LOCMAN

THE FOUNDER **Marco Mantovani discusses** the company and its world

The challenge for the brand synonymous with excellence

THE WATCHES A journey of discovery through the five collections

FROM A SMALL ISLAND TO CONQUERING THE WORLD

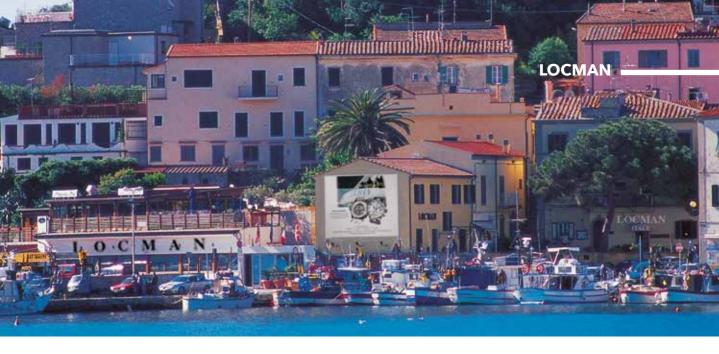
THE SPIRIT OF ELB

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LIKE A DAUGHTER

by Sergio Luciano



says Marco Mantovani, his expression softening, betraying a touch of understatement. "We started with watch straps; my father worked in the sector. Our lines were very popular at Baselworld, and that's how we started. And very soon, from straps, we decided to

try producing our own line of watches." It's inevitable that your thoughts turn to birth when talking about a son or daughter. And when Marco Mantovani, in his office at the LOCMAN building at the heart of the island of Elba, talks about the company... it's as though he were talking about a daughter. A beautiful, much-loved, ever-young daughter,

with her talents and whims, her sweetness, who needs a great, lasting commitment.

Children are pieces of our hearts, wrote Eduardo De Filippo. Companies can be, too, because – when experienced intensely – they give the business owner a generational dimension, as though bringing a part of themselves

to life, every day. And you only have to visit the "workshop of the watchmaker who watches the sea", as the Italian writer Gianni Rodari may have described Marco, to understand that he is the company's father, but its mother is its island. It's a land that has constantly guided the designer when creating a whole host of products. A corner of paradise that has inspired the rigour of the shapes, the meticulous quality of the technologies and the clean lines of

of the shapes, the meticulous quality of the technologies and the clean lines of the creative vision of every model. "Yes, the decision to remain here, on Elba, needs to be understood; it's a strategic decision, a life, style and culture that we have chosen. This island is the ideal setting for creating the company that we want." Read on to discover the company, its world and its 100% Italian creativity in a

tale of passion and competition.

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UNA PRODUZIONE ECONOMY

Piazza Borromeo 1, 20123 Milano

Marco Mantovani, the founder and beating heart of the company: when life and business combine

THE MAN, THE DREAM, THE COMPANY: LOCMAN'S CHALLENGE

by Davide Passoni

"A

s I child I dreamed of being a forest ranger when I grew up. But life has made me what I am, here, where I am now." 'Here' is the former customs bar-

racks in Marina di Campo on the island of Elba, and the would-be forest ranger is Marco Mantovani, founder and patron of LOC-MAN, the company whose headquarters are located within those refurbished barracks. The sliding doors of Mantovani's life opened very early, introducing him to a whole different world where the environment is still involved, but serves as the frame for a work of art with one central theme: the watch. When Marco talks about watches, it's as though he's their father and their lover, both at the same time... He knows each individual model in his collections. from oldest to newest, and, having started from scratch, has over the years become one of the most respected Italian watchmaking experts. His LOCMAN company is one of a very small

number of Italian watch producers, created and deeply rooted on the Tuscan island. It's a personal and business tale best told in the words of the man who created and lived it.

Elba in his blood

"In Marina di Campo my maternal grandfather owned various companies. He was a very well-liked man and when I began my adventure years ago, I was helped

> by many old people from the village who remembered him. Over time, the only family business remaining was a clothes store where my mother worked; my father was a customer and that's where they met. They fell in love and got married. Not long after I was born, however, they took the decision to move the family to Milan, because my father's business needed him to. My father had a leather business and it was the period of La Dolce Vita and Italy's economic boom, which inspired our 1960 collection; a country that produced high-end footwear and more. My father sold his goods directly to producers. He taught me his work ethic, passion and customer service. Over the years, we would often go back and forth to Elba because we had rela-

tives there, but I'd always wanted



The Montecristo Skeleton, the newest model in the collection

to live on the island."

