



GRAND PRIX DE MONACO HISTORIQUE

CHOPARD - GENEVE - SWISS

50m / 165ft

7668

1423878

A vintage car, possibly a Jaguar, is shown in a tropical setting with palm trees and a building in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark gradient at the bottom where the text is located.

Return to Monte Carlo



Chopard's sponsorship of the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique works on all sorts of levels, but boiled down to the essentials, the pairing simply fits. QP went along to enjoy the action and to find out what makes the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique such a perfect match for Chopard.

James Gurney

Previous page: Case-back engraved with the Grand Prix de Monaco inscription and the logo of the Automobile Club de Monaco.

Below: Ferrari 312B driven by Jacky Ickx.



Sponsoring events, whether cultural, sporting or otherwise, requires that the brand sits well with the activity sponsored - an apparently obvious point that was thrown into surprising relief at the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique, the Principality's biannual celebration of its matchless history in motorsport. QP was there with Chopard who sponsor the event, which seemed natural enough, but as the GP cars from the late 60's and early 70's roared around the track, my assumptions about sponsorship were swept up in the slipstream as a strange and wonderful assortment of long forgotten brand names flashed past. Names that somehow added to the glamour and nostalgia of the whole event.

Names of old

Lotus in 1972 was not just "Lotus" or "Team Lotus" but "JPS Lotus", the distinctive black and gold livery achieving iconic status following the surprise championship win of Emerson Fittipaldi. Other brands such as Martini and Marlboro became equally inseparable from the Grand Prix cars of the era, but the name that set the train of thought in motion was Yardley. That gloriously inappropriate, at least when seen from 2008, main sponsor of teams such as Brabham and Surtees during the 1970's; though why cigarettes and alcohol seem more appropriate than after-shave is, most likely, a question of persistence more than anything else.



This train of minor reminiscence is part of what makes Grand Prix de Monaco Historique the event it is, the details being the trigger for stronger memories and associations and the extra dimension that makes the weekend add up to more than the admittedly stellar entry list and alluring back-drop. As captivating as Monaco and the individual cars are, it is the circuit itself that gives Monaco its legendary status. Compared to most circuits, changes have been minor over the years, meaning that character remains essentially unchanged, adding extra spice to the sight of Bugatti's, Lotus's and Maserati's speeding up towards the Casino as equally evocative names such as Fangio, Hill and Senna echo from the PA system.



The races might not be fought to quite the extreme levels that the following week's Formula 1 Grand Prix entail, but the difference is hard to spot, particularly as the unforgiving circuit took its near



the savour of hot engines and stressed rubber that pervades the track

priceless toll of vintage metal on more than one occasion – try telling the lucky survivors that their racing lacked intensity. Collisions apart, the nose to tail nature of some of the races was all that could be hoped for.

Over and above the racing and the savour of hot engines and stressed rubber that pervades the track, the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique has another dimension that makes the weekend extraordinary and this is the relatively open access to the paddock, where owners, drivers and a deeply knowledgeable crowd watch or perform marvels of mechanics, under pressure, as machines designed for a few hundred hours of life at the limit, are coaxed into action. Even without the noise and the atmosphere, the paddock would be an exceptional tableau of motor-racing history. There were seven pre-war Bugatti's, a swarm of BRM's, Cooper's and Brabham's and a parade of Ferrari Grand Prix cars ranging from 1952 to the F2004.

Perfect match

And what of Chopard's involvement? Karl-Fredrick Scheufele, Chopard's co-president, has long been an enthusiast of all things automotive and was a constant and clearly contented presence throughout the weekend. Chopard having sponsored the Mille Miglia for twenty years, the decision to become involved in the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique in 2002 was hardly a step in the dark, particularly given Karl-Fredrick's friendship with Jacky Ickx, who was to be seen at the wheel of a Ferrari 312B in the parade of historic Ferrari and also piloting an Auto-Union replica.

