

TIMEPIECES



TIFOSI

BY JAN TEGLER

Hublot earns pole position with Scuderia Ferrari and Ferrari fans



CLASSIC CARS TOO

Hublot is strengthening its presence in the world of classic cars. Having partnered the Tour Auto Optic 2000 for the first time in 2013, joining the 50th anniversary of the legendary Ferrari 250 GTO in 2012 and joining Ferrari for a major

event in Pebble Beach, California, and helping to relaunch of the Montreux Grand Prix in Switzerland, Hublot this year was also the exclusive watchmaking partner, for the second year running, of one of Europe's most prestigious classic car

events: The Tour Auto Optic 2000. To celebrate the 2014 event, Hublot is unveiling the Tour Auto 2014 Classic Fusion Chrono, a limited edition of 100 numbered watches.

THE HISTORY OF TIMEPIECES AND FERRARI is a checkered one - by no means symbolic of racing's checkered flag. The truth is, Ferrari has had many watch partners over its existence, from lower-end quartz producers to high-end makers of mechanical timekeepers.

To use a racing analogy, none has been as competitive as Hublot.

Now well into the fourth year of a partnership that began in 2011, the Nyon-based manufacturer has invested heavily in the effort - and success has come its way.

The Ferrari line has become a very popular component of the Big Bang collection (the advanced and artful LaFer-

rari limited edition is part of the MP collection) - a hit with passionate Ferrari fans (known as "Tifosi") and Hublotistas worldwide.

The brand's engagement with Scuderia Ferrari has raised its visibility even as the famed automaker from Maranello, Italy, has struggled in recent years in Formula One, the pinnacle of auto racing. Halfway through 2014, Ferrari's F14 T - designed to adhere to the radical new-for-2014 hybrid power formula instituted by F1 - has not often been at the front of the grid.

The team is a distant third in the F1 world championship with only one podium having been scored by world

champion Fernando Alonso. His teammate - fellow world champion Kimi Raikkonen - has finished no higher than seventh position. Still, the Hublot logos that adorn both sides of the F14 T's cockpit give the manufacturer global recognition.

VICTORY

THAT WORLDWIDE PRESENCE SOARED in mid-June as the number 51 Ferrari from the Hublot-sponsored AF Corse team captured victory at the 2014 24 Hours of Le Mans. Drivers Gianmaria Bruni, Toni Vilander and Giancarlo Fisichella took the checkered flag in first place in their

Hublot-liveried Ferrari 458 Italia, winning the fiercely competitive GTE Pro class.

Le Mans is part of the World Endurance Championship and the Hublot/AF Corse partnership in WEC has yielded great results with the factory Ferrari team winning the championship in 2012 and 2013.

The watchmaker also continued its support of Ferrari's terrific customer racing series known as "Ferrari Challenge". Featuring lightly modified versions of Ferrari's 458 Italia, the Ferrari Challenge is a global championship for Ferrari owners in North and South America, Europe and Asia.

This kind of interaction far exceeds that of any previous Ferrari watch partner. As former Hublot CEO Jean Claude Biver (now head of watchmaking at LVMH) promised, the level of the brand's involvement with Ferrari has been unprecedented as has its commitment to crafting an innovative collection of Big Bang Ferrari timepieces.

That commitment is reflected in the three new Big Bang Ferrari chronographs Hublot launched just before Baselworld 2014 - the Big Bang Ferrari Titanium Carbon, Big Bang Ferrari King Gold and Big Bang Ferrari Ceramic Carbon.

Powered by Hublot's in-house UNICO ref. 1241 automatic

column-wheel chronograph movement, the three limited edition timepieces share a design blending bold style with materials representative of racing in 45mm cases.

The Ferrari-red tint of the Titanium Carbon's (1,000 pieces) sapphire crystal is a clever complement to its titanium case and black carbon fiber bezel. Under the crystal, the three dimensional construction of the dial is easy to see with hour markers and numerals balanced by the movement below, a minute-counter subdial at three o'clock and the "Cavallino Rampante" at nine o'clock.

The famed symbol of Ferrari, the Cavallino Rampante or "prancing horse" is present on all of the Big Bang Ferrari chronographs, deliberately chosen by Hublot to represent

the Italian icon rather having Ferrari spelled out on the dial as past watch partners did. The Ferrari name itself appears on these three models' reset pushers and casebacks.

The King Gold (500 pieces) employs the same design but features an 18k King Gold case with carbon fiber bezel and satin-finished gold-plated hands with white lume. As on the Titanium Carbon, red chronograph second and minute-counter hands stand out.

All three new chronographs come with two interchangeable straps and sapphire casebacks with a rotor designed to look like

the wheels found on Ferrari's 458 Italia. The Ceramic Carbon (1,000 pieces) continues the familial design but pairs a black ceramic case with its black carbon fiber bezel and striking yellow dial indexes and hands.

Though Hublot was ankle-deep in the 2014 FIFA World Cup as the Official Timekeeper and Official Watch at this writing, the brand informs us it has more plans with Ferrari for 2014 including celebrating the 60th anniversary of the automaker with three new Big Bang Ferrari chronographs due out later this year. 🍅

Captions