

The QP Bookshelf: A Summer Selection

Ken Kessler

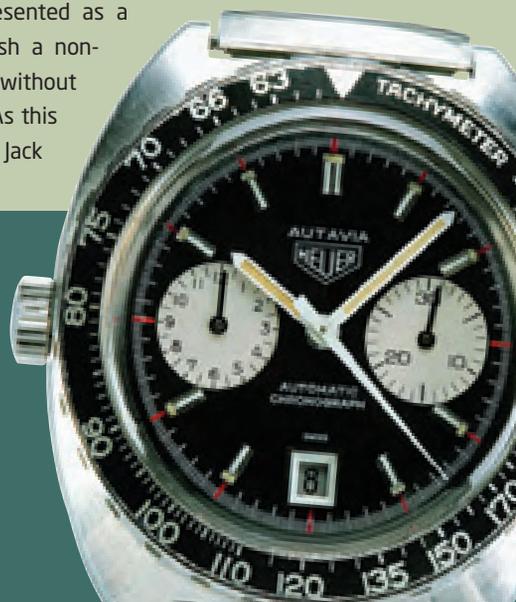
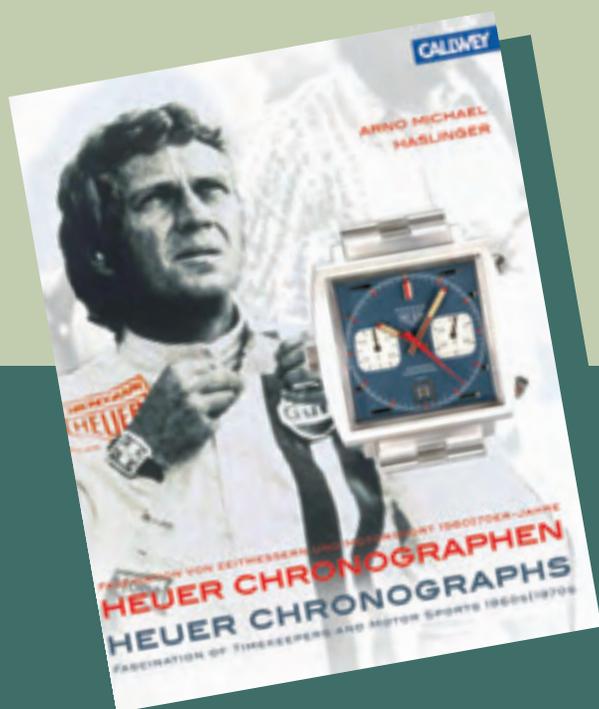
Heuer Chronographs by Arno Michael Haslinger

Published by Callwey.
288 pages, fully illustrated, text
in German and English, hard covers.
ISBN 978-3-7667-1755-9.
www.callwey.de
Price: €68, available from
www.amazon.de

Two lessons can be learned from this nigh-on-perfect book. Though they may seem almost mind-numbingly obvious, all too often they are ignored. The first is to ensure that the author not only knows the subject intimately, but that he or she understands what a historian should accomplish with such a topic, that is, aim squarely at the intended audience: fire-breathing enthusiasts. Such tomes are not purchased by the casual reader. Because of this, and because Haslinger is clearly an impassioned collector, Heuer Chronographs is precisely what any fan of the marque would want to see on his or her bookshelf.

But sometimes that's not enough in the way of credentials, so this book exemplifies an understanding of Lesson Two, which should be presented as a commandment, "Thou shalt not publish a non-fiction study involving living persons without their blessing, input and/or approval". As this volume includes an introduction by Jack

Heuer Autavia, ref. 1163v. The Autavia range arrived in 1962 and takes its name from AUTO-aviation, combining two important aspects of the Heuer programme; motorsports timekeeping and aeroplane cockpit instruments.



Heuer – surely its most prominent character – veracity is assured. Presented in the form of an interview, it sets the stage so the reader can dive straight into the most deliciously detailed coverage of Heuer's chronographs one is likely to find.

Lesson Two needs amplification, however. As has been demonstrated in the past by far too many watch books, merely being authorised by the manufacturer isn't any guarantee of completeness (let alone transparency or honesty). Let's face it: any book self-published or wholly authorised by an extant company is first and foremost a publicity vehicle. That's not to say such books must be inherently suspect: Omega's recent doorstop of an epic is proof of 100-point perfection, but it's atypical.

Because Heuer Chronographs is so focused, Haslinger sidesteps any problems in the area of intent because Heuer, in its current form, is not addressed. The subtitle of the book is 'Fascination of Timekeepers and Motorsports 1960s/1970s', which precludes any involvement from TAG-Heuer. The post-1985 era simply isn't addressed, and it's been covered elsewhere, for those whose interests include the current watches. This book is aimed instead at the purists, and not just those who worship at the altar of Heuer-*sans*-TAG: this book deals, as the subtitle says, solely with the company's chronographs vis a vis motorsport.

