



ROLEX REF. 6238
SERIAL NUMBER 1'226'439
STAINLESS STEEL
MOVEMENT CALIBER 72 B
YEAR 1964



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January 28, 2026

ARCHIVE REGISTRATION *No. 127*

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.



'STAINLESS STEEL PRE-DAYTONA'

Rolex, Ref. 6238, Serial 1'226'439



Dossier

The 6238 holds a place of its own in the history of Rolex chronographs. It is the last to exhibit a classical design and the first to clearly herald a modern idiom. Hence, referred to as the “pre-Daytona”. The moniker has been extended also to prior references, yet the true Cosmograph forerunner is this reference, when the serial number passes from six to seven digits, reaching its maturity and bringing the Daytona’s layout themes into focus. This example belongs to that season. The 6238 in steel met with great commercial success: between 1962 and 1967, produced 3590 pieces. Quite a number, considering that thirty years earlier, the first chronographs made by Rolex were just a few dozen examples.

The dial of the 6238 brings the future closer by cleaning out its contents. The baton indexes, matching baton hands, exhibit a modern design never seen before on a Rolex chronograph.

The silver sunray-brushed background incorporates graphically innovative registers. At first glance, it might already seem a Cosmograph, had it not been for its monochrome base. And secondly, the tachymeter scale runs along the dial's rim, whereas on the Daytona it will be engraved on the bezel and the dial itself will become an exercise in sobriety. After all, the signature is already minimised: the scripts "Rolex" and "Chronograph", are without "Oyster" that will come back later on.



The tonneau-shaped case features a 36 millimetres diameter and is built in three distinct parts: the bezel, the caseband and the caseback. Patented by Rolex in 1926, this Oyster system is still used on its contemporary watches. Protecting the case against water and dust, here it equips a chronograph that had by then taken on a modern character. The right case profile sports the screw-down Twinlock winding crown – patented by Rolex in 1953 – and the two water-resistant pump pushers for the chronograph start, stop and reset functions.



The serial is pantographed between the lugs at six o'clock. The right flank sports the function controls, including the screw-down crown, which contributes to water resistance and is used for winding and time setting. The two water-resistant pushers activate the start and stop at two o'clock, and the chronograph resetting at four. These were still supplied by the historic Swiss firm Boninchi SA. Until present day, the "pre-Daytona" is the last Rolex chronograph to fit a smooth bezel without any engravings. The sturdy lugs point downwards, in keeping with the typical Rolex Oyster chronograph design.



The reference number is pantographed between the lugs at twelve o'clock. The 6238 seems to fully grasp one of the great aesthetic changes of the early 1960s: when the expression mode of modernity started to follow the 'less is more' concept. Sharper lines, cleaner surfaces and orderly information, gradually replaced the more scenic language of the past. And it is due to its monochrome dial and clean case geometry that the chronograph retains all its technical complexity, transposing it into a new idea of clarity and simplicity.



The caseback screwed onto the case ensures its water-tightness, due to the Oyster system. Externally, it features a circular knurling, which provides the grip for the tool used to secure the back down onto the middle case. Internally, it displays the punched reference number, the case material, Rolex's institutional scripts and the patent indication.

ARCHIVIO PUGGI PAPALEO



The Valjoux movement was the ébauche that powered Rolex hand-wound chronographs, chosen for its precision, reliability and finished according to its usual standards. This example is the most up-to-date version of its day – an evolution of the earlier caliber 72A – namely the caliber 72B, the same mechanism that will equip the first Daytona watch models. The movement features seventeen jewels, an in-line lever escapement, a Rolex Microstella balance, a Breguet hairspring and a shock-protection device.

To top it all, a rare set in its entirety: the original Rolex guarantee, the box, and the dedicated numbered tag. This array of accessories narrates the commercial history of the watch from its very first day.





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with the number 127.

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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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