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**THE MILESTONE
WATCHES OF
PANERAI,
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MAGAZINE**



PANERAI



Over the years, Panerai has evolved from a maker of military-grade tool watches into one of the world's most coveted luxury brands. Here are the most significant watches in its illustrious history.

BY GIBBERT L. BRUNNER

THE MILESTONE WATCHES OF PANERAI

Foto: Alinari/Luce

MILESTONES
Panerai



Foto: Courtesy Ufficio Storico Marina Militare



Foto: Panerai Archives

**RADIOMIR, 1936, 47 MM,
“CALIFORNIA” DIAL, ARABIC
AND ROMAN NUMERALS**

The first wristwatch made by Officine Panerai was developed to meet the strict standards of the Royal Italian Navy, which had requested a solid divers’ watch that could withstand extreme water pressure. It had a 47-mm-diameter case and a so-called California dial, a style previously used, in a smaller size, by Rolex. Panerai used a 16-ligne Cortébert caliber 620 for the movement because Rolex couldn’t provide a caliber large enough to fit the huge case. Only 10 of these watches, which were ordered specifically for naval commandos, are believed to have been made. This first Panerai watch was called the Radiomir, combining the two Italian terms “radio” (radium) and “mira” (sight).



**RADIOMIR, EARLY 1940S,
47 MM, NEW CASE**

In the early 1940s, Panerai replaced the original cushion-shaped case of the Radiomir — which had plain wire-loop strap attachments welded to the case that would sometimes break off under extreme conditions — with a new 47-mm steel case with integrated lugs. This watch retained the original’s screw-down crown and caseback and its hand-wound Cortébert movement, and added the now-familiar “sandwich” dial with four distinctive Arabic numerals plus indexes.



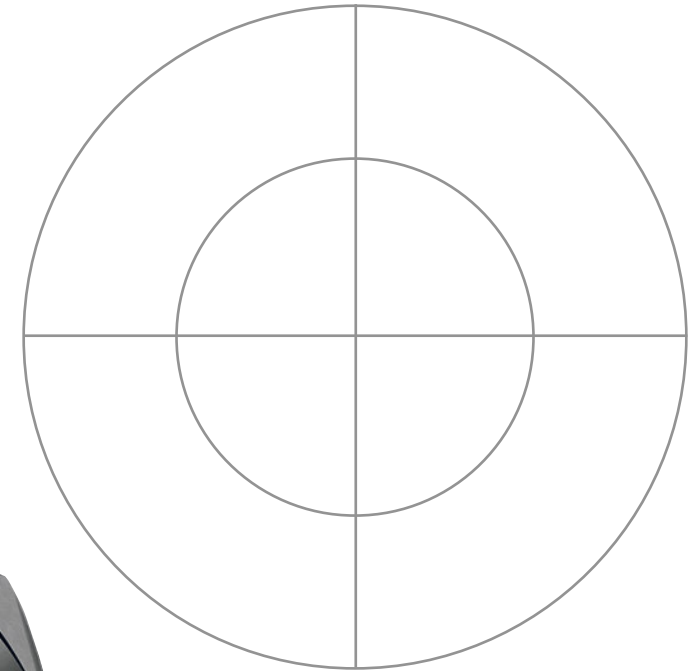
**MARE NOSTRUM, 1943,
52 MM, PROTOTYPE**

In ancient Rome people called the Mediterranean Sea “Mare Nostrum,” which means “our sea,” because their fleet controlled the waters for centuries. In 1943, Panerai developed three prototypes of this big, 52-mm chronograph, equipped with a movement from Swiss watch company Angelus, the hand-wound mechanical caliber 215. The Mare Nostrum was designed as a so-called “deck watch,” which officers used on the decks of ships to coordinate the time on a precision pendulum clock with that on a maritime chronometer. This was important to determine the degree of longitude on the high seas. These watches never went into production due to the war.



**MARINA MILITARE, LATE 1940S
- EARLY 1950S, 47 MM, CROWN
ON LEFT SIDE**

This watch was produced in the late 1940s for divers of the Royal Italian Navy and was among the first to include the crown-protecting system found on Panerai watches today — a bridge device assembled on top of the crown with a movable lever, which clamps the crown and the sealing gasket close to the case. In order to wind the watch and adjust the time, the lever had to be opened to release the crown. The divers wore the watch on their right wrist, because they had a compass and depth gauge on their left. So Panerai simply vertically flipped the case and the movement. This watch also contained the Cortébert caliber 620, but in this case with 15 jewels.





