

We met Cristiana Colarieti, the young and charming CEO of Scatola del Tempo, a company that has made the history of horology and has been synonymous with automatic rotating watch holders for years. Cristiana picked up the heritage of her father Sandro Colarieti, a real icon in the world of the last century's most exclusive horology, a great collector and a mechanical genius.

**Cristiana, can you tell us how the idea of the watch winders originated and what it means to you to have taken over your beloved father's business?**

The idea of the winders came about in 1990 – one year from the birth of Scatola del Tempo – and it sprang from a personal need of my father's, who wanted to wind up his Quantièmes Perpétuels effortlessly and without wasting any time. He spent several sleepless nights, thinking the matter over, planning and designing and, in the end, the resulting idea has henceforth changed the way in which automatic watches are wound up. Dad presented his project to Patek Philippe, of which he was a great aficionado and collector. With some help from the technical department, he worked on the winder and put it under a variety of tests for over a year, opting in the end to use it for his own complex watches. It was the beginning of an international success, since up until that moment nothing even slightly similar had ever existed on the market. Taking over my father's business makes me feel proud. Needless to say his untimely death has inevitably shaken and changed my life and that of my entire family. I miss him so much and there isn't a single day in which I don't think about him. During such challenging times, such as this moment of great instability and change, I ask myself what he would have done. However, I treasure among his many teachings the notion of believing in oneself and giving it your best to reach your goals. Those who will, can and I, along with the help of my loved ones, continue to do the job with passion, dedication and the same optimism and self-deprecating spirit. I'm sure that he's out there somewhere and hasn't abandoned me, in my heart of hearts I will always be a daughter who wants to make her father proud. My objective is to continue ensuring the brand he created will grow and make sure he will always be remembered as the great man that he was, not purely under a professional point of view but also as a human being. Those who've had the chance to meet him will know what I mean.

**For many years Scatola del Tempo was the only company serving the major Maisons of world horology with its prestigious creations. Obviously with time many companies producing similar devices appeared. How did you brace yourselves to take on the international competition challenging Made in Italy goods in the same field?**

We were alone on the market for many years, but once the patent expired, thousands of companies producing cases and winders for watches made their appearance. A recent survey reveals that there are over ten thousand companies on the market today, most of which are naturally Chinese. It seems like an unlikely number, but if you search the internet the data you're likely to unearth is astonishing! We have to say that in general terms, the competition doesn't frighten us, though obviously we are always very alert over what is launched on the market. We rely on our strong points, the first in line being quality. We're proud to be able to say that all our goods are really made in Italy, not just designed or assembled here, as is the case with some companies. They're also produced with components and elements of the highest quality. All of our winder's engines, the only exception being the economic model sold online – are produced in Switzerland and produced exclusively for Scatola del Tempo by Maxon Motors, a leader in its field. We're firmly convinced that quality and reliability are an investment. Even if this might require more resources and energy now, we will proceed along this route and are certain that our clientele is able to appreciate and judge the difference between our goods and our competitors'. In producing our cases nothing is left to chance. To cite an example: the production of one of our most successful models, the 7RT, requires four and a half hours of work with over 100 manual steps. We would probably gain time and save money by automating many of the assemblage steps, but our brand's philosophy would falter as a result. Scatola del Tempo is still a handcrafted product, lovingly hewn down to its most minute detail, as it's mostly in details that you make the difference. Our hand-made quality is united with the most advanced technologies; we've even created a department working solely on developing avant-guard technologies. Once again, we were the first to produce a light pen-operated lock, followed by one with a fingerprint sensor and then, three years ago in Basel, considering where the market was heading, we were the first to unveil the oversize watch winders.

**In 2007 you launched Timesafe in a partnership with Conforti, a large brand of safes. The safe is entirely leather-lined and contains 24 rotating panels for winding automatic wrist watches or Quantièmes Perpétuels. It's a real winner from your company, a product exclusively created in a limited edition of only 50 pieces. Can we ask what the reactions to this product were?**

Timesafe was really a huge success, beyond our wildest expectations. The idea was born when we noticed certain reactions in some important clients of ours. Though they appreciated our armored-plated briarwood cabinets, with anti-breaking glass and fingerprint-driven locks, they still didn't feel their beloved watches and jewels were truly safe. Only a safe can give the perfect psychological idea of safety. We thus looked up and contacted another great Italian brand, presenting them with our idea. Within a few months we created the first Timesafe® safe. We have currently sold 35 pieces. Considering that their external size doesn't vary, we can truly claim that every safe produced so far is a custom-built specimen. Every client has had a chance to personalize it both in the number of winders they had fitted and the set-up of the drawers, naturally by choosing the shade of leather they preferred. At the moment we're producing a Timesafe for a very important client, lined in alligator skin and fitted with solid gold details. In Basel 2009 we are presenting a new, revised and corrected version of it. One of our priorities when we're talking about such exclusive furniture is meeting the customers' needs completely, aiming to strike the right balance between the client's needs and the level of technical feasibility. The final result is usually satisfying for both.

