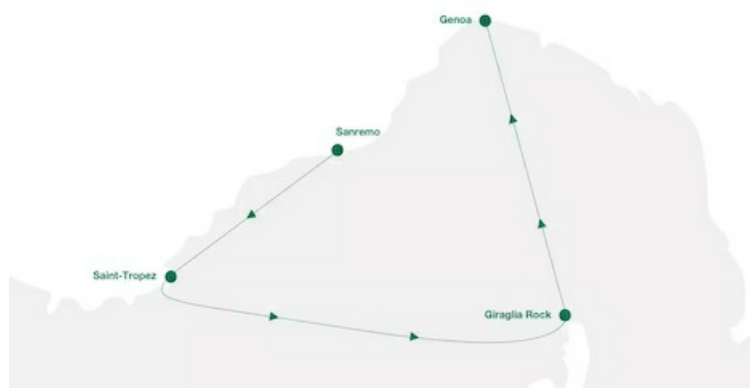JEWELRY

Rolex celebrates 70 years of Giraglia

June 1, 2023

The event will sustain the brand's reach into the yachting sector while offering a sporting spectacle for those on the outside looking in. Image credit: Rolex

By ZACH JAMES

Swiss watchmaker Rolex is setting sail for a landmark celebration in Italy.

The timepiece pioneer will host the 70th edition of the Giraglia offshore yacht racing competition in June. The event, one of six annual Rolex-branded yachting bouts, will sustain the brand's reach into the yachting sector while offering an unmatched sporting spectacle for those on the outside looking in.

"Sponsoring events not only gets the Rolex name in front of sports enthusiasts and cements their name amongst racers, but also gets the brand name out to casual observers and members of the communities where the events take place," said Donnie Pacheco, CEO of Donnie P. Consulting, Seattle.

"The name of each of these races starts with Rolex and all branding, advertising, and promotion within these regions and for people tuning into the race only reinforces the Rolex brand."

Mr. Pacheco is not affiliated with Rolex, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Wave-breakers
The Rolex Giraglia event has a storied history dating back to 1953, when its inaugural race set sail.

The bout was founded and run by the Yacht Club Italiano from its inception Rolex now sponsors and runs the event in collaboration with its original founder. This year's competition will also be the 25th anniversary of the luxury watchmaker's involvement, first partnering with the event in 1998.
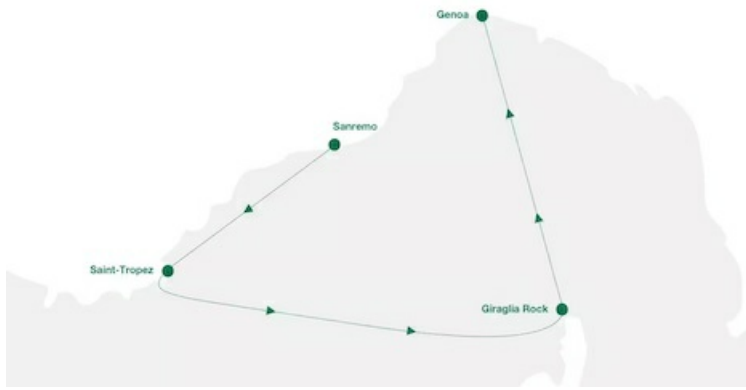
Pictured is the route to be taken for the main event race at Rolex Giraglia. Image credit: Rolex

Starting on June 9, the event, based out of Saint-Tropez's port on the Cte d'Azur, will see a series of competitive voyages but will culminate in a 241 nautical mile main event offshore race between dozens of international competitors on June 14.

The main draw will involve a venture from Sanremo, Italy, to Saint-Tropez, then traveling to the focal point of the race, Giraglia Rock and its iconic lighthouse. From there, yachters will pivot toward the coast of Genoa, where the finish line awaits.

Spectators can expect fleets of luxury yachts competing both far out and closer to shore.

The multi-day event will include many inshore races as well.

The opening day contest will see competitors jet through the first leg of the main event, from Sanremo to Saint-Tropez, as fast as possible

Sporting a community

Rolex has long been affiliated with yachting, partnering with over a dozen yacht clubs globally, this event is an extension of those partnerships and a way to gain even more headway in this community that the brand sees as lucrative.

"In [the promotional video for the Giraglia event], Rolex spends part of the video highlighting the area and reinforcing the idea of community," Mr. Pacheco said.

"This helps take their sponsorship beyond a race or a yacht club and ties it directly to the community to give it a sense of greater purpose," he said. "While the video highlights racing and the sport, it anchors it in community and the ties it builds, particularly in this region.

"By broadening this approach across all of its sponsored clubs and races, it builds a true sense of global community and ties the Rolex brand to these communities."

Rolex's efforts in the world of yachting and greater competitive sports are, obviously, not exclusive to the iconic watchmaker, but used as a marketing arm for many luxury brands.

Prada recently partnered with a Red Bull-sponsored skateboarding competition in Rio de Janeiro (see story). The event's competing athletes sponsored by the luxury fashion house saw great success.

Louis Vuitton alternatively teamed up with global soccer sensation Lionel Messi on a campaign focused on travel and luggage (see story).