**LUMINOR MARINA MILITARE,
1950S, 47 MM, SCREW-DOWN
CROWN**

Rolex launched its first Oyster Perpetual watch, with a self-winding movement, in the 1950s. Panerai, which sometimes used Rolex movements, would have been happy to use the new Rolex NA 620 and NA 630 movements in its own models, but they were too small for the Panerai cases. This prototype, produced for the Royal Italian Navy in the 1950s and used as a demonstration model, can be considered something of a transition to automatic winding. The 47-mm steel case, with integrated lugs and screw-down crown, contained a 16-ligne manual-winding Angelus movement, whose fully wound, eight-day power reserve dealt with the issue of daily winding almost as well as an automatic winding movement would have. The name “Luminor” came from the new, tritium-based luminous substance used on the dial and hands.



**LUMINOR, 1950S, 47 MM,
CROWN-PROTECTING DEVICE**

Panerai developed a new gasket system with a crown protection device in the 1940s to fix problems with its screw-down crowns. After it was tested successfully by the navy, this device was finally patented in Italy in July 1956. This is the first model with the patent number engraved on the bridge of the crown protector. This Luminor also contained the Angelus 240 movement, with eight-day power reserve.

**RADIOMIR, 1956, 60 MM,
BEZEL WITH IMMERSION
TIME INDICATION**

This watch’s huge, 60-mm steel case incorporated what was, at the time, a new feature: a rotating bezel with luminous marker. The divers of the Egyptian Navy commissioned the watch, nicknamed “L’Egiziano” (Egypt), and used it to quickly read their remaining immersion times. It was produced in 1956 and contained an Angelus eight-day movement. A round logo with “8 Giorni Brevettato” (“8 days, patented”) was printed next to the 3 o’clock index on the dial. Only about 100 pieces were made.



TITANIUM, 1980S, PROTOTYPE

The 1980s saw the debut of Panerai’s first watch with a titanium case. Titanium is about half as heavy as steel but just as strong, and more resistant to corrosion. The material is also appealing to people with sensitive skin due to its non-allergenic properties. All those attributes led Panerai to develop this titanium-case prototype, which had a 5-mm-thick sapphire crystal, immersion-time bezel with a tritium marker, crown-protection device and water-resistance up to 1,000 meters. This watch used an ETA movement, modified by Dubois Dépraz.

**LUMINOR MARINA MILITARE,
44 MM, PVD-COATED**

Watches with black cases had been popular since 1974's Porsche Design chronograph debuted, and Panerai introduced its first such watch 20 years later. The Luminor Marina Militare had a 44-mm steel case, coated with a matte-black PVD coating, which was water-resistant to 300 meters. Panerai outfitted the watch with a Unitas 6497 movement.



**LUMINOR DAYLIGHT SLYTECH,
1993, INDIVIDUAL DIAL**

Hollywood star Sylvester ("Sly") Stallone famously became a fan of Panerai in 1994, after running across its watches in a boutique in Florence while shooting the movie "Daylight." Stallone so loved the Luminor watch he bought there, one of only 677 commercial pieces produced, that he ordered from Panerai a special edition of that model, limited to 101 pieces, called the "Luminor Daylight Slytech." Delivered in 1995, the watch was water-resistant to 150 meters and had the actor's signature engraved on the caseback. Several of these first Slytechs were purchased by Johann Rupert, the main shareholder of the Richemont group. Rupert liked the brand so much that the Richemont Group acquired it in 1997.



**MARE NOSTRUM SLYTECH,
1995, 42 MM, CHRONOGRAPH**

Stallone also commissioned another special edition, the Mare Nostrum Slytech, a chronograph with a 42-mm steel case and a tachymeter scale engraved in the bezel to calculate average speeds. The watch (reference 5218-301/A) contained the manual-wind ETA 2801 caliber with a Dubois Dépraz chronograph module. Panerai produced 10 prototypes and 890 series production pieces, as well as two other editions of 50 pieces each; one had "km/H" engraved in the tachymeter scale in place of the "2," the other had "Tachymeter" engraved at that position.

**RADIOMIR 1997, PAM 00021,
PLATINUM, CORTÉBERT-
ROLEX MOVEMENT**

In March 1997, Richemont acquired Officine Panerai from its owners, Maria Panerai, Maria Teresa Abetti and Dino Zei, ushering the brand into a new era. With the acquisition came the brand name, patents and all of the inventory, including 60 vintage Cortébert 620 calibers. Panerai put these calibers into new platinum Radiomir cases, and the 60 watches sold out immediately, recouping the total amount Richemont had paid for the company.



