



ROLEX REF. 3233
SERIAL NUMBER 038'254
STAYBRITE
MOVEMENT CAL. 13" VZ
YEAR 1938



This document certifies the registration of the watch in the Archivio Pucci Papaleo, an independent archive dedicated to the selection and photographic documentation of highly collectible vintage watches, preserved in excellent overall condition.

January 17, 2026

ARCHIVE REGISTRATION *No. 62*

The watch accepted into the Archive is photographed in each of its individual parts, thus establishing its reference identity within the Archive. Acceptance into the Archive does not, however, certify that the watch was originally produced in this configuration.

PUCCI'S OPINION

This example combines its rare historical interest with a remarkable state of preservation. These features led us to register it in our Archive.



ARCHIVIO PUCCI PAPALEO

Recording *Excellent* Timepieces.



'THE VERGA FLYING SAUCER'

Rolex, Ref. 3233, Serial 038'254



Dossier

The development of the wristwatch production is in full swing: the first chronographs date only to the early 1930s, yet in a few seasons Rolex reworks shapes, calibres and dials, constantly going through a series of experimental stages. Stylistically, the Geneva manufacturer appears already ahead of the competition. The chronograph was born as a technical measuring tool for the few, but Rolex starts to explore its aesthetics: alongside the classic cases, a very limited series of unusually-shaped cases were realised. Reference 3233 belongs to this creative stage. Our research indicates that only 24 examples were made in Staybrite steel, between 1938 and 1939.

Amongst the features that make a dial especially noteworthy, particular attention must be focused on the double 'Verga' signature.

Placing the retailer's name beneath "Rolex" is hardly ever seen.

In those years, manufacturing was still so artisanal and meticulous that the most important retailers could personalise the dials with their own names. Rolex followed the idea of bespoke dials till it remained an elite choice, however dropped it later on as the brand grew, since a second signature meant competing for 'space'.

