

WATCHES AND JEWELRY

# Chopard celebrates craft with rugby player Keita Inagaki

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*The short films discuss the brand's sustainability efforts, craft and heritage. Image credit: Chopard*

By ZACH JAMES

Swiss jeweler Chopard is showcasing the work of its artisans through fresh digital content.

A new series, titled "Conversation with Keita Inagaki," follows the eponymous Japanese rugby player as he explores the maison's watchmaking manufacture in Switzerland, delving into multiple aspects of the craft along the way. The release aligns Chopard with fellow luxury horology names in discussing what makes their artisanry unique, while also tying into the ongoing Paris 2024 Olympic Games through its star athlete.

"The use of Japanese rugby player Keita Inagaki as a brand ambassador for Chopard communicates the brand's desire to reach beyond the traditional or expected kind of luxury spokesperson," said Daymon Bruck, chief creative officer at [The O Group](#), New York.

"Mr. Inagaki plays the role in these campaign videos of the newly initiated, a stand-in for viewers who might not have the depth of knowledge about the brand of the watchmaking process," Mr. Bruck said. "This interview format with Mr. Inagaki is an excellent content platform to highlight some of Chopard's key brand values, that of sustainability, handmade quality, heritage and tradition."

Mr. Bruck is not affiliated with Chopard, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

## Made by hand

Each episode of the four-part series centers on a different element of the jeweler's craft.

The titular conversation between Mr. Inagaki and Chopard co-president Karl-Friedrich Scheufele hits on a variety of topics, from the maison's history and heritage to its efforts to uplift sustainability.

## Chopard presents "The Encounter"

Kicking off the programming is "The Encounter," which briefly follows Mr. Inagaki's arrival and reception at the Swiss horology facility in its sub-one-minute runtime. Upon entering, the athlete is approached by Mr. Scheufele, who gives him a brief rundown of the company's 160-year legacy of luxury artisanry.

In the second episode, "The Artisans Work," the Japanese rugby star participates in several watchmaking workshops, including

polishing, engraving and machining; the athlete also examines the fine mechanics powering the timepieces through a microscope. A discussion between Mr. Scheufele and Mr. Inagaki plays over the visuals, with the duo speaking about how the maison handmakes their products, with the majority of the components inside also created in-house.

"In [a] rugby team, each person has a role to play, and each part of the watch has a role to play as well," said Mr. Inagaki, in a statement.

"If any one part stops functioning, the whole team stops functioning," he said. "This visit to Switzerland was also a time that made me think again about the significance of my existence in rugby, or rather, clearly what I have to do."



*Mr. Inagaki was able to get up close and personal with the pieces in his time at the Swiss facility. Image credit: Chopard*

Jumping forward, the fourth episode, titled "The Transmission," speaks on the specialized skills Chopard's craftspeople hold and how they transfer that knowledge to the next generation. Mr. Scheufele states that, at any point during the year, around 50 young artisans are engaged in apprenticeship programs focused on timepiece and jewelry making, polishing and engraving; he goes on to compare the process to bringing in college-aged talent to add new life into a sports team.

Circling back, the third short centers on the maison's environmentally conscious design process, which includes the ethical and traceable sourcing of gold, as well as the use of upcycled or recycled steel in its products.

Closing out the series, the duo harps on the necessity of fostering young talents and embracing sustainable manufacturing to build a new legacy for the next generation of consumers and aspiring luxury artisans.

### **Sporting showcase**

Mr. Inagaki is the star of the series, which serves as his second promotional effort for Chopard following his appointment as a brand ambassador for the Alpine Eagle watch line in April 2023.

Coinciding with the release of the content series, the 34-year-old athlete shared a custom selection of Alpine Eagle timepieces, as well as a few items from the Ice Cube jewelry portfolio, including a pendant, ring and bangle. The release of the digital content, as well as Mr. Inagaki's personalized horological picks, comes during an opportune time for the cross-promotion of high-end goods and sports.

### *Chopard presents "The Sustainability"*

"Of course, this new campaign launching so close to the Paris 2024 games also helps to connect the brand to the world of international sports and a luxury consumer who is passionate about all sorts of sports, not just the standard list," Mr. Bruck said.

Meanwhile, across the greater luxury space, the 2024 Summer Olympics have been a lightning rod for a wide range of activations. In the past month, a bevy of high-end brands have launched campaigns and products themed around Paris 2024.

French fashion label Louis Vuitton has been especially active, due to its parent company being the competition's premium partner, launching a book that details the City of Light's athletic scene ([see story](#)) as well as outfitting the Olympic medal bearers ([see story](#)).



*Mr. Inagaki will not serve on Japan's seven-man Olympic roster. Image credit: Chopard*

As the official timekeeper of the games, Swiss watchmaker Omega debuted a marketing campaign that upsizes athletes to meet the larger-than-life stature of the Olympics and its current home in the French capital ([see story](#)). In partnership with Team USA, U.S. fashion label Ralph Lauren designed the nation's opening and closing ceremony uniforms, mixing Americana with couture codes ([see story](#)).

Several other names throughout the prestige segment also activated in light of Paris 2024, including German luxury goods maker Montblanc ([see story](#)) and British department store Selfridges ([see story](#)).