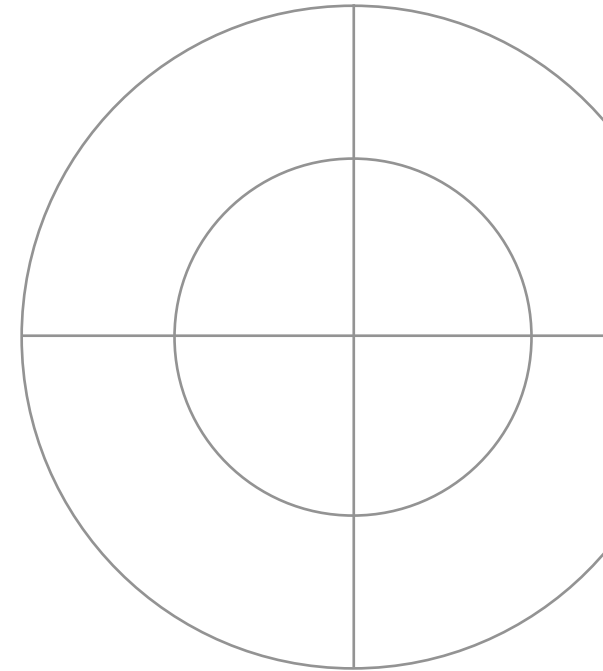
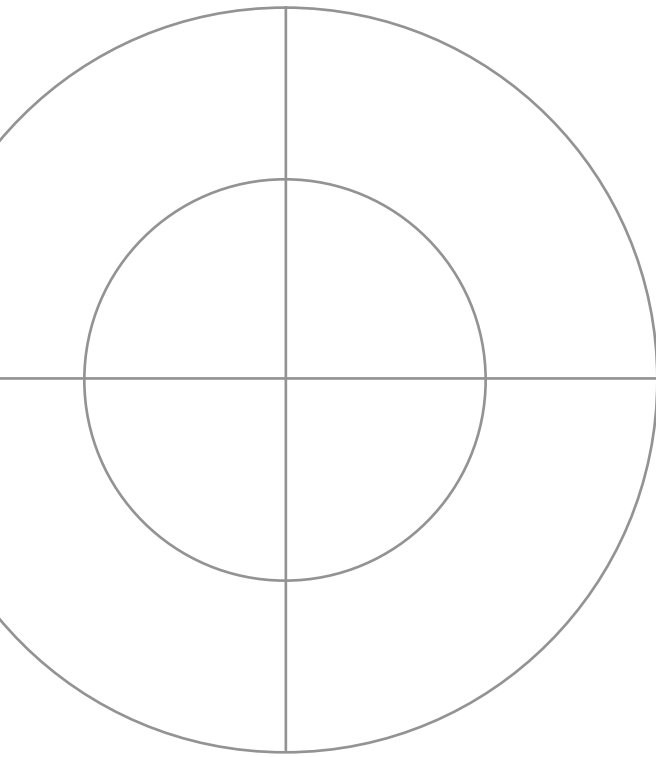
LUMINOR MARINA, PAM00001, 1997, PRE A-SERIES

This first-edition Luminor model, delivered in 1998, had a steel case water-resistant to 300 meters and the hand-wound, COSC-certified caliber OP11. The so-called “pre A” series, with the reference number 6502, was limited to 1,000 pieces. It can be identified by the following engravings on its solid caseback: the reference number (OP 6502), the serial number (BB 97xxxx) and its limited edition number (xxxx/1000). Subsequent production series included an identification letter in front of the limited edition number, e.g. “Axxxx/1000.” In this case “A” stands for the production year 1998, “B” for the production year 1999, and so on.



RADIOMIR CHRONO SPLIT-SECONDS, PAM00047, 1999, 40 MM

This Radiomir, launched in 1999 and limited to only 20 pieces, is distinguished by its movement, an old-stock 14-ligne Venus caliber 179, with a split-seconds chronograph function. The movement has a monometallic balance spring and a swan’s neck regulation. In its center, right above the chronograph mechanism, is a classic pliers construction used to control the drag indicator. The crown is for winding and time setting and also serves as a push-piece for the split-seconds functions. From 1944 to 1962, the movement supplier, which specialized in chronographs, produced only small quantities of this caliber.



