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Tag Heuer employs young designers to reach new consumer base

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By RACHEL LAMB

Swiss watchmaker Tag Heuer succeeded in reaching a younger audience by holding a contest where eight teams of product design students constructed three watches interpreting the brand's classic Monaco chronograph.

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Students from Parsons The New School for Design competed in "Art of Watchmaking" for a monetary prize and the chance for their watch to become a limited edition part of Tag Heuer's collection. The judges were LVMH Moët Hennessey Louis Vuitton chairmen, Parsons' trustees, Tag Heuer executives and other notable icons in the luxury world.

"We are a very young-thinking brand that pushes the envelope in design and innovation," said Dana Lenetz, public relations manager at Tag Heuer, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland. "Parsons is one of the most prestigious design schools in the world, and Tag Heuer was inspired by the LVMH/Parsons partnership.

"We wanted to offer Parsons students the opportunity to learn about the intricacies of watchmaking through a focused program and competition," she said.

"We're fortunate to have our atelier and artisans on-site at our facility so the students could receive personalized mentoring from our master watchmakers," she said.

Tag Heuer is a fine watch manufacturer owned by LVMH, which has collaborated with Parsons in the past.

Parsons is a college for art and design students at the New School.

About the competition

The 24 students that participated in the contest were enrolled in a design studio class at Parsons. This is one of the many collaborations the school has done with luxury brands, and its second with LVMH.

“Our partnership with Tag Heuer will further expand the opportunities available to our students to participate in real world challenges that will positively influence their future careers as designers,” said Deborah Kirschner, associate director for arts communications for communications and external affairs at New School, New York.

The students built the timepieces inspired by their design philosophies and target consumer.

The first place models included a black model with a shield over the watch face, as well as edition numbers that appealed to collectors.



The first place winner

The second place honors went to the timepieces whose designs were sleek, with black and neon accents.



Second place winner

Third place designs included naturally grown crystals in their dials.



Third place winners

"We are inspired by the students' perspective on luxury timepieces and their unfettered creativity," Tag Heuer's Ms. Lenetz said. "Through our partnership with Parsons, we have found an unparalleled platform for celebrating our passion for revolutionizing timekeeping and commitment to craftsmanship and evocative design."

A budding relationship

The collaboration began with a prior relationship with LVMH, where Parsons students participated in the Art of Craftsmanship Revisited. This brought together students from a number of design disciplines to reconsider the value of craftsmanship in today's fast-moving world, and its relationship to luxury.

The brand is promoting this initiative on its Facebook page and through vigorous public relation outreach.

"We get inspiration from different avenues – architecture, the automobile industry," Ms. Lenetz. "This program gives us another outlet for fresh, new ideas."

Final take

One of the campaign videos for the Monaco chronograph, which the students at Parsons were inspired by

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