

THOMAS MERCER

ESTD 1858

MONACO YACHT SHOW 2016 - THOMAS MERCER TO UNVEIL *LEGACY ATLANTIC CHALLENGE* THE MARINE CHRONOMETER CELEBRATING SIR FRANCIS CHICHESTER'S WORLD SOLO SPEED DISTANCE RECORD

Media Information

For immediate Release

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Thomas Mercer is pleased to announce the launch of the Atlantic Challenge, a new exclusive edition of its Legacy marine chronometer.

The new-born masterpiece will enjoy its exclusive world premiere during the Top Marques Watches 2016, exhibition which will be held at Hotel Hermitage Montecarlo on September 29th- October 1st, concurrently with the renowned the Monaco Yacht Show.

With its timekeepers featuring fundamentally in their achievements and histories, Thomas Mercer's heritage is intimately linked with such legendary figures as Sir Ernest Shackleton, Sir Winston Churchill, and such notable vessels as the Royal Yacht Britannia, thus deeply entrenching the brand in the annals of British sailing. To add a further dimension to this dashing heritage, the Atlantic Challenge wants to pay homage to another great feat of navigation, the solo world speed distance record established in 1971 by Sir Francis Chichester during the eponymous race.

CHRONOMETER 23543 AND THE ATLANTIC CHALLENGE

Sir Francis Chichester's name is a legend in British navigation. Aviator and sailor, he was knighted in 1967 by Queen Elizabeth II as the first person to sail single-handed around the world by the clipper route, and the fastest circumnavigator. For the ceremony, Her Britannic Majesty used the sword employed by her predecessor the first Queen Elizabeth to knight the first Sir Francis of nautical fame - the adventurer Drake (the first Englishman, with his crew, to circle the globe).

Never satisfied with his achievements, Chichester's restless spirit turned at once to the next great hurdle facing the single-hander; the speed barrier of 200 nautical miles a day. On January 12th 1971, aboard his 57ft ketch Gipsy Moth V, he set off from Bissau in Portuguese Guinea to cross the Atlantic to San Juan del Norte. During this 23-day crossing, he repeatedly broke said barrier, achieving his top record on January 31st when he raced 231 miles in just 24 hours.

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For navigating he used compass as direction finder, sextant to calculate latitude and Thomas Mercer chronometer No 23543 to determine longitude. With yet another ground-breaking feat of navigation directly relevant to its heritage, Thomas Mercer is now proud to pay homage to Sir Francis and celebrate the Atlantic Challenge by dedicating this eponymous timekeeper.

ATLANTIC CHALLENGE MARINE CHRONOMETER: FEATURES OF THE TIMEPIECE

With its distinctive asymmetrical body of AISI 316 stainless steel with precious elements in high gloss finish woods, the Legacy lovingly blends a modern British design with flawless craftsmanship. In parallel with her exquisite casing, the Legacy contains a mechanism that is the purest expression of marine chronometer. Visible from the dial, the escapement, the beating heart of the timekeeper, comes in its par excellence form, the Spring Detent, and is coupled with the sine qua non chain-and-fusee drive. A unique feature of the Legacy chronometer is the gimbals' suspension that allows the movement to remain horizontal regardless of the motion of the ship - ideal for achieving maximum accuracy.

In its Atlantic Challenge version, the timekeeper shows an elegant combination of Ziricote, White Ripple Sycamore and Oak, surrounding a fine hand-painted dial featuring the Atlantic Ocean map on which the plot course the 1971 race is represented. As a final touch of incomparability, engraved on the base plate are Sir Francis' signature and Gipsy Moth V's silhouette and deckplan, the latter showing also the position on board of chronometer 23543.

Alessandro Quintavalle, Thomas Mercer's chairman: "We are honoured to pay homage to this important page of British sailing history. Sir Francis Chichester was a pioneer and his unflinching determination and unique spirit of adventure led him to achieve goals until then considered insuperable. While Thomas Mercer is always proud to celebrate feats in which its chronometers played a vital part, its relationship with the Atlantic Challenge is intrinsically and indissolubly deeper, owing to the intimate affinity between racing and precision timekeeping: both, indeed, strive for perfection - and perfection is measured against time, be this in miles sailed over 24 hours or fractions of a second over the same period."

THOMAS MERCER AND THE GIPSY MOTH TRUST – THE PARTNERSHIP

On the occasion of the launch of the Legacy Atlantic Challenge, Thomas Mercer is pleased to announce its partnership with and support of the Gipsy Moth Trust, a charity whose aim is to keep Sir Francis Chichester's legacy very much alive for future generations. By acquiring and restoring Gipsy Moth IV – the predecessor of Gipsy Moth V used in 1966's solo circumnavigation - founders Eileen Skinner and Rob Thompson wanted not only to retain within the United Kingdom this fundamental part of the British sailing history, but also to make her available for people of all ages to see and sail and to inspire a new generation of youth. To further attest to the historical importance of this notable vessel, the new British passport features the Gipsy Moth IV alongside a modern marine chronometer and its ancestor H4, the invention of John Harrison that finally solved the problem of longitude determination at sea.

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Eileen Skinner and Rob Thompson founders of the Gipsy Moth Trust: "We are delighted that the new Legacy exclusive edition marine chronometer commemorates the Atlantic Challenge and the ongoing achievement of Sir Francis Chichester following his circumnavigation in 1966-67. We are honoured also that Thomas Mercer has chosen to support the Gipsy Moth Trust in its aims of keeping Sir Francis's own legacy firmly in the public domain to inspire others to meet challenge."

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