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Luxury turns up heat on high watchmaking

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Showcasing a new, manual-winding movement created in-house and comprised of 774 components, Vacheron Constantin is one of many luxury brands out with updates. Image credit: Vacheron Constantin

By AMIRAH KEATON

As Watches and Wonders 2023 kicks off in Geneva this week, a number of luxury participants are pushing forward with horological updates of their own.

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With global programming top of mind, brands included as part of the Richemont-backed event's lineup are not just promoting high-end timepieces. Instead, French fashion house Chanel, and others appear intent on telling a story, exposing the internal operations and innovative technologies that make each mechanism possible via a series of new campaigns.

"It is definitely not a coincidence that there is a slew of watch novelty releases timed to the Watches and Wonders event," said Donnie Pacheco, CEO of [Donnie P. Consulting](#), Seattle.

"Brands know that watch enthusiasts will be tuned into coverage of this event and even want to do everything they can to ensure their brand is lumped into the coverage to reach as many eyes as possible," he said. "Because there is so much coverage during an event like this, it will spill over into mainstream media versus just being covered by watch publications so brands want to take advantage of this increased coverage."

Houses participate in haute horlogerie

Global watch programming seems to be sparking thought, as simultaneous announcements arrive from luxury labels around the world.

As this year's Watches and Wonders round runs from March 27 to April 2, 2023, campaign timing strikes as strategic, considering the popularity of one annual affair in particular.

Thus, a bevy of high-end brands are riding a wave initiated by the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie, securing visibility for individual operations in the process. Leaders are indeed getting ahead of the buzz, attempting to stake their respective claims in the ongoing conversation.

French fashion house Chanel, for example, is floating exclusive interpretations of jewelry classics on a limited-edition basis.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by CHANEL (@chanelofficial)

Here, the marque's "J12," "Premire," "Boy friend" and "Code Coco" models are in focus.

The newly-launched "Interstellar" capsule collection brings a set of redesigns inspired by the world of science fiction, space and time travel to the table. Among a batch of branded assets, one selection shows remixed styles upon the wrist of a 3D robot.

Design twists include a pixilated motif, circuit board design, phosphorescent effects and star charm are also pictured.

Placing one particular development on display, Swiss watchmaker Vacheron Constantin has released a novel movement marking an original tribute to the moon.

Vacheron Constantin previews house novelties in light of Watches & Wonders 2023

Developed in-house, the "Les Cabinotiers Dual Moon" Grand Complication features 11 complications and a top-of-the-line manual-winding caliber.

Meanwhile, Swiss watchmaker Rolex is using the space to commemorate a milestone. The brand's latest initiative restyles the Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona's case and face in honor of its 60th anniversary,

The new [#CosmographDaytona](#) presents even greater visual harmony and a more modern demeanor. The dial graphics have new balance. Its case has been redesigned and its profile is highlighted by light reflections. More <https://t.co/Q4YrwkpM01> [#WatchesandWonders2023](#)
pic.twitter.com/ncJOs5ewFD

ROLEX (@ROLEX) [March 27, 2023](#)

The 40mm sports chronograph is additionally equipped with the house's "4131" caliber, launched this year.

Standalone strategy

Participants aside, Italian fashion label Gucci is out with an effort that cuts through the noise.

The brand, which just recently established a high watchmaking vertical ([see story](#)) and is, in fact, not involved with this year's Watches and Wonders event, is claiming entrance into its next era with a new campaign spanning five signature collections.

The House boldly enters its next [#GucciHighWatchmaking](#) endeavor with a new campaign that channels the golden age of space travel and a passion for discovery. [#GucciTimepieces](#)
pic.twitter.com/Kg5lrVxpvN

gucci (@gucci) [March 26, 2023](#)

Gucci's exercise features tourbillons, automatic movements and a new perpetual calendar, all in an effort to spotlight contemporary savoir-faire at the company. The grouping infuses house codes, avant-garde artistry and exceptional stones.

The brand's "G-Timeless Planetarium," "G-Timeless Dancing Bees," "G-Timeless Moonlight," "Gucci 25H" ([see story](#)) and "Grip" watches comprise the effort.

"The campaign that jumped out at me is Gucci," Mr. Pacheco said.

"The novelties showcase a great deal of color and have a more luxurious look," he said. "While they are still fashion pieces, they have a much higher-end timepiece aesthetic as well."

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