Discovering watches

It was a lifetime ambition that would have to wait a few more years to become a reality, however. "I began



working with my father and came into contact with the fascinating world of fashion and Italian manufacturing. At a certain point, though, I decided to set up on my own because I discovered I had a creative streak and designed a leather goods range called Locman Design. The name was a combination of the first syllables of my surname and those of my business partner at the time, Fulvio Locci. Not long after this, Claudio Fa-

nucchi also joined us. The articles that made up that leather goods range included some watch straps, which we took to the watch fair in Basel to offer to potential clients. We visited the stands, showing them to the various brands and managed to get some major producers interested in them: they were beautiful, innovative watch straps, designed by Italian minds. One client immediately understood that something was changing and



watch straps were becoming increasingly important: it was Luigi Macaluso, a watchmaking genius who, with his intuition and ability to develop products, was to me a true maestro. He thought our watch strap would be perfect for Breitling, and it was a success. Again thanks to Macaluso, we also began working actively with Hamilton and Girard-Perregaux."

What will I do when I grow up?

It's often the case that great stories begin with a coincidence, a chance encounter, a meeting of minds and objectives. "Being with Macaluso and others, starting with watch straps, we slowly fell in love with the watch-making sector, transforming the company and becoming a firm that produced designs. That was in 1986. Our clients included prestigious Swiss names, but those we had the most in common with were Italian owned. Among these, Carlo Crocco, the owner of Hublot and Binda who at the time also managed Breil and Vetta and distributed Longines, was very important to us. When, in 1988, we designed the first LOCMAN watch, which was totally hand-crafted with a briar-root case, we decided to show it to Mr Crocco, who was a great connoisseur. He liked it immediately and decided

to join the company, where he remained until 1996, taking on the distribution on an international level. At that time the company was split between Elba and Milan. I wanted to concentrate on the LOCMAN brand, emphasising its Italian craftsmanship and the Elba side of the business; I went to Crocco and explained my plans to him. He understood, and like the gentleman he's always been, he let me achieve them. In the end, together with my friend Giuseppe Pea, better known as Peppino, we took over 100% of the shares."

A lighthouse beam

It was a decision that caused fate to take an unexpected turn as Mantovani recalls, not bothering to hide his emotions. "I remember one day I was at customs in a Central American country, maybe Panama, waiting for my watch samples to be examined. I went into a waiting room, waiting for the officials to finish the paperwork for the person before me, and on the wall of that dreary room I spotted a beautiful photo of the lighthouse at Punta Polveraia, on Elba. It was a revelation to me: 'What am I doing here?" I wondered. I had to take risks and fulfil my dream: that was how, within a short space of time, we took over the company. For me

it was a doubly important step: first of all, I didn't have the resources to do it and I got into debt; secondly, it's one thing designing watches for Swiss multinationals or selling them watch straps, but it's another to have your own brand and finance the communications and strategies to enter the market. But it was around that time that I met my wife Gloria, who was an enormous help with the company. Anything was possible."

Discovering America

Sometimes in family stories, at a certain point an "uncle from America" appears and creates a sudden, unexpected turning point in people's lives. In the story of Marco Mantovani and LOCMAN, however, it was a "friend from America", Ben Feigenbaum, whose contribution gave the brand a global dimension. "We started producing a sporty range of aluminium watches that we felt had great potential. In early 2000 we decided to invest in the project. We were in charge of distributing the watch in Italy, and my friend distribu-

ted it in the USA, with great success. In particular, Ben sold the aluminium and diamond collection in New York through Bergdorf Goodman, an American chain of luxury stores; the day after they were put on the market. It was Jennifer Lopez's birthday and Puff Daddy, who the singer was going out with at the time, went into the shop: he bought one watch for her and one for himself. At the birthday party, all the guests saw their watches and the

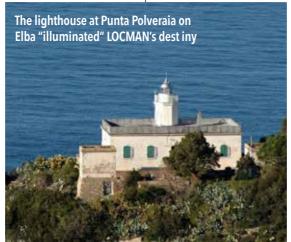
next day we had a queue outside the shop. Even Elton John, who was one of the guests that night, called us when he got back to Europe to order a large quantity for the guests at one of his parties in Saint Tropez." Within a short space of time, LOCMAN became a symbol of Italian craftsmanship and was even chosen as a diplomatic gift from the government, starting with Silvio Berlusconi, who presented a LOCMAN watch to every international political leader present at the NATO summit in Pratica di Mare in 2002.

