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# Speake-Marin Watches— Original Paintings as Opposed to Prints

By Bryan McKrell

The world of fine wristwatches is built around exclusivity. High price points, limited editions, exclusive dealer networks, and targeted advertising are all cornerstones of the industry. But how exclusive is a Rolex if the company is making nearly 1 million watches per year? Do tens of thousands of Piagets, Panerai's or Zeniths make you feel like you have really obtained exclusivity? In reality, being exclusive is usually a simple equation of relativity. Owning a Rolex is far more exclusive than a Casio; in the same way driving a BMW is more exclusive than a Toyota.

But in every field you can find examples of items that are undeniably exclusive because they are closer to a work of art than they are to a mass-produced brand, no matter how elite. In the world of watch making there are still a few independent watchmakers who meet this standard -- among them is Peter Speake-Marin who has recently started to transition from a commissioned artisan to a limited production purveyor of fine timepieces. Although he has one of the finest watch making names in the industry, few in the general public are familiar with his work. This is certain to change over the next few years for a couple of reasons.

The first of these is the release of Peter's new book, "a passion for watch making." The book provides the historical background for Peter's ideas and concepts that he applies to all of the watches that he creates. The book has something for everyone, but from a watch fan's perspective the best part is looking at all of the different watches Peter has completed on commission for clients around the world. Most notably, there are several aesthetic aspects that stand out and become familiar elements to all of Peter's watches. The first is the shape and design of the case, crown, and band clasps. Peter uses a robust circular case which has a simple yet elegant edge which surrounds the crystal. The winding crown resembles the large onion crown that's reminiscent of an IWC Pilot's watch. But the third, and most



Marin 2 Thalassa

unique, is the use of a design element that mimics the classic watchmaker's tool called a "topping tool." This unique circular shape was used as the design element for most of the winding rotors that were fit on the back of Peter's automatic movements. The open spoke design of the topping tool originally allowed the movement to be seen through the back of the case and still provide enough inertia to properly wind the movement. But Peter's latest creation brings this hallmark design feature to an entirely different part of the watch, one that can be seen while wearing the watch.

The second and more important reason that Peter's name is about to become more familiar to watch fans is the release of his new watch, the Marin 2 Thalassa. This striking time piece has a 42 mm case and a brilliant cobalt blue face. The watch also displays the topping tool design element on the front face of the watch manifested as a rolling second hand. This feature draws the eye closer to the watch after already being attracted by the unique blue face. The watch is special not because there will only be thirty examples, but because all of the unique design elements of a Speake-Marin watch are now fully visible on the front of the watch. It is precisely this level of creativity and uniqueness that leads Peter to his explanation that "a Speake-Marin watch is a painting as opposed to a print."

