



The QP Bookshelf Part 4:

# Single Models

QP peruses the shelves for books dedicated to individual watch models

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It may shock some of you to hear there are watch books not just about single brands – which we'll start covering next month – but whole volumes covering *single models*. Some are obvious candidates, such as the books accompanying watches' rebirths and anniversaries, or announcing major new timepieces. Others are simply the work of obsessive collectors. And while manufacturer-sanctioned titles may smack of hard-sell, even they transcend 'catalogue-ness' by virtue of their depth. In most cases, these stand-alone tomes are justifiable, due to truly 'classic' subject matter. However, more telling are the models yet to be so honoured with their own histories: the Breitling Navitimer and Patek Philippe's Calatrava spring to mind. If this review's inclusion of not one but two titles devoted to Omega's Speedmaster Professional strikes you as excessive, please note that we have just learned of two books recently published in Italy, on – surprise, surprise – the Rolex Submariner.



## Grand Complication

By Manfred Fritz

Hardback, 240 pages. Price: ca.€200.  
Published by Edition Stemmler, 1991. ISBN 3-7231-0437-1

One of the first 'modern' single-watch histories, this physically staggering book (it measures 27 x 32 cm and was printed on 200 gsm paper!) uses 365 illustrations and a copious volume of text in recounting the full saga of IWC's bid to create the most complicated wristwatch in the world. In doing so, it has set a standard not just for single-model books, but for watch books in general. The technique used is perfect, and has served as the blueprint for other single-model histories: Herr Fritz's narration progresses from the history of IWC through to the watch itself, from base movement to finished item. Fritz breaks it down complication-by-complication, and in doing so, sets the stage for what, in retrospect, is the story of today's current lust for complicated watches. Fitted with a clothbound slipcase and containing beautiful colour plates in a pocket at the back, it is as lavish as the watch it honours.



## Reverso – The Living Legend

By Manfred Fritz

Hardback, 344 pages. Price: ca.€85.  
Published by Edition Braus, 1992. ISBN 3-89466-034-1

Another archetypal single-model book, this massive volume accompanied the rebirth of Jaeger-LeCoultre's legendary watch in the early 1990s. As sumptuous as it gets, the production values will make you drool: prime quality paper, mouth-watering photos, and a slipcase decorated with a line drawing of the movement (an eye-popper in itself). Fritz, who also authored the inspirational *Grand Complication*, tells the full story of this iconic watch – how it was conceived, designed, manufactured, revived – whilst weaving in a general history of Jaeger-LeCoultre, sprinkled with anecdotes that will charm watch obsessives. Faultless.



## The Value Of Time

By Antonio Guccione

Hardback, 110 pages.  
Published by Officine Panerai, 1999.

A lesson learned: never judge a book by its cover. I thought I was buying a book about Panerai. Alas, it was sealed so I simply handed over however many Euros I was charged. And churlish though it may seem to criticise a collaboration between Panerai and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, the last thing I want is a book that contains nothing but artsy black and white portraits of 42 (mainly Italian) Panerai Luminor Marina owners. I had only heard of six – either due to my lack of sophistication or their obscurity. However, it was so pretentious that I wanted to go out and kick an Apple iBook owner on principle. I'd recommend you avoid this at all costs, even if you love pandas and dolphins – a disappointment, if only because such a fine timepiece as the Luminor Marina deserves so much more. Unfortunately, no alternative to *The Value of Time* exists, so we'll just have to wait until some industrious collector does justice to Panerai's definitive timepiece.



## Star Caliber 2000

Supervised by Celia Errico, Laurence Suessmeier,  
and Jean Siegenthaler

Hardback, 136 pages and DVD. Price: SFr.75.  
Published by Editions Scriptar, 2000. ISBN 2-88012-083-7

Published to accompany the launch of Patek Philippe's Star Caliber 2000, this book is a fitting tribute to one of the most complicated pocket watches ever made. Matching an LP sleeve in both size and format, it tells the full story of the model's creation, and its position within the Patek canon (to accomplish this, there is ample material on predecessors such as the Graves). Best of all, it is a multimedia experience: the transparent cutaways in the book are dazzling enough – reminiscent of school biology texts that showed the human body in sections. But it is the DVD in the back cover that brings it all to life.

So why the inclusion of a book on a pocket watch in *QP*? Simple: this masterpiece eventually led to the legendary Sky Moon Tourbillon.



### The Moon Watch: Omega Speedmaster Professional – The First And Only Watch Worn On The Moon

By Ignaz Miller

Paperback, 162 pages.  
Published by Omega SA, 1995.

Here is proof that not all hand-outs are lightweight sales vehicles. You had to know a friendly Omega retailer or buy a Speedmaster Pro to acquire this gem, and it's worth all the bootlicking the former might have entailed. Full-colour, large format and bursting with information, the book recounts the entire saga. But you get a rich 43 pages' worth of Omega's pre-Speedmaster history before you get to the Speedmaster Pro chapters. Superbly illustrated, packed with details of every model up to the publishing date, a log of space voyages – it is almost the best watch book freebie ever. Except for...



### A Time Capsule – Omega Speedmaster

By Kesaharu Imai

Paperback, 216 pages.  
Published by World Photo Press, 1998.

For my money, the best single-model watch book ever published, should there be an anorak in your cloakroom. And money doesn't even come into it: Omega gave these away via generous retailers. As with every watch book of Japanese authorship, like Imai's *Rolex: 2421 Uhren*, it goes beyond the retentive – coming up to its half-century, you will find the Speedmaster Professional to be a collector's nightmare, with tiers of variation to rival the myriad Rolex Submariners. Gloriously illustrated and so detailed that even trainspotters will blanch, this is *the* rôle model for watch-collecting books, whatever the topic. As a reality check, I heard that this and the above Omega titles are now trading for three-figure sums. But if Omega were only to reprint it and sell it for £29.95...

**Next issue:**  
Single-brand histories

**Further information:**  
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