Courageous captains and fates intertwined

As well as touching the lives of major international music stars, LOCMAN's destiny became intertwined with one of the most controversial stories of Italian capitalism in the new century, the takeover of Telecom Italia by Hopa and its "courageous captains", Roberto Colaninno and Emilio Gnutti. "At the time the company had recently acquired Telecom and Gnutti planned to create a luxury division. He was buying various companies and he also called us. After a series of meetings, it was clear that I didn't want to sell my majority share, whereas they wanted to buy everything, leaving me as CEO and President. In the end, Hopa entered with 35% of the capital and for us it was an important experience, with a highly prestigious financial partner. Gnutti was in love with watchmaking and after the sale of Telecom Italia he told me that he would have liked to have listed LOCMAN on the stock exchange, but the time was not right.

In 2005, the famous Banca Antonveneta acquisition

scandal exploded. Gnutti, who was then President of Hopa, was also on the LOC-MAN board and had to resign. As a result, our company was held back for three years, but at the end of 2008 my old partner Peppino and I succeeded in buying back our shares."



To hell and back

When fate decides to be ruthless, it's capable of taking no prisoners. Between 2005 and 2008, it wasn't

just the storm over Hopa that stagnated LOCMAN's booming growth. "Around that time, I fell seriously ill with a rare form of virus. Unfortunately, there was no cure: doctors gave me no more than 3-6 months to live. Luckily, a doctor friend of mine was in touch with a researcher who had conducted studies of this illness in America and came back with a therapy that seemed to be effective. If, three years after the treatment, the virus hadn't come back, I would have made it. I did it. In 2008, having recovered and repurchased Hopa's

shares, I realised that between my illness and the legal and financial upheavals, over the previous three years the company had been left to its own devices. From

the idyllic situation in 2005, Peppino and I found ourselves having to start over with a minimum turnover and a loss of several million, right in the middle of the USA crisis after Lehman Brothers. Nonetheless, we decided to purchase Genesi, our historic production partner, and the building of the Florence store. As early as 2009 things began to improve, then they got better and better over the next few years.

We continued to produce and design watches for third-party companies, including Pomellato, a leading European jewellery brand. When Pomellato was sold to Kering, the managing director Andrea Morante asked me if he could come in as a shareholder of LOCMAN and, naturally, I was honoured and agreed."

The art of starting over

Having survived the most complex period in the company's history, LOCMAN launched itself enthusiasti-

cally into the second decade of the 21st century, with Marco Mantovani determined to steer a straight course for the firm thanks in part to the success of new models such as Stealth and Montecristo. "The whole of the creative side is coordinated by me. Design and technology are entirely developed in-house. Say what you like about LOCMAN, but we're no sheep. In our own small way, we were part of a frenetic phase of Italy's political and economic history, which for us became an important experience. I learnt that there are times in life when you seem to be able to see the future, and others where you feel it but it's more difficult to predict. What I believe is that there'll always be a place in watchmaking for those who work hard and pas-



Clean lines and stylistic rigour are key to the 1960 collection







sionately. I think the LOCMAN brand can aspire to go beyond watchmaking and become a lifestyle, through our Italianness and creativity. And that's why we've also diversified in the eyewear sector, which is very similar to our own. If we don't turn experiences such as the ones we went through with LOCMAN into a heavy burden, but instead see them as an asset, I believe the story of our company can be transformed into a lasting success. I don't know how this will happen, but I feel it and I'm going ahead on this path of rigour in classic watchmaking combined with the creative freedom of Italian style.

In places with a rich history and culture like ours, nature and the sea represent eternal values, sources of artistic inspiration and motivation."

