

# Rolex Collectors Converge in Carmel

BY SHELDON K. SMITH



Above: Eric Ku and participants  
Right: Rolex cookies anyone?

At the inaugural Carmel Rolex Get Together, participants saw the original Deep Sea Special and other rare Rolex watches



A selection of vintage Rolexes (Eric Ku  
10PastTen.com)



In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the bathyscaphe Trieste piloted by Don Walsh (USN) and Jacques Picard to the bottom of the Marianas Trench, Rolex allowed the Deep Sea Special to go on display at Fourtané, an official Rolex jeweler located in Carmel, California. The GTG (get together) was the first of many events at Fourtané surrounding the unveiling of the original Deep Sea Special.

This Rolex was strapped to the Trieste bathyscaphe and traveled to a depth of 35,814 feet, reaching the bottom of the Marianas Trench. The trench, located off the coast of Guam, is known as the deepest point on earth at a depth greater than Mount Everest is tall.

Traveling to the bottom of the trench, the Deep Sea Special with-

stood over 16,000 lbs per square inch. According to GTG co-promoter Josh Bonifas and owner of Fourtané, Captain Walsh did not know the watch was strapped to the side of the bathyscaphe.

Walsh corrected earlier accounts of the event, sharing that Walsh was the skipper of the ship and Picard was a passenger.

Participants in the Get Together also viewed Hans Wilsdorf's first Rolex wristwatch.

This iconic model sported a rose gold case and white porcelain dial that is highlighted with a red 12. Even from the first Rolex watch, any touch of red on the dial would later become a known distinction for rare watches, which Rolex later used on its Double Red Sea Dweller and Red Submariners.



Above: The first Wilsdorf watch sported a gold case and porcelain dial with a red 12. (Sheldon Smith, minus4plus6.com)



Get Together aficionados also saw three of the most coveted Rolex dive watches in history, including Patrick Roude and Jacques Verpeaux's Janus IV Comex Sea Dwellers. Although these watches were laboratory tested to a depth of 601 meters, they actually traveled underwater to a depth of 501 meters strapped to the wrists of these divers. In 1977 diving to such a depth was astounding for both the watch and the diver.

"This is the first time in history that all the rare Sea Dwellers have been accounted for and on display at one time," says GTG co-organizer Eric Ku of 10PastTen.com. "Many times these rare prototype watches are never seen in public. Seeing all these rare Sea Dwellers in one location is a rare treat." ☺

The original Rolex Deep Sea Special was strapped to the Trieste bathyscaphe and traveled to a depth of 35,814 feet. (Jake Ehrlich, rolexblog.blogspot.com)

