



Watches & Wheels

***If ever anything could be called poetry in motion,
it's the wristwatch - and the motorcycle***

BY Keith W.Strandberg

Vehicles have always been linked to watches. As early as the first powered transportation, watch manufacturers have been coming up with new and innovative ways to time them, provide time on the dashboards and handlebars and celebrate that partnership.

Over the last few years, motorcycle and watch partnerships seem to be coming into the forefront, and it makes sense. Talk to a confirmed motorcycle lover and chances are he or she is fascinated by watches too. Motorcycles and watches are two ways that people can separate themselves from the pack. If they ride the new MV Agusta F4 CC Claudio Castiglioni or the latest Screaming Eagle Harley-Davidson, they are saying something about themselves. Watches do the same thing, only a little more subtly – and timepieces take

up nowhere near as much space in the garage.

Both watches and motorcycles have engines that make them run, and a complicated watch movement can have more moving parts than even the most sophisticated motorcycle engine. Both are designed to run at the highest level of performance. Though a watch doesn't roar like an engine, the back and forth motion of the balance wheel, the movement of the gear train and the resulting tick tock are just as emotional and seductive. The more complicated movements and engines are, the more interested those in the know will be.

Timing and racing have been related from the start. In MotoGP, endurance racing or motocross, lap times are critical in gauging position and performance in the race. Watches, and specifically chronographs, have been timing motorcycle racing events (and your jog around the block) since the first watch was produced.



Jean Richard and MV Augusta team up for the production of limited edition watches and Brutale motorcycles

In 2007, JeanRichard and MV Agusta announced a partnership involving limited-edition MV Agusta-themed watches and JeanRichard-themed Brutale motorcycles. MV Agusta is a collector’s motorcycle, boasting the highest-priced production motorcycle ever made (over US\$120,000) as well as the fastest production motorcycle ever made (312 kph), and collaborating with JeanRichard on a series of MV Agusta-themed watches makes perfect sense.

Says Ron Jackson, president, JeanRichard NA: “The idea of the partnership was conceived at the highest levels, and we quickly figured out that there are a lot of similarities between the brands and the products – production process, quality of manufacturing, limited quantities, excellence and more. Both companies create a fascination with mechanical objects designed with an artistic bent.

“The special edition 1078 Brutale really celebrates the marriage between JeanRichard and MV Agusta. You can see MV Agusta on a JeanRichard timepiece, and JeanRichard on a MV Agusta motorcycle as well. Both brands are renowned for their engines/movements and their functional style. For sure, the MV Agusta motorcycles live up to their slogan as ‘Motorcycle Art.’ The excellence and attention to detail is the same as with JeanRichard watches.”

Jaeger-LeCoultre has an ongoing relationship with MotoGP living legend Valentino Rossi. The latest watch that has resulted from this collaboration is the Master Compressor Extreme World Alarm ‘46’ (limited to 246 pieces in pink gold and titanium and 946 in titanium), a world time watch with a mechanical alarm, for motorcyclists who need to get up in the morning on their “long way



round” trips. The 46.5mm watch is powered by the new Jaeger-LeCoultre caliber 912, suspended in Jaeger’s proprietary shock absorbing system. The gong for the alarm, set easily via the window on the left side of the dial, surrounds the movement and is struck by a hammer, optimizing the sound of the alarm.

In keeping with this tribute to Rossi, some of the traditional cities on the world time ring of the watch have been replaced with racetrack names in those time zones, e.g. Mugello, Laguna Seca, Donington and others, and the case back has an engraved black lacquered “46” (Rossi’s MotoGP number) and Rossi’s signature.

“I have always liked watches, but before I visited the Jaeger-LeCoultre manufacture, my appreciation and understanding was not the same,” Rossi says. “The precision and attention to detail is amazing, the watches are like my racing bikes.”



Jaeger-LeCoultre’s Master Compressor Extreme World Alarm ‘46’ is a special line built in collaboration with MotoGP living legend Valentino Rossi





BRM has incorporated the lines of custom Ecosse Motorcycles into 10 limited edition timepieces



Tissot has had a long time relationship with racer Nicky Hayden



Breitling Ducati Master Corse

Tissot is the official timer of MotoGP worldwide, with signage and watch sales at the tracks. In addition, the brand is continuing its relationship with MotoGP racer Nicky Hayden, introduced a new, limited-edition mechanical version of its MotoGP watch as a tribute to the American MotoGP champion Hayden, with a special helmet-like case.