LUMINOR SUBMERSIBLE, PAM00024, 1998, 44 MM

Panerai’s “Submersible” models are true divers’ watches, meeting the criteria for a professional divers’ instrument. The Submersible case is a combination of the round “L’Egiziano” case from 1956 and the cushion-shaped Luminor case. The rotating bezel with its distinctive markers also comes from the “Egypt.” The COSC-certified automatic caliber OP11 is an ETA 7750 movement with the chronograph function removed. Reference PAM00024 has a steel case; PAM00025 has a titanium case. Both were produced in 1998 and limited to 1,500 pieces.



RADIOMIR ZEROGRAPH, PAM00067, 2000, 42 MM

This Radiomir ZeroGraph, made of white gold, was limited to 99 pieces and contained a historical, hand-wound movement, Lémania’s Caliber CHT15. The “start,” “stop,” and “reset” functions are all controlled by a single push-piece at the 2 o’clock position. The 15-ligne caliber, used in early military chronographs, has a 40-hour power reserve; its balance wheel, with Breguet overcoil spring, oscillates at a frequency of 18,000 vph. The small seconds indicator is at 9 o’clock; the 30-minute counter, at 3 o’clock.

**LUMINOR 1950, PAM00127,
2002, 47 MM**

This Luminor 1950 model, launched in 2002, was the largest Panerai watch since the relaunch of the brand in 1997. It is water-resistant to 100 meters and its case, dial, hands and steel buckle have a retro design. For the watch's interior, Panerai significantly altered the reliable Unitas Caliber 6497 and equipped it with a swan's neck regulator. The 37.2-mm-diameter movement has a power reserve of 56 hours and a COSC certificate. For two consecutive years, Panerai produced 1,950 pieces of this reference: the engraved identification letter "F" refers to the production year 2002.



**LUMINOR CHRONO REGATTA,
PAM00163, 2003**

Panerai only produced 399 pieces of this regatta chronograph, launched in honor of the Laureus regatta 2003, all with a 40-mm brushed titanium case. This reference, like all the brand's other highly limited regatta editions, is in great demand among watch collectors. It contains the automatic, COSC-certified OP XII movement, based on ETA's Valjoux 7753, with a 46-hour power reserve, a 30-minute indicator at 3 o'clock and a date display between 4 and 5 o'clock that can be changed with a push-piece integrated into the case at 10 o'clock.



**LUMINOR ARKTOS AMAGNETIC,
PAM00092, 2004, 44MM**

In 2002, adventurer Mike Horn wore a Panerai during his solo mission to circumnavigate the globe along the polar circles. The watch that Panerai developed specially for this expedition, the Luminor Arktos Amagnetic, is equipped with a unidirectional rotating bezel with cardinal points and markers, the distinctive crown-protection device, a 3.5-mm thick sapphire crystal and water-resistance to 300 meters. It has a soft iron cage to protect the movement, Caliber OP III, from magnetic fields. The watch, limited to 500 pieces, was released in 2004.

**RADIOMIR 8 DAYS GMT,
PAM00200, 2005,
CALIBER P.2002**

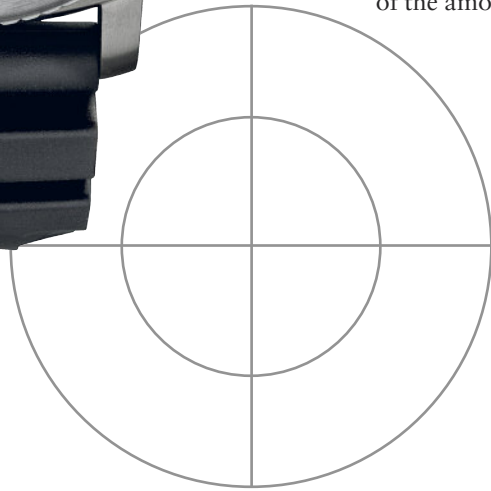
Before 2005, all of Panerai's movements came from outside suppliers. Starting that year, Panerai began introducing movements made at Richemont's movement-producing facility, Valfléurier in Buttes, and the brand's own new *manufacture* in Neuchâtel, for the first time. Work began on the first in-house movement three years earlier, hence its name, Caliber P.2002. With 247 components and a diameter of 31.8 mm, the movement also has three series-connected spring barrels to achieve a power reserve of eight days. The watch has small seconds, date, second time zone with additional day/night display, and an innovative linear power reserve indicator. The Radiomir case is in white gold.