Looking to the future

"I believe that companies work when there's a team. It's the most important thing and the most difficult to implement, especially in a sector like ours that requires highly specific technical skills. In every environment, capable people are needed who take responsibility and know how to communicate. In the company there have been generational changes over the past 33 years of its existence and now is a time for positive rebuilding, with a series of young personalities who are growing well

even in positions of responsibility. People often ask me how I see the future of LOCMAN. I have three children, two girls and a boy, and I'd like to give them the opportunity to decide whether or not to continue; only time will tell. I also believe in alliances, in synergies between companies. A good example is the one we've enjoyed over the past few years with Ducati, a fantastic Italian firm with whom we share the watchmaking adventure. At LOCMAN I have two important partners: Peppino and Andrea Morante. We're friends, although our characters are quite different, and perhaps because of this we complement one another. What's more, with a highly experienced, prestigious partner like Andrea we can plan for the future more securely. The challenge we're faced with is not insignificant; we want to create something unique. We're aiming to promote Italian watchmaking, which in the past has been booming and ruled the roost from the 1960s to the early '90s: it's no coincidence that Swiss brands made purchases in Italy. To lose this industrial tradition would be a real shame. I strongly believe in Italy's entrepreneurial capabilities, faced with our true limit, which is individualism, the inability to adopt a systematic approach. Perhaps the time has come to rebuild this production chain." Could LOCMAN be a good candidate to lead it?



Craftsmanship and industry, history and innovation combine in LOCMAN's vision and products

A CUSTODIAN OF TRADITION

by Davide Passoni

LOCMAN – founded in 1986 and deeply rooted in the island of Elba – represents a meeting of Italian style, age-old watchmaking traditions and new production technologies.

Focussing on materials, research and innovation

What makes LOCMAN watches so distinctive is the use of innovative materials such as titanium, carbon fibre, aluminium and other high-tech alloys. It's a direction that in 2001 spurred the company to found Materia Future, an entity whose role was to study the applications of innovative and composite materials to watchmaking,

paying great attention to their biocompatibility, especially in the parts of the timepiece that come into contact with the skin. On the back of this research and effort, in 2003 LOCMAN was the first company in the world to produce a watch with a case made entirely from carbon fibre, the Nuovo Carbon model.

The Scuola Italiana di Orologeria and Genesi

An essential chapter in the history of LOCMAN took place in 2006 with the creation of S.I.O., the Scuola Italiana di Orologeria (Italian School of Watchmaking) on Elba: an academy within the company that absorbed



Materie Future and, in addition to its purely educational activities, now studies movements and construction techniques. Since 2006 the movements of all LOCMAN watches have been tested and certified at the S.I.O. workshops. Today, the Scuola Italiana di Orologeria helps create employment; it's the place to learn a noble profession and the most effective way to pass on a heritage of experience and craftsmanship. In addition to the school there is Genesi, a company in the LOCMAN group with workshops on via Madre Cabrini in Milan since 2010. While some parts of watchmaking production are externalised, at Genesi watches are assembled, such as the self-winding chronograph 516, prototypes and other technical activities. The cases, which have always been distinctive parts of LOCMAN watches, are made by certain suppliers to which the company sends the design together with a prototype, both produced in-house. Once the definitive case mould has been created, it is purchased by LOCMAN and therefore becomes the property of the company, meaning that it cannot be reproduced by other parties. In LOCMAN watches there is not a single component that has not been designed entirely in-house.

Italianness and passion at its heart

Technology, innovation, Italian design and passion are the values on which LOCMAN's identity is based. The concept of luxury carried by the brand's watches is not linked to an exclusive price range, but to a value of independence, freedom and uniqueness. LOCMAN watches are created on the Island of Elba, just metres from the sea, from which they draw inspiration and energy. They are aimed at a demanding, attentive clientele in search of something unique and refined. Entirely convinced of the connection between refinement and Italianness, the Tuscan brand took the decision to highlight its origins, creating a 100% Italian brand that stands out in an international scene dominated by large Swiss watchmaking groups. With this in mind, certain strategic allegiances have been formed, such as the partnership with Ducati to create watch collections dedicated to fans of motorcycling and Italian design. In the past, LOCMAN has collaborated closely with the Ministry of Defence, producing special-edition watches for the Italian air force, navy, and elite army groups such as the Folgore paratroopers. Furthermore, in 2007, for the launch of the new Fiat 500 - a symbol of Italian design throughout the world for over 60 years - LOCMAN produced some limited watch editions created in conjunction with the most prestigious design studios of the automotive sector. These are just a few of the collaborations developed over the years, which have allowed the company - together with other established brands - to express its Italian style throughout the world.

