

A Fifty Fathoms Barakuda unique piece for Only Watch

Blancpain is delighted to have been supporting the Monaco Association against Muscular Dystrophy (AMM) since its creation in 2001 and reiterates this year its commitment to the 8th edition of Only Watch. On this occasion, the brand presents a unique piece, inspired by the new Fifty Fathoms Barakuda model, and created especially for the charity auction in Geneva on November 9th 2019.

When launched in 1953, the Fifty Fathoms was the very first modern diving watch. Frogmen from several of the world's largest marine corps rapidly incorporated it as a fundamental element in their standard-issue gear. The French were the first to equip themselves with Fifty Fathoms models for their underwater missions. Other military elites followed, including the German Bundesmarine in the 1960s. The latter were supplied with Fifty Fathoms models via Barakuda – a company specialising in the production and marketing of technical diving equipment. Alongside the watches intended for the military, the company introduced the German market to a civilian model adopting a distinctive style, notably featuring the use of two-tone rectangular hour-markers, white-painted fluorescent hands, as well as a highly visible date display at 3 o'clock. Some timepieces in this series were fitted with a tropical-type rubber strap that was very popular with divers at the time and particularly renowned for its durability as well as its wearer comfort.

The new Fifty Fathoms Barakuda for Only Watch faithfully reinterprets the aesthetic codes of this timepiece from the late 1960s, while making the most of the technical innovations stemming from Blancpain's longstanding watchmaking experience. Its black dial is punctuated by broad white hour-markers in Super-LumiNova[®] with blue luminescence, like the hands and bezel. The pencil-shaped hands are white-lacquered and the seconds hand is rimmed with light blue, while the date – a key element of the original model – returns to its favourite position in a prominent window. Blancpain has teamed these vintage attributes with its emblematic unidirectional bezel featuring here light blue graduations, along with a scratch-resistant domed sapphire insert – an innovation unveiled by the brand in 2003. The steel case of this unique piece, water-resistant to 300 metres, has a diameter of 40 mm, a size reserved for Fifty Fathoms timepieces in limited series. It houses the 1151 self-winding movement equipped with two barrels, whose sporty usage in this model naturally does not dispense it from high-end finishes. These latter may be admired through the sapphire caseback revealing an oscillating weight engraved for the occasion with the inscription "Only Watch" as well as the Blancpain logo. This rotor has the particularity to present a cut-out shape, in reference to some of the collection's antique watches. This now atypical geometry formerly served to enhance the suppleness of the oscillating weight in order to protect the movement from potential impacts.

Paired with a tropical rubber strap identical to that of the historical models, the Fifty Fathoms Barakuda for Only Watch embodies a perfect combination of vintage design and advanced technicality.