Article Side

Rolex Watches as Milestone Gifts by Jessica Norris

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Looking for the perfect gift for an upcoming milestone? Rolex watches are the way to go. Rolex, a Swiss watchmaking company thatâ€™s known for its high-quality, luxury wristwatches, was founded in London in 1905, and has since been churning out incredible watches that are known as status symbols across the globe. Rolexâ€™s headquarters are situated in Geneva, Switzerland, where snow dots the mountaintops and skiing is more important than what you wear â€“ and yet the company continues to dominate the luxury watch industry, ranking number 71 on the 2007 annual list of BusinessWeek magazineâ€™s 100 most valuable global brands. An honor such as that is no small thing, but Rolex has earned it.

The company was founded by an Englishman named Hans Wilsdorf in London in 1905. Wilsdorf partnered with his brother-in-law Alfred Davis to launch Rolex; the company initially went by the name â€œWilsdorf and Davisâ€• and worked mostly by importing Hermann Aeglerâ€™s Swiss movements England and then placing these movements into quality watch cases that were made externally, by companies such as Dennison. In the early days, Wilsdorf and Davis sold their watches to jewelers, who would then put their own names on the back of the dial. In short, when they started out, they were nowhere near the luxury giant they are today. Instead, the watchmakers were in the background, prepping their wares for someone elseâ€™s nomenclature.

By 1908, however, just three years after launching their company, Wilsdorf and Davis registered the trademark for Rolex, and opened an office in Switzerland. By 1915, Rolex had been registered as the companyâ€™s official name, and a brand was born. Rumors have long circulated as to the origin of the companyâ€™s name â€“ some say Rolex was just a made up word that Wilsdorf speculated would â€œsound good in any languageâ€• while others claim he put much more thought into it than that, taking the name from the French phrase for horological excellence, or horlogerie exquise. Some day the name was chosen out of the blue and was cemented in fame simply because it was short enough to fit in full on the back of a watch.

Whatever the reasoning, the company took off like a rocket as soon as the name Rolex was finalized. By 1914, the Kew Observatory had awarded the company a Class A precision certification â€“ a high distinction that was generally reserved for marine chronometers. To anyone who was paying attention, it was clear that Wilsdorf had a hit on his hands, and was diving into the luxury market, full stop. Meanwhile, all this time, the Rolex office in Switzerland was fully functioning, but Wilsdorf had remained in London to do business there. However, in 1919, Wilsdorf left London behind, thanks to wartime taxes that were to be levied on luxury imports and exports. At this time, with costs for production being way too high, Wilsdorf picked up and moved to Geneva full time, where it was established as the Rolex Watch Company.

A few years later, in 1923, Rolex invented their first waterproof wristwatch, which they called the â€œOyster.â€• Immediately well received, the Oyster brought in a good amount of income for the company and cemented Rolexâ€™s status as the king of luxury watchmakers. In 1931, the company innovated yet again, offering to the public the first self-winding Rolex watch. This watch was powered by an internal mechanism that used the movement of the wearerâ€™s arm â€“ quite impressive at the time! This not only made watch-winding unnecessary, which many wristwatch wearers loved, but also kept the power from dying out due to excessive winding.

Since these early innovations, Rolex has gone on to dominate the luxury watch industry, offered specific watch models suitable for a wide range of activites, including deep sea diving, mountain climbing, and aviation. However complicated these designs may be, Rolex is more known for itâ€™s

luxury status than itâ€™s ability to produce an outdoorsy watch that can withstand it all. The brand has always prided itself on high-quality designs, and this has served them well. These days, Rolexâ€™s are thought of as status symbols: once you have one, youâ€™ve officially made it. Youâ€™ll find Rolex watche on the wrists of popular celebrities and athletes, politicians and more.

It is this sense of stature that makes Rolex a great milestone gift. A Rolex watch isnâ€™t just a symbol that youâ€™ve made it, but a symbol of accomplishment. Whether youâ€™re gifting a guy whoâ€™s just g the big promotion at work, or indulging a son whoâ€™s just gotten his first real job, or a daughter whoâ€™ just graduated from college, Rolex watches make an incredible milestone gift. Chic, luxurious, well-crafted and high-quality, Rolex watches make for the perfect gift for any occasion, and are always sure to stun.

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Jessica Norris is a freelance writer who writes about jewelry, watches and specific brands such as a Rolex Watches.

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