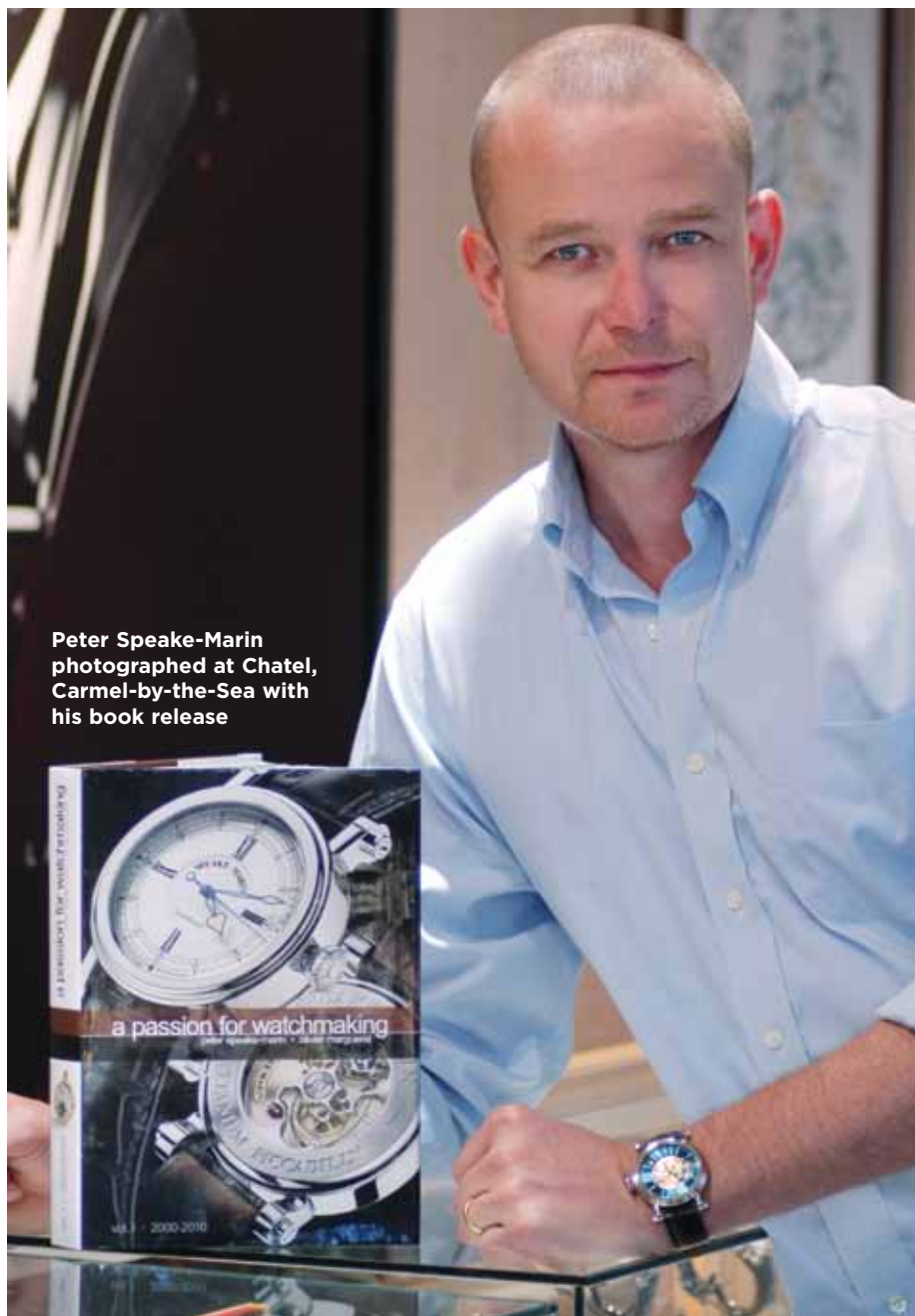
Peter hopes to get production at his small workshop up to 125 pieces this year with a maximum output of 150 pieces total per year. His ability to finally create, produce, and assemble a select few production pieces has enabled the workshop to steadily increase output. But what attracts me to Peter's watches is his firm conviction that he wants to create watches that will stand the test of time and outlive their owners. His main objective is to create a timepiece that is reliable, precise, strong and always durable. He does not recommend servicing his watches until they display a problem; and he believes that his watches have been designed and assembled to run for at least a decade without any servicing. He also has designed his watch movements so that most well trained watchmakers will be able to open his watch up, diagnose, repair and re-lubricate the movement with little if any specialized knowledge of his watch-

es. He is able to fulfill his vision because he worked in one of London's finest watch repair shops for seven years, where he studied first-hand all of the design elements from antique Patek Philippes, Vacherons, and Piagets that had lasted in some instances more than a century and were still working. By studying these proven and time-tested design elements, he is able to incorporate all of these details into his finished product.

Peter is passionate about the watches that come out of his workshop, and he prides himself on all of the work that he does on each and every one of his time-

pieces. As Peter said, "The soul of antique watches is about the time that was invested in assembling and creating these watches and that is what you get when you buy one of my watches." With a new book, a new watch, and a relentless passion to create something that will last for generations, it will only be a short matter of time before Peter Speake-Marin is a more familiar name in the watch world.

If you would like to see a few examples of the Speake-Marin watches in person, Chatel and Company in Carmel CA carries the watch. You can also visit their website at [Chatelco.com](http://Chatelco.com). ●



**Peter Speake-Marin**  
photographed at Chatel,  
Carmel-by-the-Sea with  
his book release

Photo by: MaryBurroughsStudio.com