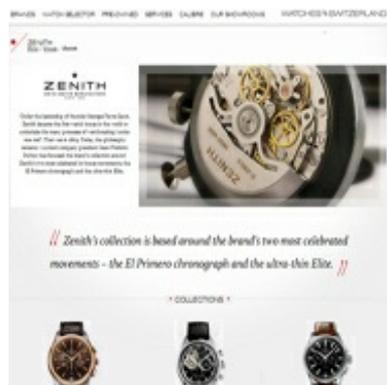


COMMERCE

Zenith raises ecommerce ante with retailer partnership

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By RACHEL LAMB

Swiss watchmaker Zenith watches is selling its timepieces online for the first time in Britain through third-party retailer Watches of Switzerland.

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Zenith timepieces will also be sold through Watches of Switzerland's showrooms and boutiques. Consumers will be able to buy the Captain, El Primero, Heritage and Pilot collections from Watches of Switzerland.

"Selling watches through Watches of Switzerland will help grow both brand awareness and accessibility to the Zenith product line," said Nick Drabicky, Fort Worth, TX-based client services manager at iProspect. "Watches of Switzerland is considered a premier stop for watches in Britain.

"Having [Zenith] watches featured on such a premier site can only lead to an increased brand awareness," he said. "In terms of accessibility, Zenith watches are currently sold primarily through store boutiques, with locations ranging from Dubai to Shanghai.

"Having the line housed in one location will not only allow for ease of purchase, but could potentially lead to an increased consumer base."

Mr. Drabicky is not affiliated with neither Zenith nor Watches of Switzerland, but agreed to

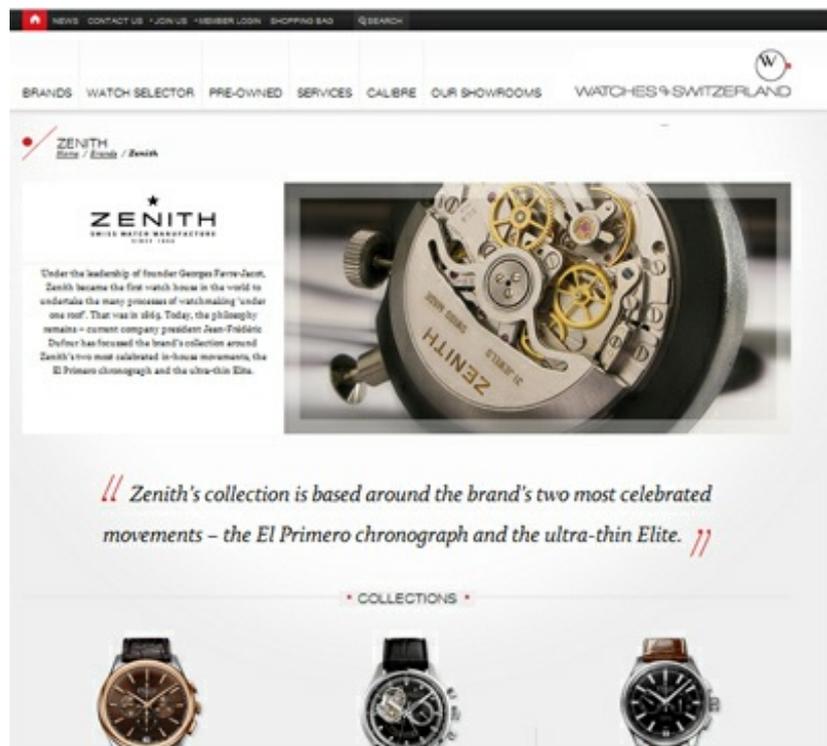
comment as an industry expert.

Zenith and Watches of Switzerland were not able to comment before press deadline.

Face time

Consumers can search and buy Zenith timepieces on [the label's dedicated page on the Watches of Switzerland site](#).

The Zenith page shows a large image of a movement next to a brief description of the brand.



