

# AN OVERHAUL FOR THE OVERSEAS

Vacheron Constantin makes some see-worthy changes to its eight-year-old line of sports watches.

**I**t's the same, only different. Vacheron Constantin is launching a revamped version of its Overseas collection of sporty-elegant watches for men and women, introduced in 1996. While the new watches aren't fundamentally different, they are noticeably so, incorporating several changes intended to make them better inside and, more dramatically, outside. There are three models, all in steel: a men's automatic chronograph, a men's non-chronograph automatic, and a quartz watch for women.

The most obvious change is the bracelet, which company executives acknowledge was something of a weak link in the old Overseas. The former bracelet was made of simple rectangular segments and was, some say, not terribly comfortable (and maybe a little dull). The new one is more supple and distinctly snazzier, bearing a pattern inspired by the Maltese cross that is Vacheron Constantin's emblem. The bracelet has a newly designed three-ply clasp with twin safety-catch buttons.

The dials have also been dressed up, and now bear an elegant guilloché pattern composed of tiny triangles. The women's watch is also available with mother-of-pearl dial with diamond markers. A diamond-set bezel is optional.

Then there's the size: a few millimeters bigger, in keeping with the trend toward bigger watches. The men's automatic and chronograph are now a jumbo-sized 42 millimeters in diameter (they had been 37 and 40 millimeters, respectively), while the women's model has grown to 34 millimeters. The markers and hands on all the watches are coated with luminous paint. The chronograph has an unusual feature: the 30-minute totalizer is slightly larger than the other subdials for greater visual interest.

Not all the changes are on the outside. All Overseas models now have an anti-magnetic shield, composed of a three-part shell of soft iron that surrounds the movement and absorbs magnetism that penetrates the case. According to company executives, this feature has become more important as exposure to magnetic fields, generated by computers and all manner of telecommunications devices, increases year by year. Vacheron has a long history of making anti-magnetic watches, the company says, and in 1846 produced the world's first, which had a balance and lever made of a non-magnetic bronze alloy.



Men's models are available in automatic chronograph and automatic non-chronograph versions.

The women's styles have quartz movements and are available with silvered or mother-of-pearl dials.

The dial of the new Overseas has an elegant, guilloché pattern of triangles.

## WATCHTALK

Another change in the Overseas: Vacheron now uses a different movement in the non-chronograph automatic, caliber 1126/1, based on a Jaeger-LeCoultre movement. The chronograph movement (VC caliber 1137), using a Frédéric Piguet 1185 base, is the same as before.

The men's models are water-resistant to 150 meters; the women's version to 50 meters.

Judging by the hoopla surrounding its launch, the new Overseas is a big event for Vacheron. The company flew reporters from all over the

world to a launch party in the lovely town of Dubrovnik, Croatia, on the country's famed Dalmatian coast. Next year the brand will celebrate its 250th anniversary (it has been in continuous operation since 1755) and no doubt the lavish launch festivities were designed to raise press awareness of the milestone to come. Look for more parties and more product introductions in the new year (the company is, for instance, getting set to bring out a new automatic manufacture movement).

*Norma Buchanan*