Once past a brief foreword and Jack Heuer's unadorned and precise replies to any questions you might have about the

brand's development, the reader is treated to an overview of the demand for classic Heuers. Next, a model timeline illustrates graphically when each model was in production. This sets you up for an A-Z presentation of Heuer chronographs, from Autavia to Verona, followed by a separate chapter dealing with Jacky Ickx, then the company's most important ambassador. A chapter on accessories, including bracelets, straps, boxes and other appendices, and one dedicated to the Calibre 11 automatic.

With the meat of the book being the studies of each model, the enthusiast can enjoy a hefty 232 pages concentrating on them model-by-model, with every watch presented in a two-page spread, with full text description and a glorious full-colour/full-page shot supported with detail photos. In-between are images that make up one of the most impressive collections of contemporary personality photos I've seen assembled for *any* watch title. Within this book's pages are images of many of the great drivers of the era, the inevitable Steve McQueen shots, Jack Lemmon hamming it up with a Nikon F while wearing a Heuer Camaro, Ferdinand Porsche with a scale model of the 911 Targa, a young Luca Montezemolo during his early days with Ferrari and Lotus' Colin Chapman operating a Heuer stopwatch.

If all watch books were this true to the promise of their titles, I'd never need to review another. It does what it says on the cover, in style and with utter competence and credibility. You simply cannot ask for more.

Heuer Montreal, re. 110503w. Following a strategy of expansion beyond the USA boarder, Heuer developed the model for the French-speaking city that had hosted the 1967 World Fair 1976 Olympic Games and Formula One racing since 1978.



Above: Heuer Jacky Ickx, ref. 429801r. Developed in 1972 bearing the name of the Formula One and Le Mans champion, who was also brand ambassador. The 'Jacky Ickx Easy Rider' model was a cheaper version allowing younger clients to access the brand. **Above right:** Heuer Daytona, re. 110203f. The Daytona takes its name from the famous 24-hour race at Daytona Beach in the USA from the late 1960s and 1970s. The watch used an integrated steel bracelet and was powered by the Calibre 12 automatic movement.



WATCHES by David Thompson

Published by the British Museum Press.
176 pages, over 270 colour illustrations,
hard covers.
ISBN 978-0-7141-5055-0.
www.britishmuseum.co.uk
Price: £25

As Curator of Horology at the British Museum, David Thompson's c.v. is pretty hard to top. What he has to accomplish here, though, is tougher than writing a magnum opus: because this is presumably for sale at the museum, for an audience far less focussed than, say, the readership of QP, he has to distil a lifetime's worth of knowledge, covering a half-millennium, into one digestible volume.

As with every book I've ever picked up in a museum gift shop, this companion to Thompson's *Clocks* (2004) has to balance the general with the detailed, appealing to both novices and veterans. Equally, though, it shares a get-out-clause with *Omega - A Journey Through Time*: this book is conceived to complement the collection at the British Museum, the 77 watches discussed here being part of the assortment it holds. Thus, it cannot face criticism based on omissions. And one has to smile at Thompson's recognition of the task of narrowing down the selection to a manageable number from over 4,500 watches and movements in the museum's possession.

Fortunately for the reader, the British Museum doesn't have to discriminate, as do most watch museums run by individual manufacturers, so the timepieces aren't hampered by nationality and cover nearly the entire span of (portable) horological history. It commences with a German Tambour-cased clock from 1560 and ends with Casio's Titanium-Cased Radio Controlled Wave Ceptor from 2007. In-between you will find a dazzling array of milestones and rarities, presented uniformly as double-page spreads, copiously illustrated and described in a scholarly manner.

Ebel SA, hermetic purse watch La Chaux de Fonds, c.1930.



Thompson's style is deliberately matter-of-fact, given that this book is as much the museum's as it is his. Occasionally, examples of spirited reporting will appear quite unexpectedly, presumably to ensure that the reader stays alert. When describing a breathtaking Vuillamy Duplex Watch from 1821, for example, Thompson registers nearly audible shock with, "The watch must surely have been dropped with disastrous consequences." More importantly, while dealing with hard facts about each timepiece, he's careful to present each in an historical context, e.g. identifying the events that killed off English watch-making when describing the construction of a specific watch from 1860.

There is but one complaint: wristwatches, unfortunately, account for very little in this volume, which begs the need for a third if

this is truly the sequel to *Clocks*; when this is reprinted, it should be retitled *Pocket Watches*. This is not the whining of a wristwatch enthusiast: wristwatches are infinitely more important than pocket watches because they reached a far greater percentage of the world's population than pocket watches ever did. In this book, a mere seven or eight wristwatches cover the century in which portable timekeepers were finally rendered affordable for the masses. Even Rolex is represented not by its milestone Oyster (Harwood rightly receives credit for the workable automatic) but by a purse watch!

That aside, it's a fine - and sanely priced - souvenir of the museum. But I do hope they heed my plea for a third book. 🕒

David Bouguet, gold and enamel cased watch, 1650.



MS, gilt-brass tambour cased watch, south Germany, c. 1560.

Johann Conrad Wolf, silver cased verge watch in the form of a skull, c. 1660.

