

MOBILE

## TAG Heuer creates watch-inspired smartphone for travelers

July 19, 2013



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By JOE MCCARTHY

Swiss Watchmaker TAG Heuer is targeting affluent travelers with its new Meridiist smartphones equipped with features similar to its timepieces.

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**Luxury Daily**

TAG Heuer is transferring aspects from its watches, such as a formidable battery life and optimal time-displays, to the Meridiist smartphone to ensure that users have a coherent communication experience while traveling. The watchmaker has previously carried its sensibilities into other product markets including eyewear and will likely use the lessons it learned to protect its brand equity.

"As an avant-garde approach to technology is rooted in our DNA, entering the technology-driven sector of the mobile phone market was no cause for fear," said Camille Barthelet, director of communication at [Atelier](#), Paris.

"Throughout the history of TAG Heuer, it has never been interested in reproducing what has gone before," she said.

"TAG Heuer has also been assured in our approach by the tremendous success of our eyewear collection, which showed us that as long as we are true to our DNA we can have total confidence entering a sector other than horology."

Atelier developed TAG Heuer's Meridiist line.

Forget about charging

The Meridiist phones are lighter, thinner and more powerful than the brand's Racer smartphones. Dual SIM slots allow consumers to achieve greater connectivity.

Staying true to TAG Heuer's brand DNA, the phones feature prominent time functions. At the top of each phone is a dual-display time unit, giving consumers the chance to discreetly view the time and monitor incoming calls or messages while engaged in another activity.

A GMT function enables consumers to quickly change the time zone, which may be appreciated by frequent travelers. The time display is also supplemented with a hundredth of a second chronograph.

Bespoke digital engineering of more than 430 components is also available.

The screen is scratch-resistant sapphire crystal on a stainless steel frame.

Although the phone may seem unwieldy, it supposedly provides a week of talk time.

Meridiist phones come with 24/7 concierge service.

A video offers prospective buyers a chance to see different facets of the phone and to briefly experience its operating system.



*Video still*

The Meridiist Sapphire comes in many styles such as white and black alligator, light diamonds and black and gold.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/gXhQ6bT1p8c](https://www.youtube.com/embed/gXhQ6bT1p8c)

The models start at \$5,100.

"Every year more than one billion mobile phone handsets are sold worldwide," Ms. Barthelet said

"The market is growing at a double-digit rate, but is heavily dominated by mass market with the result that products become obsolete very quickly and are often lacking in quality," she said.

"At TAG Heuer, we believe that the mobile phone deserves better."

### Tall waves

Vertu, another purveyor of luxury smartphones, has demonstrated its desire to dominate the market as it is rapidly expanding its physical retail presence to reach high-net-worth, mobile-savvy consumers in established and emerging markets.

Riding on its third consecutive annual sales turnover increase in 2012 and the launch of the Vertu Ti, the brand's first smartphone with the Android operating system, Vertu is aiming to reach global consumers by combining its original brand values with a modern twist. The brand plans to open 49 new boutiques and stores this year around the world to further tailor the brand experience to global markets ([see story](#)).

Other smartphone manufacturers could pose a challenge for a watchmaker looking to enter the playing field.

"As a brand driven by innovation and avant-garde, TAG Heuer had to be the first Swiss brand to enter the luxury smartphone market," Ms. Barthelet said.

"So, from the design stage to completion, we challenged our best team to create communication instruments that will be to mobile phones what our chronographs have been to watches since 1860," she said.

### Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/UjliXxh139M](http://www.youtube.com/embed/UjliXxh139M)