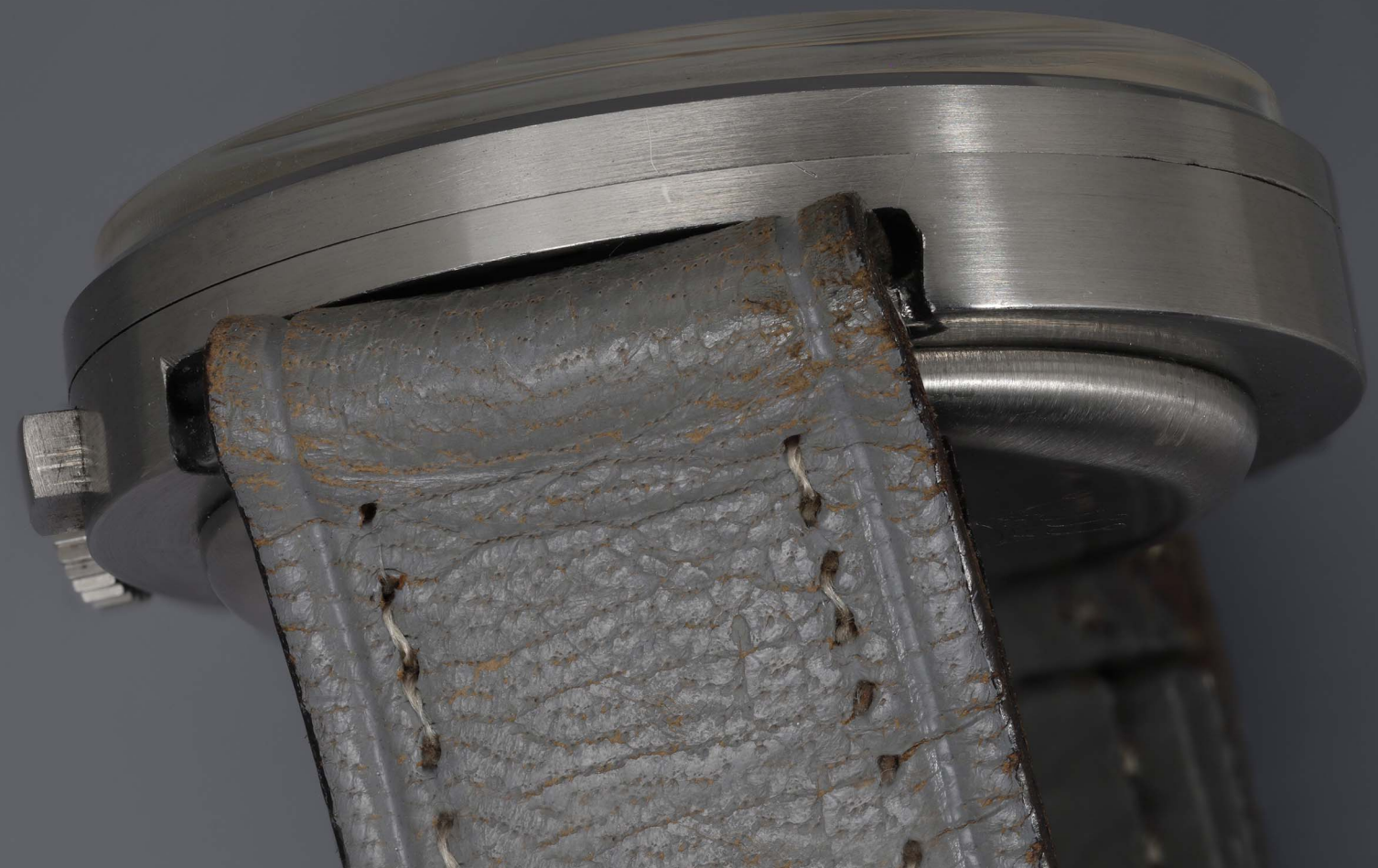


Manufactured in Staybrite steel, yellow or rose gold and with a 31 mm diameter, the case of the reference 3233 is as aesthetically pared-back as a watch can display: a clean circle without lugs, so stark and sober to evoke the image of a 'flying saucer'.

Exhibiting a highly defined shape, it is one of the most understated and unusual examples amongst the Rolex chronograph designs of the period. In lieu of the lugs, the strap is bound by means of a system built inside the case, clearing the design from any external support and further enhancing its sharp lines.



The right side view highlights the winding crown and the two square chronograph pushers, set on the right at two o'clock for the start-stop functions and at four o'clock for the reset. The square design is one of the shapes Rolex adopted in those years for chronograph pushers, together with the rounded 'olive' type. Further attention must be given to the case design. Nothing here is ornamental: every line is reduced to essentials and each shape seems dictated exclusively by functionality.



It is the same principle that in those years inspired European modernism and, in particular, the Bauhaus style – born from the German school of Walter Gropius, blending clean volumes, glass and unadorned surfaces, focused on the idea that form follows function, perfectly embodied by the Dessau building (1926). By means of a disc of a few centimetres, the 3233 carries that same idea of geometric purity and rational modernity that drove the architecture and design of the era.





The 3233 reference sports a snap down case back, externally displaying a smooth surface with engraved reference and serial numbers. The inner side features the punched inscriptions and institutional logos referable to the making of the case. Furthermore, the inner surface customarily retains the distinctive perlage finish of the period.



The movement of the 3233 reference is the Valjoux VZ calibre, a 13 lignes two-register mechanism, one of the finest and most reliable Valjoux bases made at the time. It is a calibre of small diameter, about 29.5 mm, which will be later equipped by Rolex also on the celebrated "Bariletto" 3525. Its antimagnetic protection, usually printed on the dial, confirms its flair for precision.





Dossier 3233/038254.
Registered in the Archive
on the 17th of January 2026
with the number 62

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at the discretion of Pucci Papaleo and the appointed connoisseurs. Through a professional photographic survey, archiving captures the identity of the watch at the moment of its registration in the Archive, offering a stable, permanent and verifiable point of reference over time.

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

The *Certificate of Registration* states the date and the registration number in *Archivio Pucci Papaleo*. It will also be accompanied by the photographic survey. The Certificate of Registration, together with the Photographic Dossier realised, shall constitute a *Monograph* that will

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