From Elba to the world

What could have been a constriction for the company—being located on an island, especially such a small one—has been turned by LOCMAN into a strength. Thanks to special agreements with couriers, within 24 hours the products are delivered all over Italy and in 48 hours they reach all the world markets. Distribution is carried out via a network of around 1,200 authorised retailers all over the world, together with eight single-brand boutiques. The distribution policy values direct relationships with the clientele, which for LOCMAN is represented by the most prestigious watch and jewellery retailers. These are points of sale that—now more than ever—value the idea of working with an almost family-run company that meticulously tailors its products and customer service.

The Scuola Italiana di Orologeria (Italian School of Watchmaking) created by LOCMAN combines training, research and development

AT THE SCHOOL OF PERFECTION

by Davide Passoni

arco Mantovani's clear entrepreneurial vision aims to take LOCMAN beyond a case history of success, turning the company into a point of reference for watchmaking culture as well as a world-class manufacturing firm. It's a culture that is also transmitted by training specialised technicians and handing down the profession of master watchmaker, which in Italy has a tradition of excellence and has been rediscovered over the past few years. This was the thinking behind the creation of the Scuola Italiana di Orologeria (S.I.O.), founded by LOCMAN on Elba in 2006. S.I.O. is a school focussed on research, particularly into new technologies, high-tech

materials and movements. Research and experimentation with new materials have been primary activities for LOCMAN since its early days in the 1980s. When selecting materials, LOCMAN pays extremely close attention to biocompatibility and the effects of the materials – in the short and long term – on the human body. In order to obtain the desired results, S.I.O. chooses entirely dedicated production technologies. Furthermore, thanks to the contribution of S.I.O. over the past few years, LOCMAN has introduced exclusive movements such as the first mechanical chronograph made by technicians from the Tuscan firm in collaboration with the Swiss Depa Movement workshop which specialises in





movements and complications, and fitted in the Montecristo Automatic Chronograph.

S.I.O.'s pioneering role is demonstrated by the fact that, before LOCMAN, there was no watchmaking tradition on Elba. LOCMAN has therefore begun a process whe-



reby the Scuola Italiana di Orologeria plays an extremely important role in individual professional training. Finally, in addition to courses, the Scuola Italiana di Orologeria offers more in-depth masters to complete participants' knowledge of the watchmaking world. These masters go beyond calibres and movements, as demonstrated by the Training Course for Sales and Post-Sales Staff, which takes place over the course of two days in the workshop. One of LOCMAN's priorities over the past few years has been to optimise customer service. S.I.O. provided the necessary know-how to develop LOCMAN's post-sales technical assistance, which can now count on a network of assistance centres distributed throughout the world, connected to a unique online information system that is constantly active and guarantees quick, efficient operations. The aim of the course is to transfer this expertise to the participants so that they have the right tools to be able to meet the needs of dealers and customers in a timely manner. Through a multidisciplinary educational programme based on specific cases, participants acquire the knowledge and techniques to resolve the most common issues linked to watch maintenance. In addition to creating wealth and jobs, the strength of a company also lies in its ability to innovate while at the same time holding on to tradition: the essence of LOCMAN and its Scuola Italiana di Orologeria.

Montecristo

AN UNMISTAKABLE STYLE

he collection that best represents LOCMAN is named after a legendary island in the Tuscan archipelago and fully represents the spirit of the company from Elba. Launched in 2009 with the Montecristo Classic, the collection made an immediate impact on the market thanks to its strong, highly distinctive design with a wide case patented by LOCMAN featuring a flat crystal and the typical three-bar lugs. The self-winding calibre that drives it (chronograph or three-hand) is the fruit of a structured research process on the part of the technicians at the Scuola Italiana di Orologeria (Italian School of Watchmaking). Montecristo is available with a self-winding mechanical movement developed by LOC-MAN, visible through a crystal aperture on the titanium case back (used for its hypoallergenic properties), or with a high-tech quartz mechanism. Depending on the model, the 44 or 41 mm case is in steel or with black, blue or pinkgold PVD treatment, while the strap is in silicone or leather or replaced by a metal bracelet.

The limited-edition Montecristo Carbon and Montecristo Moon, with lunar phases, are particularly interesting. The former is made with a carbon and titanium case, while to make the second, LOCMAN recovered 300 Lemania 1883 movements and fitted them into the case of the Montecristo, bringing an elegant, prestigious timepiece to life.







