

WITH THEIR NEWEST COLLECTION OUT TO WOO THE CONNOISSEUR, IWC SCHAFFHAUSEN, HAS SUCCESSFULLY MARKED OUT TIME, EXEMPLIFYING THE DILIGENCE OF AIR WARRIORS, WRITE ANITA KHATRI AND SAVIA RAJAGOPAL



# FLYING HIGH

IWC Schaffhausen is a world-renowned leader in professional timepieces. That comes as no surprise to many who have followed the brand's progression in technology and design over the years. Right up from the mid-1930s, when IWC produced its first special watch for pilots to now, IWC has continuously broken barriers as a leading watchmaker that specially takes into account the demands of modern-day travel. They make it very clear that

their first priority is to provide the customer with watches that are modern, inventive and most importantly, reliable. For this purpose, the customer has been given a wide range of options such as the Classic collection of five watches in the traditional instrument look or the more elegant models from the Spitfire collection. To emphasise their inspiration from bygone eras, IWC held an exclusive event in England earlier this year. Held in the quaint



town of Hampshire, a host of press and media persons experienced the true joy of being a pilot at the Flying Club owned by the Royal family. The idea was to recreate the real experience of being a war time pilot and bring to forefront the virtues of determination, courage and commitment. It gave all those present a taste of what it is really like to be a pilot by flying an old-time war plane. To have the controls of a plane in your hands and fly the craft by yourself is an experience not many present would forget easily. Persistence and stability are synonymous with IWC's Pilot watches and to really appreciate how IWC has created these timepieces with cutting edge technology, it is important to revisit the original inspiration for this line of watches that exemplifies the spirit of pilots the world over.

#### A PATH-BREAKING ERA

In 1936, IWC first introduced a special watch that was meant specifically for pilots. Designed to survive in the cockpits of aircrafts built in that era, that special watch is considered a marvel even today, for its sheer functionality. Keeping that in mind, the dial was black and optimally legible with high contrast luminous hands, large luminous figures and a rotating glass bezel with an inlaid arrow for short interval timings.

Setting the benchmark, this watch was followed by the Big Pilot's Watch in 1940, that was built to military specifications. This included an original pocket watch movement and large center seconds – a certified observer's and navigator's watch for military pilots. Civilian and military pilots alike used the Mark 11, IWC's most famous pilot watch, from 1948 onwards. What set it apart from other models was that it has an additional inner case made of soft iron to screen the movement against magnetic fields. This feature of course, now is available with all pilot watches for screening against magnetic fields.

#### MODERN DAY TRANSITION

Keeping in tradition of watches that are specially designed for pilots, the new Classic collection of watches comprises five models – the new Big Pilot's Watch, the Double Chronograph, the Chrono-Automatic, the classic Mark XVI and, as an addition to the pilot's watch segment, the midsize model. When it comes to new features, this collection presents the case diameter of Mark XVI, which has grown in comparison to its predecessor. The Chrono-Automatic has also grown by three millimeters. For watch collectors, the Double Chronograph is available in a ceramic case, which will be produced in a limited edition of 1,000 watches while the Big Pilot's Watch has minor modifications. The limited-edition platinum variant will be supplemented with a white gold model. The uniformity is very evident in the entire Classic pilot's watch collection. Breaking away from the conventional pilot watches, IWC has also created a collection since 2003, that takes inspiration from an aircraft – the Spitfire. Its sleek lines and graceful curves made the Spitfire an elegant and aesthetically pleasing aircraft back in the days of World War II. IWC's Spitfire collection comprises four models – the Chrono-Automatic, the UTC watch with its two time zones, the classic Mark XVI and the new Spitfire Midsize.

#### CLASSIC ALL THE WAY

The humble wristwatch wasn't given much of a role in the early years of aviation and was merely an aid to navigation for the pilot. Other instruments on board were characterised by their simplicity and superior legibility. The cockpit of the legendary Ju 52 and the Classic collection of pilot's watches from IWC, bear those very characteristics.

All aviation followers would know that the Junkers Ju 52 is often looked upon as the aircraft that smoothened the way for safe air travel. This legendary aircraft came into the

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spotlight in July 1932, through its success on circular flights over the Alps. Five years later, it became sensational news when the Lufthansa Director Carl August Freiherr von Gablenz landed in Peking on August 24, 1937. Quite naturally, it was the Ju 52 that flew him in on a trip, which opened up the air route to Asia. The quality, safety and reliability of this particular aircraft – traits most important in aviation – encouraged aviation companies all over the world to put the three-engine machine into service as a passenger and cargo plane. The Ju 52 became the first aircraft to be manufactured in large-scale production due to enormous demand. To draw comparisons between the Ju 52 and the pilot's watches from IWC would involve an emphasis on pure functionality. When it comes to the Mark 11, it was the official service watch issued to pilots in the British Royal Air Force as well as being worn by civilian pilots with British Overseas Aircraft Corporation (BOAC) and other airlines.

## REINVENTING A CLASSIC

The new Classic collection follows the well-kept tradition of IWC's pilot watches. The midsize model is the new addition to the pilot's watch segment, making it ideal for slender wrists. In appearance, the midsize is a variation of the Mark XVI on a reduced scale. The Mark XVI on the other hand has grown in diameter while its functional design only reinforces the logical development further of this legendary IWC watch. The 30110 calibre automatic movement functions as an impressive drive mechanism, which also does service in the Midsize, with a power reserve of 42 hours, and shows the date as well as the time. The Chrono-Automatic possesses greater visual presence than its predecessor. The 79320-calibre chronograph movement permits the recording of stop times and aggregate times up to twelve hours, and it also shows the date and the day. Like almost all models in the Classic collection of pilot's watches, the Chrono-Automatic is worn on a matt black crocodile leather strap with a stainless steel buckle. As an alternative, the Mark XVI and the Chrono-Automatic are also available with a stainless steel bracelet equipped with a folding clasp and the patented IWC bracelet system. This bracelet system allows the bracelet to be readily adapted to the wearer's wrist.

The Double Chronograph is an item for watch collectors the world over. The ceramic watchcase is a pioneering achievement of IWC Schaffhausen. The Da Vinci perpetual calendar in a black case made of pyroceram oxide was

