

## Special Edition IWC Mark XII and Mark XV Watches. An overview of a mutual collection.

*by : Nelson Herring, Hans Goerter and Adrian van der Meijden.*

Over time, the watchmakers of IWC have developed many special and pioneering lines of watches, ranging from the classic Portugieser line to the highly technical and complex complications like the Portugiese Minute Repeater and the Grand Complication and Il Destriero Scafusia.

Along the way, IWC has combined their technological know-how with the desire to explore the elements of Earth (with the Engineer line), Sea (with the Aquatimer line), and Air (with the Pilot's line).

As far back as the 1930's, IWC accepted the challenges that faced timepieces used for aviation. Problems such as temperature extremes, heavy vibration, and resistance to magnetic fields were overcome. Later as the evolution of the Pilot's line continued and these timepieces were becoming more collectible, IWC began to produce special limited editions that would tempt and satisfy those collectors looking for something more than an excellent, utilitarian watch. We attempt here to explore Limited Special Edition IWC pilot watches from the Mark XII and Mark XV versions.

To produce limited and special editions has always been a speciality of IWC. Already in the era when only pocket watches were produced, IWC issued special versions for jubilees and festivities. Most famous are the "Schützenuhren", devoted to shooting competitions in German speaking countries. As far as we know, no special editions have been made of the earliest Pilot watches Mark IX and Mark X<sup>1</sup>. Minor variations of the dials of Mark X are known but these are not considered special editions. A transition watch in terms of special edition might be



**Fig. 1:** IWC-Schützenuhr (back)



considered the Mark XI. This highly collectible watch has been produced between 1948 and 1984. It was used by the British Royal Air Force as well as by several other airborne combat forces (South Africa, Australia and New Zealand). Produced with different dials, hands and different code engravings on the back, one might consider these as special editions.

**Fig. 2:** IWC Mark IX

<sup>1</sup> Officially, the Mark X was not a pilot watch. It was used by the British Army, not by the Air Force.

After ending the production of the legendary Mark XI, IWC waited 9 years until they launched the Mark XII. IWC stated about the Mark XII : " This is a contemporary, updated successor to the Mark XI, complete with automatic movement and date displays". Although this is true, remarkable similarity exists between all Marks, from IX to XII and later to Mark XV. All of them have about the same size, they have black illuminating dials and Arabic numerals. The Mark XII was relatively short on the market from 1993 to 1999. However, its design must have been appealing as not less than 7 special editions have been issued. In 1999 the somewhat bigger Mark XV was launched, while 1 year before a new design Pilot watch came to the



**Fig. 3:** IWC Mark XI

market :the Universal Time coordinated(UTC) watch. Most of the Marks have been produced in steel with a leather strap. But versions in gold and platinum are known as well in combination with metal straps of different material. Also smaller lady versions of Mark XII have been made.

In our article we will show pictures from our own, nearly complete special edition Mark XII and Mark XV collection and we try to explain why each of the authors is attracted to these classic, timeless IWC Pilot watches. We want to acknowledge STEPHEN SUGIYAMA who wrote "Limited Edition IWC Mark XII Watches" (<http://www.qahill.com/tz/mark12-ltd/mark12-ltd.html>). This author compiled all different editions of Mark XII.

Almost none of the special editions has been depicted in the well-known white hardcover IWC catalogues over the years. The only exception, we think, is the Mark XV Spitfire made for the English market and the platinum Mark XII<sup>2</sup>. Two different movements have been used in the Mark XII : cal.37522, which is a modified and improved ETA cal.2892A2, and cal.884. Cal.884 is based on the JLC cal.889/2. As both calibres are not complete "in-house made", it seems that collectors are more attracted to the appearance of the watch, its dial and of course to the inscription on the back. The Mark XV was slightly larger than the Mark XII(36 versus 38 mm) and housed the new cal.37524 that increased the power reserve from 38 to 42 hours.

#### **NELSON HERRING :**

*Although I had seen some of the early hardback IWC catalogues, the first IWC I really held in my hands was a Mark XII. My father brought it back from a vacation where he purchased it. He has since given me this watch for my collection, so it is very special to me for sentimental reasons.*

*I had heard about most of the special ones from the IWC site and other collectors over the years, and I got other Marks in my collection from dealers and friends. One special weekend in the Fall of 2000 found me flying from the United States to Cologne for a whirlwind weekend to pick up my Gadebusch Mark XV along with some other special IWC's*

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<sup>2</sup> although the platinum version of the Mark XII was in the catalogue, 80 of that 500 pieces made was not pictured in the catalogue (the Asian version)