Part of the attraction for Karl-Fredrick and Chopard is simply down to the quality of the event itself, "In Monaco this year I was really pleased to see how well the event has grown up in so short a time. 2008 is only the 4th year of the Grand Prix Historique yet the public interest and turn out was incredible. I think what is so special about this particular race is that



This page & bottom of previous: Grand Prix de Monaco Historique 2008 has been sponsored by Chopard since 2002. Over 200 drivers take part, driving voituettes and Grand Prix cars dating from 1947 to 1978 around the Principality's famous circuit.



Top: Jacky Ickx driving Chopard's replica of a 1939 Auto-Union V12

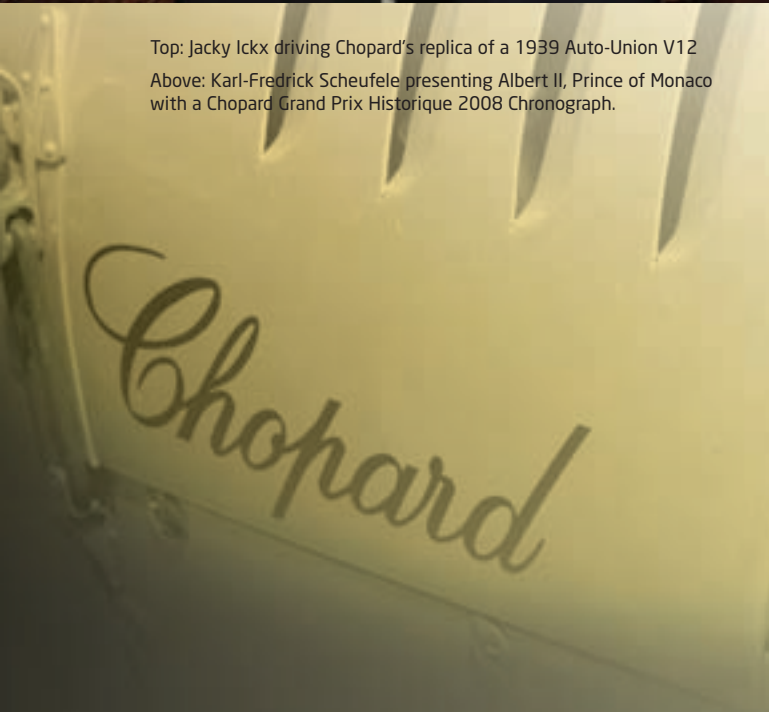
Above: Karl-Fredrick Scheufele presenting Albert II, Prince of Monaco with a Chopard Grand Prix Historique 2008 Chronograph.

This train of minor reminiscence is part of what makes Grand Prix de Monaco Historique the event it is

although it takes place around one of the world's most famous and beautiful tracks, it is still very much accessible to the public. The Automobile Club of Monaco is really doing a great job as organiser and in a very short time it has definitely become one of the top events in the Classic Cars calendar."

The Chopard logo was near ubiquitous at the event, but I was interested to find out how familiar the brand was among the audience at hand. While much of the value of the association is in photogenic terms, supporting sales of Grand Prix de Monaco Historique watches around the world, the spectators and participants represent an important marketing target in themselves. So I was pleasantly surprised to discover that a healthy proportion of the crowd in the paddock were not only familiar with Chopard's involvement in classic cars through the Mille Miglia, but that the Mille Miglia watch was much in evidence. Although small in numbers, the audience here, the majority of whom seem to be involved with one or other of the cars racing, can confer a credibility that ripples far wider than their immediate circles.

And what of the watches that Chopard have made to carry the Grand Prix de Monaco Historique name? This year, Chopard chose a chronograph with 42.5 mm case in steel or, as a limited edition of 500, in rose gold. The case-back is engraved with the logo of the "Automobile Club de Monaco" and the letters Grand Prix de Monaco Historique and the crown has a racing steering wheel. All very acceptable and sensible to wear in the paddock, which is probably why Mr. Scheufele brushed aside, in the politest manner possible, the idea that these watches might be more interesting with LUC manufacture movements.





Chopard Grand Prix de Monaco Historique 2008 Chronograph. The chronograph is available in stainless steel with black barenia strap (£3,010) or stainless steel bracelet (£3,860), or in the limited edition of 500 18 ct. rose gold with crocodile strap (£8,780).