

WATCHES AND JEWELRY

Richard Mille launches latest Flying Tourbillon into action

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The Swiss watchmaker's lightest model yet gets promotional support from a longtime partner: Spanish professional tennis player Rafael Nadal. Image credit: Richard Mille

By AMIRAH KEATON

Swiss watchmaker Richard Mille is pushing the bounds of performance engineering.

Marketing for the brand's lightest model yet features input from a longtime partner. Spanish professional tennis player Rafael Nadal withstands competitive pressure in a new campaign that captures the two titleholders.

"The strength of a powerful video is not what is shown; but what the viewer perceives," said Chris Ramey, CEO of [Affluent Insights](#), Palm Beach.

"With Nadal's coming retirement, the video reinforces pillars of luxury including loyalty, scarcity, unique point of view, meaning, and nonnegotiable standards of quality."

Mr. Ramey is not affiliated with Richard Mille, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Transparent tourbillon in action

The elimination of a standard watch part is arguably what has made the architectural layout of Richard Mille's signature product line most noticeable.

Richard Mille's replacement of the upper bridge with single-sided mounting is what gives owners and onlookers alike a full view of its Flying Tourbillon's inner workings.

In the case of the RM 27-05 Flying Tourbillon Rafael Nadal, the design choice, complex both aesthetically and mechanically, also helps cut down on the chronograph's overall mass.

The new 80-piece RM 27-05 Flying Tourbillon Rafael Nadal closes the saga of extreme watches with a new weight record: 11,5 grams without strap. <https://t.co/1XrQoicMYu#RichardMille #RM2705>
pic.twitter.com/9BzJoChVcC

Richard Mille (@Richard_Mille) May 28, 2024

Weighing in at 11.5 grams sans strap, the manual winding movement can handle up to 14,000g of force, setting a twofold record.

Of the units' many functional elements, several have been improved. However, at exactly 2.12 millimeters, or less than half an inch wide, the launch's incredible thinness when compared to its impact resistance is what sets it apart.

Besides the prestige its name invokes, it is the lightness of Richard Mille watches that enables the brand's ambassadors to carry its luxury selections onto the court.

A new campaign captures two titleholders: tennis pro Rafael Nadal and Richard Mille's RM 27-05

Mr. Nadal himself donned the RM 27-05 during his opening Roland Garros match this past Monday. The durability of these accessories is continually put to the test when worn during tournaments this is precisely the premise of the campaign at hand.

Classic in appearance, its black-and-white contents capture the athlete in motion, a Richard Mille affixed to his wrist. Campaign messaging points out that many of RM 27-05 Flying Tourbillon's defining characteristics excellence, resilience, precision are guiding principles shared by Mr. Nadal, proving key to his success.



Classic in appearance, the campaign's black-and-white contents capture the athlete in motion. Image credit: Richard Mille

"My relationship with Richard Mille, the company, as well as Richard as a person, has undoubtedly been a pillar of my sports career since 2010," said Mr. Nadal, in a statement.

"They have supported me in all circumstances, and I hope that this bond will continue for many more years," he said. "Richard Mille is not just a simple partner: he has never stopped being by my side, in good times and in difficult ones.

"Today, after these 14 years, they are part of my family and my life."

Match made in heaven

Just 80 of the special-edition timepieces will be made available for purchase at Richard Mille boutiques worldwide ([see story](#)). Each retails for \$1.1 million.

"Richard Mille price points necessitate clients with substantial financial capacity," Mr. Ramey said.

Excluding the RM 27-05, Richard Mille has released 10 watches with Mr. Nadal since beginning the collaboration in less than two decades ([see story](#)).

The manner in which the pair have codeveloped their creations has progressed the very nature of high-end celebrity partnerships; these contracts have become more holistic, with more talents getting involved with product design.

Richard Mille publishes an exclusive interview with Rafael Nadal as part of the promotion

Modern-day brand representatives are also increasingly engaged across multiple verticals at once. See Italian fashion label Gucci's promotion of a beauty ambassador to a global apparel and accessories effort ([see story](#)) or French jewelry maison Cartier's decision to tap a famous actress for not just fragrances but the promotion of the house's watch and high jewelry lines as well ([see story](#)).

Due to heightened levels of alignment between the two parties' value systems, longer-term agreements like that of Richard Mille's

can work to convey extra doses of authenticity. When it comes to timeless connections, tennis and heritage labels, in particular, have proven to be matches made in heaven.

“As professional athletes go, tennis players tend to be less risk; they’re educated privately, they’ve learned self-control and they understand how to interface with the public,” said **Affluent Insights’** Mr. Ramey.

“[The athlete’s sport], to tennis fans, is [one] of grace, power, strategy and strength,” said Mr. Ramey.

“Mr. Nadal has served Richard Mille well.”