

WATCHMAKING IS A STATE OF MIND MADE OF PASSION, FREEDOM AND RESPECT, ACCORDING TO MECCANICHE VELOCI'S CHIEF EXECUTIVE **CESARE CERRITO**. AND THAT STATE OF MIND IS AFFECTED BY HIS LOVE FOR ITALY, AND PARTICULARLY ITS MOTOR RACING INDUSTRY. A PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY'S HISTORIC STEERING WHEEL MAKER NARDI IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THE BRAND'S DIRECTION, AND OPENS UP A MARKET FOR ENTHUSIASTS OF CLASSIC CARS AND HIGH END WATCHES, AS **ROB CORDER** DISCOVERED IN CONVERSATION WITH **MR CERRITO**.



*Meccaniche
Veloci chief
executive Cesare
Cerrito.*

MECCANICHE VELOCI'S RACING CLASSICS

WatchPro: What have been your highlights for 2019 in terms of new models and business achievements?

Cesare Cerrito: 2019 has been a very intense in terms of novelties: we introduced the QuattroValvole Nardi Edition, limited to 50 pcs, a beautiful interpretation of the the aesthetic code of the Italian car industry in the 60s-70s. Then we also presented the Icon Damasteel, whose case is made with Damascus steel hammered out in an old forgery north of Milan and then machined in Switzerland. Finally, we also realized by

hand a very particular case finishing called NeroFumo (literally BlackSmoke), which reproduces the burning effect of the fossil combustion you can find on a used piston, which is our beloved case shape. The goal for us was to further consolidate our positioning in the high-end niche brands with no boring attitude: mission accomplished.

WatchPro: How do you go about breaking into new markets? What challenges do you face when your watches are so unique and made in such limited quantities?

Cesare Cerrito: We were born in 2006 and since then we sold many watches all around the world. Also, thanks to some celebrities and its iconic design, Meccaniche Veloci gained a widespread global reputation. Nonetheless we are not a mainstream brand and today, since you don't come to know the evolution of Meccaniche Veloci, the biggest challenge is to win the watchmaking legitimacy that recognizes the work we have been doing since 2016, when we moved to Geneva; then we started developing our first in-house movement that today equips our watches, which also claim to be 100%

Swiss Made and come with a “watch passport” in order to certify the origin of each components. Breaking into new markets means breaking the resistance of those who don't know the new positioning of brand yet, but also capitalizing on your existing fanbase. Limited quantities do not preclude our presence in multi-brand stores, as we can have enough capacity to supply their demand.

WatchPro: Do you normally work with retail partners or do you deal directly with customers?

Cesare Cerrito: A natural consequence of our limited production is that we love to deal directly with the end customer, to whom we also offer our Bespoke Atelier service capable to design a one-off timepiece by request. This doesn't necessarily mean that we don't deal with distribution or retailers. I'm possibly among the few that believe the future of retail still belongs to those passionate sales persons that are capable to explain the story of a brand and advise and assist their long-time customers, rather than to a compulsive online mass-market. At least for my brand, that do not belong to what I call “industrial luxury”.

WatchPro: What are your strongest markets, and what is working best in those countries?

Cesare Cerrito: My strongest market is Japan and I love it. It pushed me to the strictest and highest quality standards and quite frankly this was my first objective when I took over the brand in 2016. The most important selling factor is the genuine story of the brand, there is no marketing smoke around it: we are Italians passionate by the automotive and mechanical scene, we design unique timepieces with an Italian touch and we strive for the utmost Swiss manufacturing quality for every part of the watch, since we are based in Plan les Ouates, the famous watch district of Geneva. This combination is our simple but intriguing recipe.

WatchPro: Is there one watch that you would say defines Meccaniche

Veloci today, and why would you choose it?

Cesare Cerrito: QuattroValvole Nardi Edition is the quintessence of Meccaniche Veloci: elegant yet bold, it brings the story of the whole Italian automotive scene of the 60s and 70s when cars were made by people that entered into the legend: Enzo Ferrari, Enrico Nardi, Carlo Abarth, Sergio Pininfarina and Ugo Zagato just to name some.

Its aim was also to bring this heritage, which is part of our DNA, to this relatively young brand. We applied all our knowledge and craftsmanship in order to reproduce on the dial the “guillochage” of Nardi steering wheels, that is still made by hand, as well as to engineer the mahogany ring around the watch case. Of course, it displays the four iconic time zones on the dial that made that Meccaniche Veloci unmistakable look.

WatchPro: Major watch retailer groups like Watches of Switzerland are introducing independent watchmakers with initiatives like pop-ups, designers in residence and special events for collectors attended by the watchmakers. Is this something you do already with retail partners in some countries and would you like to do more?

Cesare Cerrito: I just came back from Japan where I had a road-show in our points of sale in major cities in order to spread the story of my brand; customers love it and so do I, it is the best way for me to transmit the ideals that drive my state of mind: passion for watches, freedom to create and respect for the client. This is the part of the job that I love more, together with designing: it allows me to be in touch with people that love watches and I have the time to share with them all the stories behind any model, without which they would be simple objects. Yes, I would like to do as much as I can.

WatchPro: How do you meet new business partners if you do not do shows like Baselworld?

Cesare Cerrito: It is time for us to reconsider our presence in some of the major watch exhibitions, although what I do most is to visit potential clients and distributors in person, in their country. It is a much more complete experience and it allows me to better understand the peculiarity and needs of each market.

WatchPro: What are your key goals for 2020?

Cesare Cerrito: For 2020 we aim to enter in UK and US with a selected number of official retailers. We actually have a strong demand from these regions and we want to serve our clients in the best way, especially giving them the opportunity to “touch” with hand our watches, giving them the time to get acquainted with the brand and making their purchase experience much more satisfactory. ↕

STEERING FOR SUCCESS



QuattroValvole Nardi Edition epitomises the vision of Meccaniche Veloci with its fusion of elements drawn from the worlds of watchmaking, motor racing and Italian heritage. Nardi is a famous manufacturer of steering wheels that made its name in the glory days of Italian racing when the likes of Enzo Ferrari, Enrico Nardi, Carlo Abarth, Sergio Pininfarina and Ugo Zagato were global stars. The 50 piece limited edition is entirely Swiss-made and houses the MV8802 in house movement that powers the four dials on the watch face. The watch has several details devoted to Nardi including a middle case ring made from the same mahogany as its steering wheels and the same style of guilloche on the dial that is used on steering wheel spokes. The cyan colour used on to circle the four dials is also the colour of Nardi's logo.