

## THE DAY OF PANERAI

Panerai has always commanded a broad cult status; Panerai owners naturally gravitate to each other in any occasion, as if, within the Panerai certificate of authenticity, there is a hidden clause that requires owners to befriend each other under any circumstance. But the most notable, influential and incredibly fervent of these communities is Paneristi (www.paneristi.com). Founded in 2000, just three years after the Richemont Group acquired Panerai, this online forum group has developed beyond its initial goal of honoring and appreciating Panerai timepieces, becoming a community that has, at times, given rise to exemplary instances of solidarity and mutual support.

Every month, Paneristi receives an average of 2.25 million visits, with about half of the contributions from the United States, as well as strong support all over Europe, Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The site was initiated by the English collector, Guy Verbist, and today it belongs to three enthusiasts: Padraig Conway, Paul Sleduck and Jay Pully. The owners work with 18 moderators from all over the world to guarantee constant monitoring of forum activities, which are wholly independent of Panerai.

However, on the 10th anniversary of Paneristi, Panerai created a limited-edition timepiece exclusive to the forum group to show the company's appreciation for Paneristi and its members. And in marked contrast to previous years, the Paneristi held their annual gathering, called "Pday", in the United States (New York City). While they were here, we had the privilege of interviewing Padraig Conway, one of the three owners of Paneristi.

### How did you personally get started collecting Panerai timepieces, and what led to your connection with Paneristi.com?

I've always liked watches. I remember wearing my dad's Omega at the age of seven, when I was sick in bed. It was a bond of sorts. When I moved to the United States in 1985, he gave me his Omega f300Hz tuning fork Constellation. The feeling of wearing an heirloom as a personal gift reinforced our bond.

In 1999, I saw an ad for a Panerai, and I bought a PAM 9A PVD. But I was consumed with tremendous guilt too, as it was the first luxury purchase I had ever made for myself. The burden of guilt lifted when I found fellow enthusiasts Guy Verbist and Paul T on Paneristi in 2000. Guy had only recently created the site, and as it quickly expanded, he recruited moderators and eventually handed the baton over to a newly formed ownership. Paul and I remain owners of Paneristi to this day.

### How did Paneristi's annual get-together, Pday, get started?

A European contingent of Paneristi started an annual meeting nine years ago in Germany and have met every autumn in different European locations since. It was always called Pday. They are very knowledgeable about Panerai's heritage and some of them have even written books on vintage Panerai's. Close to a hundred global friends meet each year in Europe. Next year, we're meeting in Australia.

This year, Pday coincided with our 10th anniversary. Eng Tay, the renowned visual artist, is a massive fan of Panerai and kindly offered his studio as a gathering point in New York. It was decorated with beautiful artwork featuring Eng's work captured by the lens of Martin Wilmsen, a photographer. Great people from around the world visited and saw the city at its finest. Unfortunately, we didn't always have enough room to entertain everyone who wanted to join us. There were a lot of splinter events.

### What were some of the events that were organized during Pday this year?

Panerai catered to nearly 200 global guests in its New York boutique for two days prior to the anniversary event and helped to host a cocktail at Eng Tay's studio on 25 September. Many of our members dined at restaurants of their own choice, all organized by local Paneristi. At the main dinner, the New York committee arranged a traditional Brazilian meal for 200 guests.





**Why is Panerai arguably the most collectible watch brand in terms of its cult status and holding its value?**

Panerai has a genuine history as a diving instrument used in WWII. That heritage still resonates through the newer models, which are generally made in low production numbers. As the years pass, models are retired, or adjusted in appearance, creating a “must have” frenzy for the enthusiast. Less is more, hence desirable. Panerai always leaves you wanting more and saying, “maybe next time

they could...”

Paneristi has a great working relationship with Panerai. We are not affiliated, so we can differ in public with mutual respect at all times. Our site helps Panerai [the brand] to hear honest reactions and opinions from its clientele. This can help steer designs and special editions, though you can't take credit away from many of the brilliant ideas of Panerai's CEO, Angelo Bonati. His worldwide staff is top-class and has excelled at embracing our community. We love the relationship.



Left to right: Gary Friedell, Eric Steinmeyer, Bo Bolander, Lars Milsten, Jay Pulli, Paddy Conway, Charles O'Neill, Eng Tay



**A PANERAI WATCH JUST FOR PANERISTI**

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of Paneristi.com, Panerai created a special edition called the Luminor for Paneristi's Anniversary.

The piece was strongly informed by the ideas expressed by the Paneristi community. The 44mm Luminor case is distinguished by the classic crown-protecting bridge device, giving the watch water resistance of up to approximately 300 meters.

The case, bezel, bridge and crown are coated in DLC, as is the buckle that closes the antiqued leather wristband. The steel caseback is engraved with the words "Paneristi.com" and "Tenth Anniversary".

The traditional Panerai numerals, index markers and hands, all coated with special ecru-colored SuperLuminova, stand out against the black dial. Further contributing to the watch's vintage look, "Luminor Panerai" and the OP logo are engraved in white. The movement is the manually wound OP I caliber.

The Panerai Luminor for Paneristi's Anniversary was launched on the Paneristi forum on 1 July 2010, and the 300 pieces produced sold out within a few minutes of the posting!