**Fig. 4:** Regular Mark XII



**Fig. 5:** Mark XV „Gadebusch“



**Fig. 6:** Regular Mark XV

**ADRIAN VAN DER MEIJDEN :**

*"I loved IWC Pilot watches instantly by viewing pictures in the IWC catalogues. Before I could buy a Mark X or a Mark XI, I purchased a Mark XII because of its classic style and its reasonable price. Not long after that I added a Mark XV to my collection. The special editions came later. I considered to order a Spitfire Special Edition when it came out in the UK. I did not, but recently I found a brand new one, complete with box and special pilot scarf. Personally, I like the railroad dial on the Spitfire most of all dial variations. It resembles very much the dial of the "mother of all" : the Mark IX. The hour hand has the typical heart or pear shape : "Poire Paris". Almost the same dial is built in the platinum, limited to 80 pieces, Mark XII which was produced for the Asian market<sup>3</sup>*



**Fig. 7:** Left; Asian Mark XII in Platinum. Right: Mark XV Spitfire, Limited Edition in steel

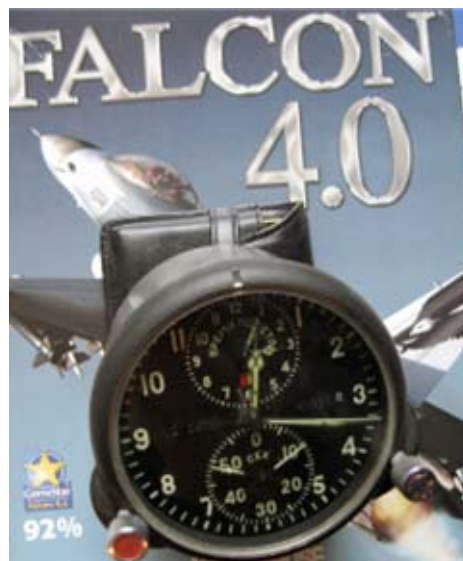
<sup>3</sup> Of all the 500 Pt. Made, 80 were the Asian version and the rest (420 pcs) were the blue ones



**HANS GOERTER:**

*"I love flying and maybe in my next live I will become a pilot. In the meanwhile I fly simulators (from Cessna to F16 Fighting Falcon) and on my desk always is an original board watch from a Russian MIG29.*

*When I began to collect IWC watches which can be dated 1998 (until then I had only one IWC, the PD Titan Chrono) very early I had the chance to buy a Mark XI from a US Army officer serviced by IWC and with the special "certificate of authenticity". Although the SC52<sup>4</sup> and the Mark IX are my objects of ambition the Mark XI for me is the best looking pilot watch ever. I found myself looking at the dial and was wondering: "what is the reason that this watch is looking so good?" I never found it out. After the Mark XI and XII I acquired a MarkX and the MarkXV "*



**Fig. 8:** Original MIG29 board watch

*Besides the Mark-line I also have the IWC Fliegerchronograph, the classical Fliegerchrono ever.*

*Besides psychological reasons ("because I am not a pilot at least I have a pilot watch") I like the clearness of display and the simplicity of pilot watches.*

*And one thing is clear: a pilot watch must have a black dial!*



**Fig. 9:** Early Mark XII

Although not in the strictest sense a "limited edition", one obscure version of the Mark XII is one of the earliest. It appears these watches went to the Japanese market. What makes them unusual is the lack of "Mark XII" on the dial.

IWC has always been successful on the Italian market. Probably because of that, EMILIO FONTANA and GIORGIO LATUADA, (former distributors of IWC in Italy) each ordered in 1998, 100 special Mark XII in Titan with on the dials displaying "E F" and "G L". There were more variations than just the initials. Both the G L version and the E F version had a dark blue instead of black dial. The G L version had a date display but even though the E F has no date, there still is the crown position to adjust the non-existent date, a bit irritating one could say. The dark blue dials are much darker than of the platinum version and without bright light one can hardly see the difference between the dark blue and black

<sup>4</sup> C52 S.C., 1940. IWC's biggest wristwatch ever build (55\*16,2mm). Navigation- and deck watch. Worn over the flight overall on the arm or even on the thigh.



**Fig. 10:** Mark XII "GL"



**Fig. 11:** : Mark XII "EF"

The motor company SAAB launched a Cabriolet model 900 SE in 1997. Those who ordered this bright yellow edition received a Mark XII in titanium with a leather strap as yellow as the car. This "MELLOW YELLOW" version was produced in 210 pieces. All of the titanium watches (E F, G L, and yellow mellow Saab) contained cal. 37522



**Fig. 12:** Mark XII „mellow yellow“

Cathay Pacific an Asian airline company celebrated its 50 anniversary in 1996. A special Mark XII was launched in 1000 pieces on this occasion in stainless steel. The front of this watch is identical to the regular Mark XII. But on the back there is an inscription and the number of limitation. It is believed that not all 1000 have been produced but IWC will probably wait some time before they reveal how many have been made.