**Ranging from the total exclusiveness of Timesafe down to your more accessible goods, lately you've surprised all your aficionados by shattering two of Scatola del Tempo's taboos, with your latest creation, Softline. As it happens, not only have you introduced an "entry level" product as far as its the price goes, but you're also selling it directly online. Why make this "revolutionary" choice?**

With Softline we had a younger customer target in mind, not necessarily collectors of complex watches, as our habitual customers tend to be. We wanted to give the owners of automatic or complex watches – though not necessarily very expensive ones – a chance to buy a quality product at a far more accessible price. This can be done precisely thanks to online selling, which has no intermediary steps. It's clearly a Scatola del Tempo product, but there are obviously some substantial differences with the high-ranging series. Considering what that can be found today on the market, the main idea was to offer a Made in Italy product of quality at a decidedly competitive price. Another aim of our exclusively online sale of Softline models is to acquire a larger slice of the American market. At the moment there's a vast offer of online winders but in the majority of cases the quality is mediocre. We thus hope that with the arrival on the market of models such as Softline, many clients will gravitate towards Made in Italy goods, buying a reliable product at an affordable price.

**Talking of being Made in Italy, by now the brands that have truly remained faithful to the Made in Italy philosophy are few and far between. In other words, even many of the most prestigious Italian brands have outsourced their production to countries with a cheaper workforce. Today, in such a difficult climate for world economy, what does it mean to remain faithful to a production line entirely carried out in Italy?**

It's true, we're part of a small clique of oddballs and we're proud of it. It's often difficult and always laborious, but we think it's a choice you can't compromise upon. Made in Italy isn't just an abstract notion but really a product really made by us Italians. There are realities in Italy that unfortunately, due to the philosophy of outsourcing, are disappearing or worse, have already become extinct. Unfortunately, many still don't realize that this is a heritage that'll be lost to Italy forever. I'm talking about the experience of innumerable small craftsmen, who've worked their entire lives in their workshops, making Italy grow and making us great in the world, and all that experience will be lost forever. Unfortunately I've already seen this happen in the textile sector and it's spreading to other fields, which is something that frightens and pains me very much. As far as we're concerned we have no intention of changing our ways and I hope, from the bottom of my heart, that many others out there will do the same. The only way forward to us is preserving the real Made in Italy, leaving future generations a huge and unique heritage of expertise acquired through the centuries, which has made Italian products some of the very best in the world.

**Which are the most interesting markets for Scatola del Tempo and which are its most successful products?**

At the moment there are nascent markets such as the ex USSR, for instance Ukraine and Kazakhstan, which are both very interesting countries. We've started selling in China – for once it's the Chinese who buy our goods and not the other way round – and this is certainly also an expanding market. We also have specific requests from all over the world, for custom-made models. We have recently sent three armor-plated 64RTs to Morocco, but I'm not allowed to name names, considering the client's importance. We're also producing a series of mechanical

units with winders (250 in total), which will then be located in a safe room; the project will be completed by the end of the month of May. Naturally, the most successful models belong in the standard series. One of our bestsellers for over fifteen years was the 7RT. At the moment we sell the oversized series quite successfully, especially in its new chocolate shade.

**Which are the novelties that Scatola del Tempo reserved for collectors and fans during BaselWorld 2009?**

First of all, I would like to point out that we celebrated the first twenty years of Scatola del Tempo; Basel offered us a chance to celebrate such an important goal along with all our friends and clients. As always, we were all there and it was a real pleasure my mother and I to welcome, and personally thank all those who contributed to making our brand so unique throughout the years. But it's obvious that the most heart-felt thanks ought to go to my father. Without his ingenious idea, none of any of this would ever have happened. The novelties at Basel 2009 have once again astonished our clients and our fiercest competitors. As it happens, we came out with a line entirely in wood. It's in essence zebrawood, which mustn't be confused with macassar. It's not only a far more modern design than previous ones, but most importantly it allows one to rewind oversized watches too, something previously possible only when buying the leather models. Furthermore, we presented two new special models: the 21RT EB OS, a cabinet in zebrawood with a grand total of 21 rotators in an ultra-modern design, always in an oversized version, not to mention the new oversized version of the Timesafe.

**In conclusion, can you tell us of your project to heighten the exclusiveness of your product by handing out special awards to exclusive world cinema personalities such as Lukas and Spielberg, Muccino and Whitaker?**

No product, no matter how exclusive, can be truly successful unless it's really put across. For this reason we decided to promote the notoriety of our brand on the international markets by starting a campaign connecting us with the world of Hollywood celebrities, and beyond. As a result, a few years ago, thanks to our press agency in the USA, we started awarding acknowledgements to the most high profile and successful stars, directors and producers of the moment. Naturally, the news of the awards ceremonies were published in the international press, which contributed to turning the spotlight onto the exclusivity and uniqueness of a Scatola del Tempo product more than a thousand words could do.