



## TUDOR HISTORY - THE SUBMARINERS

### TUDOR PRESS KIT - 2014

### DIVING INTO THE LEGEND

In **1954**, TUDOR set out on a new path which would contribute to forging its legend. It was in that year that the brand's first divers' watch, the TUDOR Oyster Prince Submariner reference 7922, saw the light of day. Designed from its origin to fulfil exceptional criteria of durability, reliability, precision and waterproofness at a moderate price, it quickly positioned itself as an instrument of choice for professionals. Over the next 45 years this original tool-watch continuously evolved to ever better meet the specific requirements of the many types of divers who were clients of the brand.

The first generation of TUDOR Submariners saw numerous versions, and through them, a notable advance in terms of performance; for example, the maximum functional immersion depth, set at 100 metres initially, reached 200 metres with the introduction of reference 7924 in **1958**. During this period, multiple experiments were conducted to determine which characteristics were indispensable to the ideal divers' watch. Each reference in the 7900 series thus featured subtle specificities which, whether or not they were retained in the development of the product, contributed to its legend. Finally, with the latest variation of reference 7928,

recognisable by its round crown guards, it was in the first half of the **1960s** that the general lines and technical specifications that constituted the TUDOR Submariner were established.

The year **1969** saw the dawn of the second era of the TUDOR Submariner's history, which would last until **1999**, the date of its last appearance in the catalogue. While the general foundations of the product were laid by the 7900 series, its evolution continued. From a technical point of view, the movements used until then were replaced by ETA self-winding movements. Aesthetically, **1969** saw the TUDOR Submariner present a famous new face. Developed for the explicit needs of diving, it was characterised by unique dials with square hour markers and matching hands, known to collectors by the name "snowflakes". It remained in the catalogue until **1981**. As of **1976**, models with smaller case diameters also appeared in the catalogue.

In parallel with its civilian marketing and sales, the TUDOR Submariner served the members of important armed forces. Its successive adoption by the *Marine nationale française* (MN), the US Navy (USN) and other military organisations spoke volumes about the watches' robustness and reliability.

## FIRST SERIES: THE TUDOR SUBMARINERS FROM 1954 TO 1968

While the first TUDOR divers' watch, reference 7922, dated from 1954, it was several years before reference 7928 marked the first mention of a TUDOR Submariner in the brand's general catalogue. Meanwhile, TUDOR was experimenting with a number of technical solutions to perfect its ideal divers' tool. This absence of marketing documents did not however keep the first-generation models from being sold and immediately finding an appreciative audience, notably the naval military organisations of major countries.

Thus, while references 7922, 7923, 7924 and 7925 had the shared characteristics of not having crown guards and featuring 37 mm cases, each one offers specificities derived from, and representative of the research conducted by the brand. Reference 7922 was waterproof to a depth of 100 metres, the 7923 had a manually-wound movement, the 7924 was waterproof to a depth of 200 metres, and the 7925 possessed all the characteristics of the 7924 but was waterproof to a depth of 100 metres.

The last reference of the 7900 series, the 7928 included crown guards to protect its winding crown, ensured waterproofness to a depth of 200 metres, and was equipped with a self-winding movement. This list of characteristics was common to the Submariners that TUDOR would market until the end of the 1990s, making reference 7928 the sum of experience acquired over many years of experimentation in the field of divers' watches.

## TUDOR OYSTER SUBMARINER 7923

Reference 7923 was the only TUDOR Submariner to have been equipped with a manually-wound movement. This technical choice made it a particularly flat divers' watch. Thanks to its screw-down case back and crown, characteristics proper to the Oyster case, as well as its domed crystal, the waterproofness of the TUDOR Oyster Submariner was ensured to a depth of 100 metres.

Its black lacquered dial was no longer inscribed "ROTOR", "SELF-WINDING" at 6 o'clock since the movement used was not self-winding. In place of these indications, the dial now bore the epithets "SUBMARINER", "SHOCK-RESISTING". A reminder of the waterproofness was not visible on the dial and the hands used were in baton style, different from those that equipped the first-generation Submariners.



