

Fast Friends: Watches and Racing

— JAN TEGLER | JUNE 29, 2016



The world of motorsports has long been fertile ground for watchmakers. From the timing element of auto racing to its focus on mechanical, electronic and materials

for marketing, racing has drawn racers and timepiece makers together since the dawn of the automobile.

Today, watch brands are present in nearly every category of auto racing with partnerships reaching new levels of intensity. From racing series title sponsorships to team and driver backing, watch brands are now firmly interwoven into the fabric of racing.

Pull your belts tight and get ready to head out on track with us to catch up with some of the latest partnerships.

TAG Heuer



Daniel Ricciardo drives the Red Bull Racing Red Bull-TAG Heuer RB12

Racing is part of TAG Heuer's DNA. From the inception of the dashboard timers it manufactured for automobiles and racers beginning in 1911 to the famed Heuer Autavia (1933), Auto-Graph (1953), Carrera (1963), Monaco (1969) and the Ayrton Senna chronographs of the 1990s, TAG Heuer has been synonymous with racing.

taken over by the TAG Group, also a shareholder in the team. This very intimate and iconic partnership lasted until late 2015 when TAG Heuer CEO Jean-Claude Biver ended the relationship.

TAG Heuer's new partnership for 2016 is as surprising as the end of this thirty-year association. This season TAG Heuer is backing four-time world championship winner Red Bull Racing. In a fascinating turn of events, TAG Heuer has been able to badge the Renault powerplant currently used in Red Bull Racing's 2016 F1 racing car.

Consequently, Red Bull's car is now known as the Red Bull Racing-TAG Heuer RB12. With its name emblazoned on the RB12's engine cover, this is the first time a watchmaker has been named as part of an F1 constructor. The TAG badge had been applied to Porsche V6 Turbo engines used by McLaren in the early 1980s but this was prior to the acquisition of Heuer.



TAG Heuer and Redbull Official 2016 Visual

Another new partnership for TAG Heuer is as the official timing partner of the World

championship featuring electrically powered open-wheel formula racing cars. This partnership continues apace.

The brand's presence across major open wheel championships is completed by its ongoing relationship with IndyCar as the official watch of the Verizon IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. It also retains actor/racer **Patrick Dempsey as a brand ambassador.**

Rounding out TAG Heuer's extensive presence is its latest news. TAG is now the official timing partner of the FIM Endurance World Championship for motorcycles.

Richard Mille



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Richard Mille's two greatest passions outside the world of haute horology are auto racing and aviation. His innovative brand began its association with motorsports almost from its beginning, partnering with Brazilian Formula One star Felipe Massa to produce the RM 004. Four more models (RM 008, 011, 050, 056) dedicated to the

The brand's next move into F1 came with the adoption of French F1 driver Romain Grosjean as a Richard Mille ambassador during his 2014/2015 seasons with Lotus F1. That partnership has blossomed. At the end of 2015, Grosjean was announced as a driver for the new Haas F1 team, the first American squad to compete in Formula One in thirty years. Shortly thereafter, Richard Mille surprised everyone with news that the brand would partner with Haas as a team sponsor.

An even bigger surprise was sprung just before the start of the 2016 F1 season when Richard Mille revealed that it would become a long term partner of McLaren-Honda in F1, replacing TAG Heuer with the legendary British team. The team's world championship-winning drivers Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button will both wear Richard Mille timepieces henceforth.



Richard Mille, Jenson Button & Ron Dennis

Richard Mille also has a presence in global sports car racing via its new long-term partnership with Aston Martin. The Swiss maker will support Aston Martin Racing in

Three-time WRC (World Rally Championship) champion, Sebastian Ogier is also an RM ambassador.

Oris



Oris Ambassador Valtteri Bottas wearing his Oris Limited Edition

Oris is on the Formula One grid as well, continuing one of the longest partnerships in



limited-edition model named for current Williams driver Valtteri Bottas.

Since 2014, Oris has partnered with Audi Sport, sponsoring the German marque's futuristic hybrid prototypes in the World Endurance Championship and its rakish sedans in the German Touring Car (DTM) Championship. Audi has won the famed 24 Hours of Le Mans thirteen times and will be on the grid again in 2016. Three models now make up the Oris Audi Sport collection – two limited edition chronographs and a GMT.

Rolex



Rolex Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona

The Rolex moniker is as identified with auto racing as with any of the other competitions/events the watchmaking giant supports, and its association with the sport dates back to the early 1930s.

Today Rolex has a marquis presence in the sport. In 2013, the Geneva-based maker launched a new chapter as Global Partner and Official Timepiece of Formula 1.

There is perhaps no better-known watch-race pairing than the twenty-five year relationship Rolex has crafted with the 24 Hours of Daytona. Known since 1991 as the Rolex 24, the race is one of the big three endurance races on the planet along with the 24 Hours of Le Mans and the 12 Hours of Sebring.



Rolex countdown clock Rolex 24 Daytona 2016

Of course Rolex's connection to the race goes back further, to 1963 and the launch of one of the most famous watches in the world – the Cosmograph Daytona. Continually updated, the Daytona is an icon as well as an actual prize for capturing victory at the Rolex 24. Overall victors and class winners are awarded Cosmograph Daytonas and it's fair to say that this chronograph has become a symbol of racing.

But Rolex's connection to endurance racing goes further. Since 2001, Rolex has been the official watch of the 24 Hours of Le Mans and more recently, an official partner of the World Endurance Championship.

Brand ambassadors include the winningest driver in Le Mans history, Tom Kristensen. <http://iwmagazine.com/education/20160629/fast-friends-watches-and-racing/>



and Monterey Classic Car week.

Hublot



Hublot and Ferrari Partnership

Hublot is another LVMH watch brand with an extensive connection to auto racing. Since 2011, Hublot has been the official watch and the official timekeeper of Ferrari, and the official timekeeper and official watch of the Maranello, Italy-based juggernaut's Formula One team, Scuderia Ferrari.

The relationship has generated a large number of limited edition Hublot-Ferrari timepieces including the innovative MP-05 LaFerrari.





Hublot Big Bang Ferrari Carbon Titanium 401

Hublot sponsorships extend into sports car racing as well with backing of the AF Corse team in the WEC GTE class and Scuderia Corsa in the American IMSA

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