

TAG HEUER 360 : ARCHITECTURAL ALCHEMY



TAG Heuer 360 is the first museum dedicated to the unique collection of precision timepieces in the 150 year history of the brand. TAG Heuer, renowned for “firsts” throughout its history, has located this privileged project on the ground floor of the company’s new headquarters in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland. The Museum was conceived and realized by Eric Carlson and his Paris-based architecture studio *CARBONDALE*, in collaboration with “*dUCKS Scéno*”, a specialist in scenography and museography, and the in-house TAG Heuer team.

This remarkable design was inspired by the intriguingly inaccessible space between the dial and the crystal glass, where the hands of time are turned by an inexplicable force from within. This spatial layer, steeped in both mystery and science, is architecturally articulated by the 3 major elements that together define the singular 200 square meter Museum.

THE CRYSTAL GLASS

The first element, symbolizing the *crystal* that crowns a watch, is a monumental circular video screen suspended overhead and beveled to provide a clear view to the visitors below. This dramatic panoramic screen is composed of 12 high performance retro-projectors, synchronized into a single moving 360° centripetal image. The film projected by the circular screen emphasizes the legends and ambassadors that contributed to the evolution of the brand. The ultra-sound speakers directionally shower down a beam of sound audible only to those positioned directly below, intensifying the sensorial experience.

THE TIME LINE

The second element defines the periphery of the museum and acts as an architectural *Time Line*. A 50 meter long band of brushed aluminum inlaid with a flush glass ribbon circumscribes the four walls. Behind the eye-level glass ribbon a contiguous composition of 16 display cases, 8 video screens, 51 back-lit images and text incrementally mark the passage of time. Starting from the entrance and moving in a clockwise direction, key moments in the history of timekeeping are highlighted with numerous astonishing treasures that chronicle the story of TAG Heuer up to the present day.

THE DIAL

The third and most striking component of the exhibition space is analogous to the dial. Rather than employing the typical design solution of distributing individual display cases throughout the space, CARBONDALE envisioned an innovative architectural approach. A single seamless horizontal plane of polished black Corian slicks powerfully across the space, like motor oil, filling it to a depth/height/width of 1 meter. An organically carved path navigates through this richly reflective surface to reveal the 9 horizontal circular displays as “sub-dials” to the watch face. The horizontal displays contain an extraordinary collection of timepieces based on the 9 themes of the collections: Great Inventions, From Pocket to Wrist, Modern Times, The Dream of Flight, Legendary Tracks and Races, Famous Partners, The Call of the Sea, Technology + Function = Design, Watches for Women. In keeping with the avant-garde tradition of TAG Heuer, each circular display made of rose wood and brushed aluminum is hydraulically equipped to lift and lower the islands of watches in silent perfection. As a final touch, 50 large magnifying lenses of varying sizes and resembling giant water drops on the body of a car have been placed in an irregular pattern over the vast horizontal surface. Each clear glass lens is strategically positioned above key timepieces to enlarge the infinitesimal details renowned in Swiss watchmaking.

The spatial and visual complexities of this custom tripartite design, combined with the great care given to the detailing and construction of high-tech materials make the TAG Heuer 360 Museum uniquely luxurious. The multiple dualities that are the essence of the brand - Precision & Beauty, Strength & Elegance, Innovation & Tradition and lastly Mystery & Science - are all architecturally assembled and crystallized here and express the fascinating alchemy of TAG Heuer.

A 360° SCENOGRAPHIC CONCEPT

Designed and produced by dUCKS Scéno, in cooperation with the architectural firm of CARBONDALE and TAG Heuer, the TAG Heuer 360 Museum’s scenography forms a vast PANORAMA, reinterpreted in an avant-garde way.

Visitors, standing in the centre of the museum, contemplate the history of TAG Heuer unfolding around them. This unique venue provides both an overall vision and detailed views. It allows visitors to examine the collections and let themselves be carried away by legendary characters, stroll through the whole of the company’s history, discover the objects that are emblematic of timekeeping, and lastly step from the timelessness of the legend into the now of the sporting event.

Visitors are able to browse three levels of interpretation: Legends, History and Collections. The legends are projected onto a giant conical screen suspended above the ground, History is written on a 50 meter strip of light that winds around the museum space, Collections are revealed in 9 circular flat glass display cases.

LEGENDS

The upper level belongs to the legendary and the epic, to the forerunners of the brand, the men and women who made it what it is, who founded it. Here the Formula 1 racing car of Ayrton Senna or the golf ball of Tiger Woods are imagined spinning around the visitor on a giant screen 7.5 meters in diameter. Through the succession and movement of the images, this machine separates the seconds, the minutes... It gives body and feeling to the control of the measurement of time.

HISTORY

The middle level (vision panel) is educational; it traces the history of the TAG Heuer brand in the form of a backlit graphic time strip that unfolds across every wall of the museum. The history of the brand is described using three cross-cutting themes: chronographs, the quest for ultra-precision, stopwatches for sporting events.

Chronographs, key dates, texts, quotations, illustrations are presented, as are period documents, collector's items and films.

The objects are put in context thanks to period documents, static images and videos. Our aim has been to create an emotional reaction by the relevant association, by the authenticity of the objects and documentation.

The 8 films projected onto the strip, which link images with themes, are the guide to the exhibition, the thread connecting the panoramic film, the history narrated and the collections in the flat display cases; they punctuate the story with different rhythms.

COLLECTION

The lower level houses the TAG Heuer Collection: chronographs and watches, single or multiple pieces, technical or mythical pieces, useful or glamorous pieces, classified and itemised thematically in the convolutions and flow of the 9 cases.

2) MUSEUM TECHNICAL DATAS

Name: TAG Heuer 360

Design lead time: 21 months

Location : TAG Heuer SA

6A Louis-Joseph Chevrolet

2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds. Switzerland.

Display space: c. 200 m²

Furnishings:

- 70m² of Corian
- 70 linear metres of mirror polished stainless steel
- 50 linear metres vertical strip of glass, brushed aluminium and polished stainless steel
- 16 wall-mounted display cases with mechanical opening system
- 51 backlit cabinets (9.5 m²)
- 9 display cases on hydraulic jacks
- 300 LEDs
- 840 watts
- Raw concrete ceiling

Scenographic equipment:

- 35 3X magnifying lenses
- 285 made-to-measure brackets and wall clocks
- Backlit graphic time strip 50 m long
- 97.5 m² of Optilux canvas forming a conical 360° panoramic screen
- Panoramic screen: 7.5 meters in diameter
- 12 video projectors with mirrors
- 8 32-inch LCD screens

Collections & Iconography Funds:

- 300 timepieces
- 125 static images (photographs, reproductions)
- 8 themed films
- 1 panoramic film with 2 million animated images
- 180 seconds of audio tape