

JEWELRY

Rolex dissects meaning behind five-pointed crown motif in digital heritage series

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Hans Wilsdorf used his watchmaking craft to support the adventures of explorers, pushing the boundaries of timekeeping. Image credit: Rolex

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Swiss watchmaker **Rolex** is preserving the spirit of goodwill and discovery that founder Hans Wilsdorf has left behind.

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Per the new "**Man Behind the Crown**" campaign, the brand is paying homage to Mr. Wilsdorf's idealism and faith in the power of exploration. Rolex details the extent to which these values are woven into the company's history, telling the story of its success in a mini-documentary.

Practice in perpetuity

Rolex is centering the altruism of Mr. Wilsdorf in the campaign, speaking to the deep value of his legacy.

The film paints a picture for viewers of the world in which Mr. Wilsdorf was born into. In the 1880s watches were generally pinned or exclusively for women, not being seen as assets to active lifestyles.

The man behind the crown Hans Wilsdorf

The young Mr. Wilsdorf had a different vision of what watches could be, being extremely passionate about the invention's precision and movements.

Working through his twenties in watchmaking shops, he eventually made his way to London. This is where the story of Rolex truly begins, as the city is where he invented the name and trademarked it

By 1919, the Rolex name had attained prestige, setting up shop for good in the Swiss city of Geneva.

With the 1926 introduction of the Rolex Oyster, the company earned a spot in history forever. The watch was the world's very first waterproof model, making Mr. Wilsdorf's dream of adventurous watches a reality.



Rolex invented the first waterproof wristwatch. Image credit: Rolex

In an attempt to further assert Rolex's exploratory mission, the Rolex Oyster donned the wrist of Mercedes Gleitze in 1927 as she became the first woman to swim the entire English Channel. With her praise, Rolex watches joined the adventures of numerous groundbreaking expeditions, including the summit of Mt. Everest.

Continuing to push the boundaries in the many decades since the iconic age of explorers, Rolex continues to be a proponent of discovery. The campaign situates this mission in this in-depth, historic context while looking to the future.

Rolex remains an avid supporter of those venturing to the farthest reaches of the world, and those who work to protect those places.

With empowering models such as self-winding and automatic wristwatches, all incredibly precise, Rolex works to allow the wearers of the designs to go further and see the world up closer. Scientists, environmentalists, athletes and adventurous photographers keep coming back to the company for this reason, their Rolex pieces glinting in the sunlight of lands few ever get to see.

Nature of time

Rolex has platformed environmental causes with this background in mind, forming the Perpetual Planet initiative.

The initiative highlights the climate-friendly nature of the brand through storytelling. From marine explorer Sylvia Earle to scientists on expeditions in Africa, Rolex is bringing attention to their causes ([see story](#)).

Other brands are also starting to incorporate sustainability and environmental action into the companies' ethos, working with scientists and changemakers ([see story](#)). Louis Vuitton recently began working in Australia to protect native land, looking to improve material sourcing across supply chains through exploring indigenous knowledge and responsible stewardship.



Rolex history is a rich history, steeped in the partnership of exploration. Image credit: Rolex

This values-based movement across luxury has not always been present, but Rolex has historically been entangled in environmental causes and a desire to discover the planet's wild places. It is this attitude that fuels the brand's philanthropic efforts, and grounds the present in its history.

With a heritage so rooted in idealism and a desire to support adventurers, it is clear why the brand continues to use its resources for environmentalism.

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