Reference 7923 was equipped with the manually-wound ETA calibre 1182 with a frequency of 18,000 beats per hour. Its Oyster-type bracelet with riveted links, reference 6636, bore the Rolex logo. On the example shown here, two straight cylindrical bars replaced the more common curved end links holding the bracelet to the case.

## SECOND SERIES: THE TUDOR SUBMARINERS FROM 1969 TO 1999

As of the late **1960s** TUDOR began to present versions of the Submariner based on its ideal divers' watch, whose characteristics were established with the last variation of reference 7928. Indeed in **1969**, two new references appeared simultaneously in the catalogue, 7016 and 7021, equipped with new self-winding movements and featuring new dials with characteristic square hour markers and hands, known in collector's circles as "snowflakes". Reference 7021 was also the first TUDOR Submariner to offer a calendar function. Finally, an alternative combination of dial and bezel in blue was introduced.

The versions continued in the mid-**1970s** with the introduction to the catalogue of a small-size version of the brand's divers' watch, the TUDOR Submariner Princess Date. The following years would see the appearance of many smaller versions: the TUDOR Submariner Prince Oysterdate, the Prince Oysterdate Mini-Sub and the Princess Oysterdate Lady-Sub.

The last years of the TUDOR Submariner line would also witness significant innovations with the introduction of highly resistant sapphire crystals, directional bezels with notching, as well as dial and bezel design variations.

In total, from **1969 to 1999**, more than 20 different references with numerous variations, all retaining the principal TUDOR Submariner characteristics, would be produced.

## TUDOR OYSTER PRINCE SUBMARINER 7016

In the **1969** catalogue two new TUDOR Submariner references appeared, the 7016 and 7021. With them began the second generation of TUDOR divers' watches. The example of reference 7016 dating from **1969** presented here shows the detail of certain characteristics, the most visible being the dial and hands. Punctuated with large and highly visible square-shaped hour markers, in place of the rose logo it displayed a shield, symbol of resistance and reliability. Its hands, nicknamed "snowflakes" by collectors, were enhanced with luminous squares intended to optimise readability. This new face was highly recognisable and contributed to the TUDOR identity.



The other major change introduced on reference 7016 was the replacement of the self-winding calibre 390 used until then by an ETA 2483 movement having the same frequency as its predecessor, 18,000 beats per hour. The watch's lines remained the same as those established by the preceding generation, a 39 mm case signed Rolex, waterproof to a depth of 200 metres with round crown guards, a screw-down crown signed Rolex, a 60-minute graduated bidirectional rotatable bezel, marked in 5-minute intervals with one-minute subdivisions between the 0 and 15 marks, and a folding link Oyster-type bracelet, signed Rolex. The Plexiglas crystal was no longer domed but flat, thick and prominent.



## MILITARY DIVERS' WATCHES

There is no better proof of quality for a tool intended for professionals than its adoption by organisations whose main activities push the use of the item to its ultimate limits. Acclaimed throughout their long history by the *Marine nationale française* (MN), the US Navy (USN) and other important military organisations throughout the world, which used them to equip their elite personnel, TUDOR Submariners thus extended their reputation for quality and robustness.

The TUDOR divers' watches delivered to these military organisations were neither custom-designed nor specially developed. They were just references listed in the catalogue, which these organisations chose. As a rule, their only distinction was an engraving on the screw-down case back. Thus for example the TUDOR Submariners used by the *Marine nationale française* bear the initials M.N. accompanied by the last two digits of the year in which they were delivered.

Since they were used intensely in extremely harsh conditions for many years, it is very rare that examples surviving to this day are in perfect condition. However, the relative rarity of these watches, their respective stories and the world of visions they evoke, make them a highly prized collection theme.

## TUDOR OYSTER PRINCE SUBMARINER "MARINE NATIONALE" 9401

*Marine nationale* divers were known to have used parachute belts to make watch straps, as on the example of reference 9401 presented here, dating from 1977. The elasticity of this material made the watch comfortable to wear and allowed easy adjustment over a diving suit. The back of this watch bears the engraving M.N. 77.

The bracelet shown here was not produced by TUDOR.

