

PANERAI

LABORATORIO DI IDEE.

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THE SEA, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

While the Panerai brand was founded in Florence in 1860, the Panerai watch came into being in the world of the depths of the sea. To be precise, the depths of the Mediterranean, where in March 1936 the commandos of the Italian Navy first tested the prototype created by Panerai in response to the request from the General Staff to develop “a special luminous underwater watch”. The Royal Navy, as it was then called, evaluated the creations of many established producers, but the only example which satisfied all the rigorous requirements of the military authorities was the one which would become Panerai’s first prototype, and also, according to many, the first professional underwater model in the history of watchmaking: the Radiomir.

In the years before the Radiomir was created, watches had already been made that were water-resistant because they had a double case, that is, they were inserted in a hermetically sealed case, or fitted in a screw case that could resist the pressure of water to a certain depth. But water-resistance alone was not enough for the Italian military authorities, who required a watch which met several other requirements that were fundamental for the commandos who would operate underwater for long periods, frequently in critical conditions.

When the Florentine watchmaker Panerai created the Radiomir, the company had already been a trusted supplier of the Navy for some time. In 1938, two years after the success of the prototype, it put into production the first ten examples for the men of the naval assault forces which were part of the Italian Navy's Submarine Command. On their wrists, over of the waterproof suit of rubberised fabric, the commandos wore both a watch, the indispensable instrument for synchronising all wartime operations, and other precision instruments developed by Panerai, such as the depth gauge and the compass.

Equipped only with this vital equipment, the divers of the Submarine Command carried out their operations riding slow-speed torpedoes (Siluri a Lenta Corsa or S.L.C.), special underwater vessels which carried two operators seated astride the vessel. On these human torpedoes, also known as "pigs", the commandos explored the depths of ports in the Mediterranean under extremely difficult conditions, in the darkness of the night in waters which were frozen and muddy. They descended 40 metres below the surface of the sea and remained immersed for hours, depending only on their instruments, which consequently had to be guaranteed to provide the maximum resistance, reliability, accuracy and legibility.

The identity of Officine Panerai is still today that of the company which invented the Radiomir. In the years which followed it has created a collection of timepieces which have become part of the history of watchmaking for their uniqueness and authenticity. About a century after developing its first instruments for the Italian Navy, Panerai still finds its own reference universe in the world of the sea: in every new creation it instils that remarkable blend of history, technical skill and design which makes Panerai watches unique.





OFFICINE PANERAI AT THE SALON INTERNATIONAL DE LA HAUTE HORLOGERIE 2013

History, technology, design. The Officine Panerai collection presented at the Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie 2013 rises from the depths of the sea and of time, to affirm once more the unmistakable identity of these top-of-the range sports watches in which everyone produced is a synthesis of these elements.

The new Submersibile range of watches is a perfect interpretation of this synthesis. Designed with the vocation of exploring the depths of the sea, the new Luminor Submersibile 1950 3 Days Power Reserve Automatic Bronzo and the Luminor Submersibile 1950 3 Days Automatic Ceramica have movements developed and produced entirely in the Officine Panerai manufacture in Neuchâtel. These are combined with cases incorporating research into technology and case materials, in a design where every detail is faithfully inspired by the watches created by Panerai for the Italian Navy during the last century.

The family of in-house Panerai movements is enhanced by two important novelties in the field of chronographs: the P.9100 calibre, the first Panerai automatic movement with the chronograph flyback function, and the P.9100/R, which combines the chronograph function with the Regatta countdown for the start of yacht races. The regatta countdown is an instrument of the highest technical content for all the sailors and navigators who take part each year in the international races of the Panerai Classic Yachts Challenge, the main international circuit for vintage and classic yachts.



The new Panerai collection includes several fascinating versions of the historic Radiomir 1940 case. This represents the moment of transition, in about 1940, from the first cushion case that was characteristic of the Radiomir of 1936 and 1938 to the more massive Luminor, distinguished by the device protecting the winding crown, the definitive version of which was established in about 1950.

Finally, the new and extraordinarily complex tourbillon squelette is a testimony to the skill and expertise of the master watchmakers of Neuchâtel and the research and development carried out by Officine Panerai's Workshop of Ideas. It is used in the first Panerai pocket watch, a remarkable timepiece in ceramic reserved for collectors of the most exclusive and sophisticated Special Editions. This watch is an original creation which brings together the P.2005/S movement and the Radiomir case in ceramic.