**Fig. 13:** Mark XII, Cathay Pacific

The most rare special editions of Mark XII have been produced for Denmark and for Switzerland. For a Danish Finance Magazine in conjunction with IWC Denmark 25 special Mark XII have been made. The watch can be recognised by its red second hand. Some of them (not all) have a red crocodile strap. The certificate that comes with this rare watch is sealed with a special seal of red wax which looks exactly the same as the wax on the glass vial, containing the century slide of the Da Vinci



**Fig. 14:** wax seal seal



**Fig. 15:** Mark XII with red second hand and wax seal

In 1994 a special version of Mark XII was developed for the ultimate people who wear Pilot watches :

Pilots.. The PATROUILLE SUISSE an acrobatic team of Swiss Air Force received 29 watches. A red logo consisting of 3 airplanes including the Swiss Red Cross is depicted on the dial. The PATROUILLE SUISSE was formed by 6 Hunter fighter planes. Around thirty watches were produced because the acrobatic team existed 30 years. Together with their watches the pilots received in the same year new, faster planes: Tigers. All steel versions (Danish, Cathay Pacific and Patrouille Suisse) used cal. 884 as their movement.



**Fig. 16:** Mark XII Patrouille Suisse



From the Mark XV few special editions have been built. Probably the most famous one is the "English Spitfire" of which 1000 pieces have been produced, exclusively for the English Market. On the back the famous fighter airplane "Spitfire" is depicted, an aircraft which played a crucial roll in World War II.

As stated before the dial of this watch is nearly similar to the "the holy grail": the Mark IX.



**Fig. 17:** Mark XV, Spitfire



A watch dealer in Cologne, Germany, issued a Special Mark XV edition with his name "GADEBUSCH". Of this watch 50 have been made.

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**Fig. 18:** Mark XV, Gadebusch

Although as stated before most Mark XII and XV watches have been equipped with leather straps metal mesh straps were available too. It is peculiar that the mesh strap is attached to the case of Mark XII at 2 places, while the Mark XV has 5 attachments.



**Fig. 19:** Metal strap, 5 attachments to case



**Fig. 20:** Metal strap, 2 attachments to case

**W**hat makes the Mark XII and Mark XV so special for collectors? First of all because all pilot watches refer to flying, this mystical way of moving in the air at great speed. It is clear that IWC has played an important role in aviation from the start in 1930 until now

The company treasures its own history and transplants it to its modern and sophisticated contemporary Pilot watches. Furthermore, collectors are eager to hunt special editions because of their limited number and extraordinary features. Therefore special editions of Mark XII and Mark XV should be cherished.



ADDITIONAL PICTURES FROM SPECIAL MARK XII



Fig.21: Mark XV, special edition Gadebusch 4/50



Fig. 22: special edition Gadebusch Jeweler in Cologne, Germany



Fig.23: Mark XII, SAAB yellow mellow, limited edition



**Fig.24:** Mark XII, Danish Edition, red second hand, red crocodile strap



**Fig.25:** Mark XV Spitfire, Special Edition and IWC's JU52 on it's TOUR AROUND THE WORLD





**Fig.26:** Nelson Herring (left) and Adrian van der Meijden (right) struggling with a model explaining the working mechanism of the Aquatimer split minute chronograph



**Fig.27:** Hans Goerter, also struggling, but with his 40 years old Martin D-18



**Fig.28:** Three international avid IWC collectors: the authors of this article



## Complete tabular Overview of the Mark XII-versions<sup>1</sup>

<b>IWC Nr.:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Case</b>	<b>Strap</b>	<b>Movmnt.</b>	<b>Dial</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
IW324101	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Steel	Buffalo-black	Kaliber 8842	classic-black	
IW324102	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Steel	Steel	Kaliber 8842	classic-black	
IW324103	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Gold	Buffalo-black	Kaliber 8842	classic-black	
IW324104	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Steel	Buffalo-black	Kaliber 8842	special-black	Edition "Cathey Pacific"
IW324107	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Platinum	Alligator-blue	Kaliber 8842	classic-blau	limitiert to 500 watches
IW324108	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Gold	Buffalo-black	Kaliber 8842	classic-black	Edition "Cathey Pacific"
IW324109	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Platinum	Alligator-black	Kaliber 8842	classic-black	Special model Japan
IW324110	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Steel	Alligator-red	Kaliber 8842	classic-black	Special model, 25 pieces
IW924101	Fliegeruhr - Mark XII	Gold	Gold	Kaliber 8842	classic-black	

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of Mr. Christian Niemann, IWC Schaffhausen

