

Ron Gordon Watch Repair Highlights the History Behind Rolex and the Rise of a Global Status Symbol

Explore how Rolex became a global status symbol. Ron Gordon reviews Pierre-Yves Donzé's book on Rolex history, marketing and Midtown NYC luxury watch repair.

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<https://www.rongordonwatches.com/>, a top-rated watch repair shop in Midtown Manhattan, has announced a new blog post examining the remarkable history of Rolex through the lens of Pierre-Yves Donzé’s book, *The Making of a Status Symbol: A Business History of Rolex*. The post reviews the book and explores how Rolex combined best-in-class watchmaking with extraordinarily savvy marketing to become one of the most recognizable luxury brands. The new post is available on the Ron Gordon Watch Repair

blog at <https://www.rongordonwatches.com/2026/08/rolex-book/>.

“After repairing and servicing thousands of Rolex watches over the years, I know these Rolex watches on almost an individual level. That is, I know the movements, the cases, the problems Rolex watches develop and the stories their owners bring into my New York City watch repair shop,” explained Ron Gordon, proprietor of Ron Gordon Watch Repair. “What I enjoyed about Donzé’s book is that it backs away from the workbench and looks at the bigger story. Rolex didn’t just build a great watch. It built an idea around the watch: achievement, adventure, success and, eventually, status. It connected Rolex to the idea of success through the visibility of beautiful and successful people.” Person reading a book about Rolex watches in New York.

Donzé’s book, published in English in 2025 and available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/making-status-symbol-business-history-ebook/dp/B0F7RTNGLQ/) at <https://www.amazon.com/making-status-symbol-business-history-ebook/dp/B0F7RTNGLQ/>, examines the business decisions and marketing strategies that transformed Rolex during the twentieth century. Early Rolex advertising emphasized technical innovations such as the water-resistant Oyster case and self-winding Perpetual movement. Public demonstrations helped prove that the technology worked, including Mercedes Gleitze’s famous 1927 English Channel swim associated with the Rolex Oyster.

Beginning particularly in the 1960s, however, Rolex marketing increasingly shifted from the extraordinary watch to the extraordinary person wearing it. Through its work with advertising agency J. Walter Thompson, Rolex became associated with athletes, explorers, business leaders and cultural figures. Arnold Palmer, Jackie Stewart, Jean-Claude Killy, Nancy Lopez and Plácido Domingo were among the personalities who helped connect the Rolex name with individual achievement. The new post by Ron explains by way of book review the genius of marketing the watch brand by connecting it to famous and successful people. People connect with people, Ron explains, and Rolex brilliantly leveraged this fact. The product was still important. But now the person wearing the product was part of the message.

In other words, Madison Avenue entered the watch business. The new post also examines Rolex's deep connection to New York City and the American luxury market. In 1977, Rolex paid \$15 million for a building on Fifth Avenue as the company expanded aggressively in the United States. Today, Rolex is completing a new headquarters at 665 Fifth Avenue in Midtown Manhattan. Iconic buildings in an iconic city make for iconic marketing. For Gordon, the New York connection makes perfect sense.

"New York understands the Rolex idea," Gordon continued. "A Rolex can be a precision instrument, a beautiful piece of jewelry, a status symbol and a family heirloom all at the same time. Walk around Midtown and you will see brand-new Rolex watches, but you'll also see watches that have been on somebody's wrist for thirty, forty or fifty years. Those older watches have lived a life."

That history makes proper maintenance of vintage Rolex watches particularly important. For example, owners may have an older Date just inherited from a parent, a Submariner purchased decades ago or another vintage Rolex that has been sitting unworn in a drawer. Mechanical watches require periodic inspection and service. Lubricants age, gaskets deteriorate and components can wear over decades of use.

Ron Gordon encourages owners not to regard these watches simply as "old." They are pieces of Rolex history. Ron Gordon Watch Repair provides Rolex inspection, maintenance and repair from its Midtown Manhattan location. With more than 30 years of experience in luxury watch repair, Gordon works with both modern and vintage timepieces and can evaluate an older Rolex before recommending appropriate service or repair.

More information about [Rolex repair](https://www.rongordonwatches.com/rolex-repair/) in New York City can be found at <https://www.rongordonwatches.com/rolex-repair/>.

"Rolex spent more than a century creating this history," Gordon concluded. "If you own a vintage Rolex, you own a small piece of it. Wear it, enjoy it, tell its story — and please take care of the thing."

ABOUT RON GORDON WATCH REPAIR

Ron Gordon Watch Repair is conveniently located at 280 Madison Avenue at 40th Street in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. The company specializes in the service and repair of high quality, luxury watches, both modern and vintage, and repairs watches for those who wear the very best brands. The expert and namesake is Ron Gordon.

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