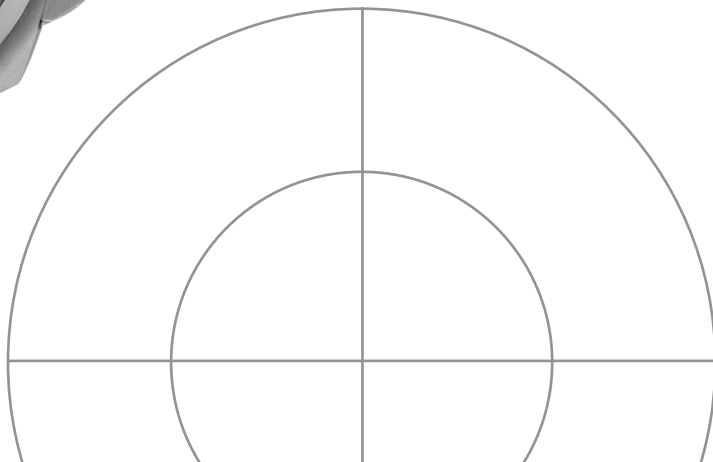
**LUMINOR 1950 SUBMERSIBLE
DEPTH GAUGE, PAM00193,
2006, 47 MM**

This divers' watch linked the past to the present. The former is represented by the case and the 13¼-ligne automatic movement based on a Valjoux 7750. The depth gauge — an independent electronic module consisting of a pressure transducer, a micro-processor and a micromotor — represents the latter. The lithium battery lasts approximately 500 hours. A silicone membrane surrounds the pressure chip on the module board; the pressure of inflowing water pushing against this membrane is transmitted to the microprocessor every 1.25 seconds. As the water enters through small holes in the caseback, a special gasket protects the movement. The micromotor moves the yellow depth-gauge dial with a subdivided scale. There is a generously broad display for dives up to 18 meters; the remaining 102 meters are displayed in a narrower scale. Each depth gauge electronic module is certified with an individual certificate by the Swiss Federal Office For Metrology (METAS). The module saves the maximum depth reached during the most recent dive, an indication of the amount of battery power that remains.



**LUMINOR 1950 TOURBILLON
GMT, PAM00276, 2007**

The tourbillon mechanism in this watch's in-house caliber P.2005 is a bit different: in a classical tourbillon, the balance wheel rotates around its own axis. Panerai wanted its tourbillon to be something out of the ordinary. Panerai designed it so that the balance wheel rotates at an angle of 90 degrees facing its own arbor, taking 30 seconds to complete a full rotation. The whole construction, which reminds one of a chicken roasting on a spit, is possible due to a relatively small diameter and a 9.1 mm thickness. The construction can't counteract gravity, but reduces friction at the balance staff bearings, escapement, and escapement wheel. The benefits are a constant frequency of the balance and an improved isochronism at all positions. The watch has a power reserve of six days.



**L'EGIZIANO, PAM00341, 2009,
60 MM**

This huge, 60-mm watch, produced in 2009, is a replica of the original L'Egiziano from 1956. In place of the original model's hand-wound Angelus movement, this watch uses Panerai's in-house caliber P.2002/7, which has an eight-day power reserve. The titanium case makes the modern version significantly lighter than its historical predecessor. The caseback, secured with six screws, is engraved with a serial number, the words "Officine Panerai Firenze," and the image of a "Maiale," a manned torpedo that was used by submarine commandos during World War II. This watch is limited to 500 pieces.



**LUMINOR 1950 CHRONO
MONOPULSANTE 8 DAYS GMT
CERAMICA, PAM00317, 2008,
44 MM**

The Panerai model PAM003127 is a chronograph controlled by a single push-piece, integrated in the case at 8 o'clock rather than on the right side, which is dominated by the crown-protecting device. The movement is the hand-wound in-house caliber P.2004, with its eight-day power reserve indicated by the linear power-reserve display above 6 o'clock. The movement, made of 321 components, also powers a second-time-zone indicator with day/night display. The 44-mm case is water-resistant to 100 meters and made of scratch-proof, durable ceramic.



**L'ASTRONOMO LUMINOR 1950
EQUATION OF TIME
TOURBILLON TITANIO,
PAM00365, 2010, 50 MM**

The most complicated watch ever produced by Panerai, this is an homage to the Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei. The in-house movement P.2005/G not only includes the innovative, patented tourbillon rotation but also numerous astronomical features. The L'Astronomo displays the equation of time (the difference between apparent and mean solar time) and sunrise and sunset times, adjusted by the watchmaker to the watch's owner's place of residence. The sky map on the caseback of the watch is also individually set for the owner. Hours, minutes, seconds, date, month and power reserve are also displayed on the dial as well. This sophisticated movement is inside a titanium case that is water-resistant to 100 meters.

