



Why having a Domino's Pizza logo on your Rolex is a flex (no, seriously)

Rolexes with Domino's Pizza branding on their dials are rare items and they have a fascinating backstory...

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Among Rolex collectors, a little extra “something” on the dial always attracts interest and usually adds value. This may be the signature or crest of a Middle Eastern head of state, a branch of a foreign armed forces, a pioneering technical dive company or, indeed, a pizza shop.

These days, [Rolex](#) is reluctant to put anything other than its own name on its dials, but back in the 1960s and 1970s, when it was fighting for market share, promotional dials with brand logos were a big thing, especially in the US. These were not aftermarket additions, but factory-applied official dials advertising everything from oil companies, trucking, the Masons, beer, Coca-Cola and Chevrolet – typically intended as sales awards, corporate gifts or to mark retirement. The longest-running association is with Domino’s Pizza, starting in the 1970s and continuing to this day.

The origin story is a little hazy and actually starts with Bulova. Tom Monaghan, founder of Domino’s tells the story in his autobiography *Pizza Tiger*. “I started giving away watches in 1977, when I wore a Bulova with our Domino’s logo on its face. A franchisee asked what he had to do to get that watch from me, and I told him, ‘Turn in a \$20,000 sales week.’ He did it.” After that first

Bulova, Monaghan handed out branded Seikos for a few years before settling on Rolex's Air-King ref 5500.

Curiously, in September 2016, Morphy Auctions sold a "Domino's" branded 5500 with a four million serial number, dating it to around 1975. Seemingly produced as a prototype and later serviced by Rolex with no changes, this was claimed to be the first one used in the "Domino's Challenge". This may mean that Monaghan's story is apocryphal or maybe he got his dates wrong. Either way, the challenge continued and the Rolexes continued to be awarded.



A 1989 Rolex Air-King 'Domino's Pizza' ref 5500

Today, the company has grown, targets are higher and thus the challenge is more ambitious: the goal needs to be achieved four weeks in a row. The watches are still handed out, though no longer Air-Kings, as they were briefly discontinued in 2014, causing Domino's to shift to the Oyster Perpetual.

Over the decades, the Domino's Rolex has evolved. The logo has changed in size and orientation, briefly going black and white in 1991 before reverting to colour the next year. Ladies have not been

left out, with Domino's branded Oyster Perpetuals available in 24mm cases from ref 67194 onwards. In the mid-2000s the logo left the dial entirely, becoming a more subtle piece of branding on the first link of the bracelet and conforming to Rolex's more draconian modern dial policy. The logo was simplified further in 2012, becoming a rectangular domino piece with no wording. This was in line with Domino's decision to drop "Pizza" from the brand logo and to expand its product line.

A relatively affordable collectible, a contemporary "bracelet logo" OP sells for the same price as a non-branded one, which is to say, of course, significantly over list price. Older "dial logo" prices are rising but vary wildly: a ref 14000 sold for \$5,100 at Bonhams in December 2020, while two months earlier one fetched \$20,000 at Christie's. With dial styles and case back engraving changing so much over the years, due diligence is crucial to ensure your Domino's is the real deal.