 years of heritage.

He then elaborated on the immensely thoughtful materials behind the new watches: the IWC Pilot's Watch Chronograph 41 Top Gun Ceratanium and the IWC Pilot's Watch Chronograph Top Gun Edition in Woodland and Lake Tahoe.



Thoughtful in every detail, as evidenced in the new IWC timepieces

The former timepiece comes in several options including a new ceratanium bracelet, a vegan strap and many options in textile and rubber. Ceratanium merges the best parts of ceramic and titanium features, making the watch light and durable but also scratch-resistant.

The new watches arrive just in time for the new film, *Top Gun: Maverick*, which will be released in theaters on May 27.

"Top Gun goes much further than just being high-performance pilots watches," Mr. Grainger-Herr says in the video. "Today, Top Gun is a mood a cinematic lifestyle that promotes a work hard, play hard attitude."

IWC is also inviting consumers to meet them in the metaverse, in its first approach to Web3. Web3 is considered to be the next phase of Internet, following the social media age. For its metaverse offering, the brand teamed up with renowned architect Hani Rashid to create a VR version of the exhibition experience.

There, consumers can virtually walk around the IWC booth, experience their products, meet executives and interact with brand ambassadors Eileen Gu and Tom Brady.

To gain entry, IWC is giving out the first 1,868 tokens available, a reference to the brand's founding year. Consumers scan the QR code displayed during the #IWCTopGun vignette, mint their tokens and gain access to all the digital channels including the metaverse, which can be utilized with VR goggles or on a computer.

Swiss watchmaker Zenith was not to be left behind in the physical or digital sense, releasing the new Chronomaster

Open and Chronomaster Sport.

The Chronomaster Open is sleek and innovative, featuring a partially open dial, with a 39.5 mm case in steel or rose gold. The Chronomaster Sport features new references in precious metals and the timepiece crafted entirely in rose gold, available in either black or white dial.

Zenith is also introducing "Master of Chronographs Since 1865", a 360-degree platform that marries the past, present and future to showcase brand history and famous collections. The platform was crafted to be accessible and to foster the love of watchmaking through both physical and digital offerings.

Fellow LVMH watchmaker Tag Heuer follows this year's theme of thoughtful materials.

For the first time in its history, Tag Heuer has crafted a timepiece with lab-grown diamonds

The brand is introducing its new Tag Heuer Carrera Plasma. It is the first product to feature lab-grown diamonds in Tag Heuer's more than 160-year history.

The lab-grown diamonds, predominantly found on the dial, were manufactured by a network of partners specialized in innovative technology including Lusix, Capsoul and Diamaze. These speak to Tag Heuer's ethos of innovation and an avant-garde approach, which the house refers to as 'Diamant d'Avant-Garde' for this particular product.

"I'm thrilled to see Tag Heuer working with lab-grown diamonds, grown by Lusix, one of the world's finest quality prime diamond growers," Mr. Hurwitz said.

"I believe other watch brands will be evolving collections with lab-grown diamonds in the near future as well."

Time en vogue

Luxury brands otherwise best known for their jewelry or fashion offerings are also shining at Watches and Wonders.

French fashion and leather goods house Hermès released the Hermès H08 Blue, a sophisticated, deep-blue version of the H08, and the Hermès Arceau Le Temps Voyageur, for the watch-wearer with an adventurous spirit.

Last year, Hermès and watch platform Hodinkee reunited for a timepiece collaboration, their first joint effort since 2018.

The Hermès H08 Limited Edition for Hodinkee is a playful and casual watch suited for everyday wear. The exclusive piece is a special take on the H08 collection, which Hermès debuted at Watches and Wonders 2021 ([see story](#)).

French fashion house Chanel is showcasing the J12 Watch Caliber 12.2 in black and white versions, as well as the J12 Diamond Tourbillon Watch Caliber 5, in black ceramic and matte black ceramic options.

Last year, Chanel explored the thought and style behind its J12 watch in a 12-part video series. The campaign celebrated the 21-year-old watch, an icon of Chanel, highlighting its sleek technical complexity and the thoughtful expertise inherent in its creation ([see story](#)).

French jeweler Cartier is highlighting The Tank, a watch first created in 1917 by Louis Cartier, refined with subtle monochrome dials, four-hour marks and no rail track. Cartier also released the Cartier Santos-Dumont, a square tribute to another historical brand model, adding three new versions to the collection.

"It certainly looks like more high-end jewelry brands are branching out into luxury timepieces at this year's event," Mr. Hurwitz said. "It's as if they've been researching and developing these new offerings over the past two years of COVID-19, and they are exploding onto the scene with the renaissance of the Watches and Wonders in-person show this year."