A new limited edition MotoGP watch was also introduced at BaselWorld, complete with interchangeable case backs engraved with all the different MotoGP circuits.

“MotoGP is a perfect match for Tissot,” says Bernie Schreiber, international sponsorship manager for Tissot. “It’s a global sport and we are a global brand. We needed a platform to communicate our technology, our sporting expertise and our passion. In addition, the sponsorship isn’t just one event; it’s a whole season. Every MotoGP race is televised globally. MotoGP give us incredible visibility.”

BRM, which specializes in skeletonized movements with a motorcycle engine feel, has a partnership with Ecosse Motorcycles, a

high-end custom motorcycle builder. BRM incorporated the lines of the Ecosse motorcycle into a unique limited edition matching timepiece – each of the 10 watches made will be engraved with the same serial number as its corresponding motorcycle. The automatic chronograph’s brushed-titanium bezel reflects the brushed titanium on the motorcycle chassis, and both bike and watch share the same color scheme.

Breitling just announced its partnership with Ducati and Ducati racing for branded watches that showcase the Ducati style and spirit. Look for the Ducatistas to jump all over these new timepieces.

Bulova is continuing its relationship with Harley-Davidson as well, making a mixture of quartz watches and mechanical watches that are sold through Harley dealers and watch retailers.

Sports watch company Reactor uses a custom Suzuki M109R to help publicize its performance watches. Luminox just commissioned two custom bikes to help market its rough and rugged watches, while Tutima has a custom Harley that the company’s sales manager uses when visiting retailers.

Steve Soffa, owner of Hard Core Watches, combines art and motorcycles with watches. Each watch starts as a painting, and then the painting is incorporated into the watch.

“People are buying my watches for the lifestyle of each piece,” Soffa explains. “Everything that we do is custom painted and hand set – my company is really a lifestyle company more than a watch company. If you like the lifestyle and you want to take off your Patek and wear my watches with your special outfit. My watches are artwork on a timepiece. I am trying to change the way people view time.”

In addition, Soffa designs motorcycles with the same themes, using the motorcycles in the stores to attract customers.

Watches and motorcycles will always have the engine in common, and for people who love all things mechanical, it can be a real draw towards high end watches. Affiliating a watch brand with a motorcycle company makes sense, as the link between high performance motorcycles easily crosses over to timepieces. ★

Motorcycle Watch Art

Engines and watches have gone together for many, many years. There are watches that are inspired by motorcycles, engines, cars, racing and more. Now, thanks to José Geraldo Reis Pfau from Brazil, there are incredible pieces of motorcycle art made from watch parts.

That’s right, watch parts. And, as you can tell by the accompanying pictures, watch parts make very convincing miniature motorcycles.

“I wanted to have a hobby, something that I could do on the weekends. I started doing pieces of art with keys,” explains Pfau. “A friend of mine who owns a jewelry shop gave me many broken watches that customers left in the shop when they bought new ones. Instead of going into the trash, I used them to make the motorcycles.

“I brought the watches to my house and started to separate the pieces,” he continues. “First I wanted to create human images, but the round shape of the watches led me to create wheels. Most of the pieces are made using three watches: the front wheel, the back wheel and the engine.”

It takes Pfau an entire weekend to create one motorcycle from the broken watch parts and pieces, and he prefers to use mechanical watches, as they have more pieces to use in his art. “The art becomes richer in the details,” he says. Pfau is excited about the fact that people all over the world are seeing his pieces via his website (<http://www.pfau.com.br>).

Pfau works from his home in Santa Catarina, Brazil and he showcases his work in exhibitions in his home country. “I probably have almost 300 pieces,” he says. “I have small ones, big ones, one with side cars, motocross pieces, choppers, customs, motorcycles with V8 engines, tricycles, quads and more.”

Kudos to Mr. Pfau for taking old watches that were going to be discarded and giving them new life as pieces of motorcycle art.

