

Charlize Theron, Brad Pitt, and Adam Driver of Breitling's Cinema Squad.

MISSION ACCEPTED

BY CHRISTINA BOHNSTENGEL

MEET BREITLING'S FIVE NEW SQUADS OF GLOBALLY CELEBRATED PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE ON MISSIONS TO BETTER THE WORLD.



The Breitling Surfer Squad: Sally Fitzgibbons, Kelly Slater, and Stephanie Gilmore.



When audiences see an all-star cast of Brad Pitt, Charlize Theron, Adam Driver, and Daniel Wu teamed up together, it is understood that a work of greatness is being produced. In 2018, the producer bringing these Hollywood legends together was Swiss timepiece brand Breitling.

The luxury watch label shares a great deal of DNA with moviemakers, it noted, explaining that like a good film, its watches tell stories that connect people to something larger than themselves—just as a great script can take its audience to any place on earth or beyond.

So in the spring of 2018, with the buzz of the luxury watch fair, Baselworld, in the air, Breitling raised the curtain to premiere its Cinema Squad, starring Pitt, Theron, Driver, and Wu.

But it wasn't just the Cinema Squad that Breitling had been scripting. That was just one starring role in a unique full-scale Breitling production: the #squadonamission campaign. Shining the spotlight on the debut of its squads initiative, Breitling named five teams from different industries it designs for—aviation, exploration, cinema, aquatics, and racing—who would be represented by masters of the craft. Breitling noted it chose squad members, "who had reached the pinnacles of their professions, and as part of a squad, they will be challenged to work together with their colleagues on specially selected endeavors."

CEO Georges Kern said, "At Breitling, we believe in the power of a team, the strength of a group, and the mutual identification of a common target, which ultimately leads to success." He went on to explain that the concept is rooted in Breitling's company values—action, purpose, and a pioneering spirit—and that the watchmaker celebrates the collective spirit of squads united in a mission. "The squad initiative perfectly reflects our values and our philosophy. We aim for authenticity, credibility, and honesty... The same applies for each of the squads. Their members are absolute masters in their respective fields. I am very much looking forward to seeing them follow their passions and succeed in their missions in one (or more!) of Breitling's environments—air, sea, and land."

As brand ambassadors, squad members will be wearing Breitling timepieces designed for their fields, however, the squad missions are about so much more than watches on a red carpet. The projects these teams will undertake with Breitling address key issues in today's current events and aim to bring about change for the betterment of society.

Given Breitling's storied aviation heritage, The Jet Team Squad kicked off the campaign, outfitted with models from the Navitimer 8 collection, which launched at Baselworld 2018 in Basel, Switzerland.

As the "official supplier to world aviation," Breitling earned its wings with the world's top pilots as far back as World War II when the British Royal Air Force installed Breitling chronographs on its fighter planes. Breitling's chronographs would go on to become standard equipment on commercial aircraft and the wristwatch a favorite with flight crews. In 2003, Breitling further cemented its partnership with pilots when it launched the Jet Team, known around the globe for spectacular aerobatics. Today, the Jet Team is soaring to new heights as a squad on a mission. Kern noted that the brand and the team share striking synergies in achievement, mastery, aesthetics, and human excellence. To which Jacques Bothelin, Breitling Jet Team leader concurred, "Our core values—team spirit, camaraderie, precision, style, and excellence—are all qualities that define Breitling. In watchmaking, as in aerobatics, nothing can be left to chance—everything is meticulously planned."

Looking forward to what the aerobatic superstars will add to the initiative, Kern added, "Be prepared for amazing things!"



The Breitling Jet Team.



Above: Bertrand Piccard; **Below:** the Breitling Explorers Squad: Inge Solheim, Bertrand Piccard, and David de Rothschild.

On the Breitling Explorers Squad, look for Bertrand Piccard, David de Rothschild, and Inge Solheim. Piccard made the first nonstop around-the-world balloon flight on the *Breitling Orbiter 3* and then circumnavigated the globe in a plane powered only by the sun. Rothschild made his mark as the youngest Briton to reach both geographical poles. He followed that up in 2010 by crafting a catamaran out of 12,500 reclaimed plastic bottles and sailing it 8,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean from San Francisco to Sydney. Solheim has raced to the South Pole, and later served as the expedition leader for Prince Harry's charity, *Walking with the Wounded*, guiding the Prince and wounded soldiers to the North Pole in 2011 and to the South Pole in 2013.

All three explorers used these previous missions to call for attention and action on social issues: Piccard proved all that can be possible with renewable energies, de Rothschild showed the world the tragic effects of single-use plastics—the Pacific Garbage Patch—and Solheim put the poles and soldiers in the spotlight. These out-of-the-box explorers got together with the brand last year on Norway's Arctic island of Lofoten to plan potential future projects that could tap into their important issues.



The Triathlon Squad's mission: raise funds to donate bicycles to Qhubeka by racing in the Coronation Double Century.



On the Breitling Surfers Squad, American Kelly Slater, the most successful surfer of all time, joined two Australian talents, Stephanie Gilmore and Sally Fitzgibbons, in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, last summer to strategize their squad's upcoming missions, most likely aquatically related to environmental engagement.

And covering the sporting angle of the land element of Breitling's family of collections is The Triathlon Squad consisting of Jan Frodeno, Chris "Macca" McCormack, and Daniela Ryf. Together these gold-medal Olympians and Ironman champs have won more than a dozen world titles. As their first squad mission, they joined CEO Kern and 30 other Breitling cyclists last November to compete in the Coronation Double Century. The grueling endurance bicycle race held in Swellendam, South Africa, raises funds for Qhubeka.

"We have so much respect for the work Qhubeka does," said Kerns. "They donate bicycles to people whose lives are changed in meaningful ways. A bicycle can take someone to school or work or a clinic—these donations can be, literally, a matter of life or death, and we're thrilled to be able to use our mission to support Qhubeka's vision."

Qhubeka Founder Anthony Fitzhenry said, "We completely buy into Breitling's #squadonamission, where teams are fueled by camaraderie and driven by purpose. Like Georges Kern and his Breitling team, we also believe that more is accomplished working together than alone. This is why we partner with the private, public, and civil sectors to boost our ranks as we distribute the bicycles. To date, we have distributed 90,000 bicycles to help people travel further and faster, and carry more." ✕