Stealth

FOR DYNAMIC WRISTS



t's one of LOCMAN's historic collections, created in 2008 at a time when the company was picking itself up after some difficult years. The company was hedging its bets on a new watch in order to relaunch itself on the market and, over the years, the Stealth has proven to be a landmark in the brand's collections. Featuring clean lines and defined by the invisible bombers that inspired its name, over the years the Stealth has changed its look without changing its essence, softening its lines and edges yet remaining faithful to the vocation of cutting-edge materials: carbon fibre or steel case and dial, hypoallergenic titanium case back, and soft silicone strap. The watch is available both in a self-winding three-hand version and in a quartz chronograph in the version with a 46 mm case, or quartz three-hand and chronograph in the 41 mm version. Special consideration goes to Locman's female clientele who are increasingly central to the brand's collections, with 33 mm versions with the added touch of a genuine Italian leather strap.



Mare

DESTINY IN THE NAME

aking its début in the LOCMAN collections in 2019, the Mare – meaning Sea in Italian – is named in honour of the essence of the brand. With a wide, ergonomic case, the watch draws inspiration from the world of water sports. Continuing the tradition of LOCMAN, which has always sought to explore new materials and their use in watchmaking, the Mare features a 316L steel case and a carbon fibre dial, in versions with golden rose PVD

treatment or a self-winding movement. The moulded, curved case back is in satin-brushed titanium. The silicone compound used for the straps is a soft-touch material, much tougher than rubber and especially resistant to temperature variations and UV rays.

The Mare is also made with a rubber strap with protective leather inserts. Available with a self-winding three-hand mechanical or quartz chronograph movement, Mare is fitted with a knurled screw-down crown, assuring water-resistance to a depth of 100 metres, in line with its marine inspiration. Water-resistance is also guaranteed by the double silicone seal of the chronograph pushpieces. The dial's most striking feature is its shark design on the dial, at 6 o'clock. According to an old Mediterranean legend, the shark represents courage and strength and is a powerful symbol of protection for sailors. To mark the launch of the Mare model, LOC-MAN has teamed up with the MAREVIVO association, which has been working to conserve and protect the sea at home and abroad: over the next few years, LOCMAN will donate some of the proceeds from the sale of Mare watches to the association.





1960

A TRIBUTE TO LA DOLCE VITA

eaturing an elegant design with pure, understated lines, even the name of the LOCMAN 1960 collection is a statement of intent. It reinterprets the glamorous atmosphere of the early Nineteen Sixties, a period that, for Italy, represented the consecration of its style and outlook throughout the world. Forever preserved in Federico Fellini's film La Dolce Vita and the charm of Marcello Mastroianni, the swinging Sixties revolutionised lifestyles and customs, both in Italy and throughout the world. At that time, thanks to the linear nature of their designs, Italian stylists were able to infuse their creations with an elegance echoed in LOCMAN's 1960 collection, featuring men's and women's timepieces with a flat 42 or 32 mm case in glossy or golden rose steel.

Available with a quartz or self-winding movement, either three-hand, three-hand with large date, or chronograph, the watches in the 1960 collection feature a variety of leather or fabric straps as well as a version in soft, comfortable Milanese steel mesh.



Ducati

PERFORMANCE MADE IN ITALY

he agreement signed in early 2017 by LOC-MAN and Ducati is an example of the way the company interprets its Italian-made vocation. Like LOCMAN, Ducati is an ambassador for Italian creativity and excellence throughout the world, and constantly committed to researching technologies and materials at the service of performance. The first product of the agreement was a watch designed according to an innovative construction system, combining high-quality movements with materials such as titanium, carbon, AISI 316 L steel and silicone. The first timepiece in the LOCMAN Ducati collection was available both in a chronograph version and in a self-winding three-hand version and featured a tonneau case, not uncommon in the company's historic collections. The new LOCMAN Ducati timepieces, on the other hand, present a round 42 mm case in steel, with the distinctive perforated lugs recalling the details of the frame of Ducati motorbikes. The yellow and red colours, together with the logo engraved on the case back



and appearing on the dial, are LOCMAN's tribute to Ducati. The timepieces are available both in three-hand and chronograph versions, with a quartz or self-winding movement, developed by the Scuola Italiana di Orologeria (Italian School of Watchmaking). Because 100% Italian bodywork needs an engine made in Italy.





Mechanical automatic movement or chronograph hi-tech quartz mechanism Titanium and stainless steel case. Carbon fibre dial. 10 ATM water resistant



Locman proudly supports Marevivo for ocean preservation



