

CLASSIC DRIVER

Icons of watchmaking history no.13: Panerai Luminor Marina



In our 'Icons of Watchmaking' series, Gisbert L. Brunner provides his expert opinion on wristwatches with a cult status. This week, we dive into exciting underwater worlds with the Panerai Luminor Marina.

When Giovanni Panerai opened his watchmaker's shop in 1860 on the Ponte alle Grazie in Florence, he would never have guessed how valuable his name would eventually become in the watch world. It took around 56 years for the small shop to transform itself into a brand of international standing.

Under the new name of Officine Panerai, the company produced the initial prototypes of a diver's watch, which were first completed in 1936. The cushion-shaped watches were then equipped with the most dependable movements from Rolex. The legibility of the watch, in combination with the reliable components, met the expectations of the Italian Navy, and just two years later their combat frogmen were equipped with 'Radiomir Panerai' watches. The main task of this elite unit was to mount daring attacks on enemy ships, with the aim of sinking them.

The late 1950s, however, were dedicated to the 'Luminor'. The new Panerai had the cushion-shaped case and the well-known Radiomir dial, but it was also equipped with a patented mechanism to improve water resistance; a locking lever on the crown pressed against the casing to prevent the unwanted intrusion of water. After a short break, 1993 saw an Italian-led comeback in the form of the Luminor Marina. Since 1997, the Richemont has been the master of up-to-30m water resistant timepieces. The current Luminor Marina

1959 3 Days Automatic remains very close to the original design, but now has an exclusive caliber.

Next week we will present the classic Patek Philippe Nautilus.

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