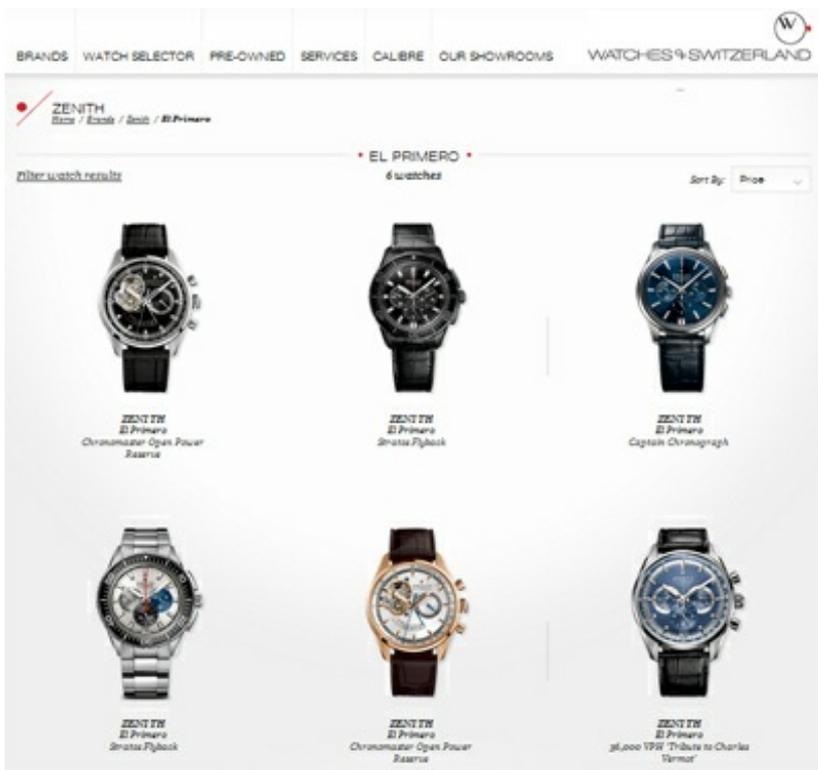
Zenith page on the Watches of Switzerland site

Below the description are four images that represent one of the collections. When consumers scroll over these images, they are slightly blown up.

When clicked, the images reveal the watches in the collection available for purchase.

The Captain collection has seven timepieces. It is an automatic movement, classic-looking three-hand watch with minimal embellishments.

The El Primero collection has six timepieces. The high-frequency escapement beats at 36,000 vibrations per hour.



The El Primero collection

The Pilot collection has just one model – the Chronograph. It has a brushed-steel case, matte dial and an oversized crown.

The final collection is Heritage, which comes in three variations. The automatic movement is thin, ultra-thin and new vintage.

Channel changer

Watch distribution channels have been a much-talked-about subject lately.

Luxury watch and jewelry brands typically opt for third-party retailers, without really selling on their own ([see story](#)).

“Running and operating an ecommerce site takes a lot of time, personnel and resources,” Mr. Drabicky said. “Going the route of a third-party reseller is seen when a brand is new to the space, and is looking to get their feet wet.”

Watchmakers including Jaeger-LeCoultre, Ulysse Nardin and Hublot have been breaking off and forming their own monobrand boutiques in metropolises worldwide.

This strategy could be to create a unique branded haven that does not compete with other brands.

Other brands including Audemars Piguet, Breitling, Chopard, IWC, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Omega, Longines, Rolex and Chanel are also marketing products through Watches of Switzerland.

Although Zenith could potentially be fighting for awareness on Watches of Switzerland, the exposure will most likely help rather than hurt the brand.

Indeed, being surrounded by like-brands increases the appeal of Zenith and only

reassures consumers that the label belongs with the most high-end timepieces in the world.

“I think in this specific case, getting the word out is paramount,” Mr. Drabicky said. “This is a big step for a brand who typically sells its merchandise through store fronts only.

“In this case, the relationship can act as a win-win relationship,” he said. “Zenith capitalizes on the Watches of Switzerland site, with its current ecommerce-ready platform, while Watches of Switzerland gets to offer yet another line of luxury watchmakers.”

Final Take

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