

QP Bookshelf

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IWC Schaffhausen: Engineering Time Since 1868 by Manfred Fritz, Paulo Coelho and Enki Bilal (Benteli Verlag, £150). Hardback, 536 pages with over 500 images. ISBN 978-3-7165-163-17.

Enormous, weighty, an objet d'art: IWC's new volume has no precedents in watch book publishing. It's not even easy to find the right word to describe it (a cornucopia? a compendium?) as it contains a history, detailed studies of the various watches, an appendix of IWC calibres, superb period photos and luscious new ones and, in keeping with IWC's penchant for involving cultural icons in its milieu, seven original stories by literary giant Paulo Coelho, illustrated with new drawings by Enki Bilal. Three books in one, perhaps?

It starts with a highly-readable history, where you will learn about the company's roots in the USA, the various 'dynasties' that controlled the brand over the years – even how that giant of psychology, Carl Jung, was an investor in the brand. The middle section contains Coelho's tales, a break from the hard facts, a delicious intermission. Lastly, there are chapters on Da Vinci, pilots' watches, Portofino, Portuguese, ladies' watches, specials and pocket watches.

A book too large for your lap, you open it on a table and savour it. That's the least it deserves. Oh, and probably the honour of the best single-make watch book. Ever.

We have 1 copy of IWC Schaffhausen: Engineering Time Since 1868 to give away, for details see the bottom of the page.



Montblanc Writing Time by Franco Cognigni, Gisbert Brunner and Reinhard Meis (Flammarion, £115). Hardback, 290 pages, fully illustrated. ISBN 978-208030-1581.

Given Montblanc's relative youth as a watchmaker, one would be forgiven for thinking that a history at this stage would be akin to an autobiography by Carey Mulligan – an Academy Award nominee, true, but still only 25. The analogy is apt: Montblanc is already responsible for the astonishing Nicolas Rieussec and Metamorphosis watches, and I dream about the Sport DLC Chronograph, but the firm can not yet be described as venerable. This book, though, is deceptive because, within its covers, lies the story not just of Montblanc's horological adventures, but also those of one of the most admirable watch brands of all time: Minerva.

Chronograph collectors don't mind that Minerva has been a well-kept secret: prices for vintage Minerva chronographs are still realistic. With the name enjoying renewed life thanks to the Montblanc connection, it's only a matter of time before their prices appreciate. As this book reveals, Minerva, established in 1858 in Villeret, Switzerland, mastered the art of the chronograph, resulting in a litany of superb movements for special applications, from sport to the military. The highlights of this volume include photos of ultra-rare models and a glorious fold-out display of enamel dials.

Along the way, Minerva's and Montblanc's stories are interwoven, culminating in the latter acquiring the former in 2007, the two creating the Minerva Institute for Research in Fine Watchmaking. This in turn enabled Montblanc to be elevated with amazing rapidity to the ranks of *manufacture* and to create such masterpieces as the aforementioned Rieussec and Metamorphosis. My only complaint? Nowhere on the book's covers does it mention Minerva.

We have 1 copy of Montblanc Writing Time to give away, for details see the bottom of the page.

Reader giveaways: To enter a draw to win one of the books on this page, please send a postcard with your name and address and which book draw you are entering to QP Magazine, AS&K Skylight, 1-19 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1NU. Please use a separate postcard for each book applied for. **Closing date for entries 10 May 2011.**

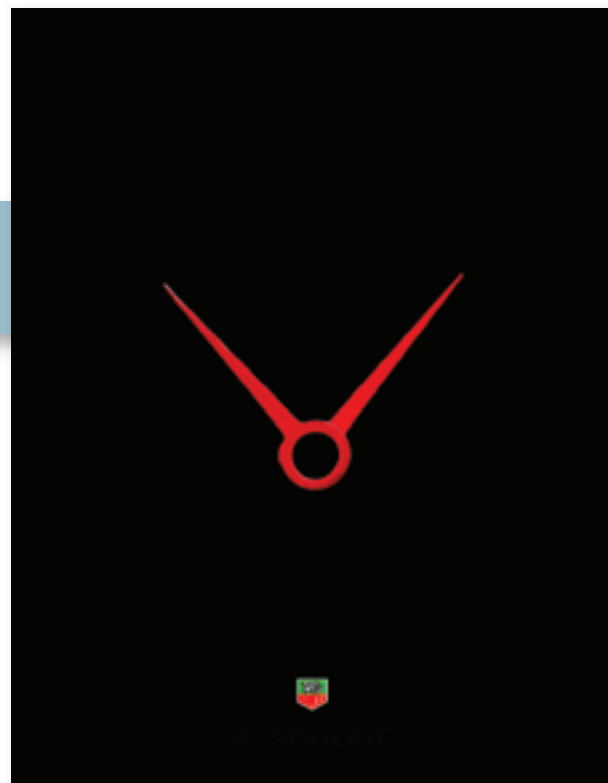


Rolex Gallery by Giorgia and Guido Mondani (Guido Mondani Editore, €140). Hardback, 232 pages and over 1,000 illustrations. ISBN 978-3-7165-163-17.

Guido Mondani, though he sold off his massive collection of Rolexes, remains one of the world's most revered experts of the marque. He publishes, with daughter Giorgia, massive volumes devoted to specific models such as GMT and Submariner, or comprehensive, data-rich collecting guides. Unusually, *Rolex Gallery* is more in keeping with John Goldberger's books: page after page of wonderful photos and minimal description, simply there as a feast for the eyes. This does not, however, suggest a lack of substance. If you read Mondani's pitch, the book serves as an introduction to Rolex collecting and, at the same time, to Mondani's catalogue.

In their own words, *Rolex Gallery* is, "a clear, detailed and updated guide for all those who want to approach and understand the market of Rolex wristwatches. This book is within everyone's reach." Given that the company's regular titles cost between €250 and €960, this is something of a bargain. For your money, you get over 1,000 images, in chapters for Air-King, Bubble Back, Chronographs, Daytona, Explorer, GMT-Master, Milgauss, Oyster Date, DateJust, Day-Date, Prince, Quartz, Submariner, Turn-O-Graph, Yacht Master and more. Each is covered by a selection of models with minimal descriptions. You'll never tire of gazing at the images. But the odds are, this teaser will make you order Mondani's heftier tomes.

We have 1 copy of Rolex Gallery to give away, for details see bottom of the page.



TAG Heuer: Created in Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of TAG Heuer by Nick Foulkes (Assouline, £92). Hardback, 220 pages, fully illustrated. ISBN 978-2759404124.

Once you get past the sheer size and mass of this book (385x300x37mm) – one of the largest watch volumes I've ever seen and only a few centimetres off Mondani's huge book on the Rolex Submariner – you have to take a step back and re-align your expectations. You might, as I did, assume that it is the final word on the history of TAG Heuer. That it most certainly is not. It is, as the extended title suggests, a celebration, not an academic fount of facts.

Its size is deliberate as it's an enabler: this is a vast landscape for immense, eye-filling illustrations, presented in the manner of an art book with no compromises in print quality. Boasting the services of Nick Foulkes, text is concise and includes a detailed company timeline.

What this work truly celebrates is a brand closely involved with sport, with motor racing, with innovative and radical takes on how chronographs can be designed and on larger-than-life personalities. No TAG Heuer aficionado – and, as Bonhams December 2010 sale proves, there are many – will want to be without it, although collectors hungry for more historical information may need to reference drier, less visually-impressive volumes.

We have 1 copy of TAG Heuer to give away, for details see the bottom of the page.