



RAY-BAN: THE HISTORY OF THE TOP SELLING EYEWEAR BRAND WORLD WIDE

1936 Birth of Ray-Ban Eyewear

For aviation, both military and civil, the 1920s was a decade of remarkable advances. Air traffic grew as a result. With the development of new aeroplanes that could fly higher and higher came altitude-related problems. Pilots were suffering from headaches and nausea because of glare and the great distances that they had to traverse. In 1929, General MacCready asked Ray-Ban for a new type of air force eyewear that would protect pilots from glare at high altitudes while at the same time ensuring a clear field of vision. The company took up the challenge and succeeded in developing a new pair of glasses with lenses that could block out a high proportion of visible light. This marked the birth of Ray-Ban's first, green-lens **ANTI GLARE** eyewear. The first model to go on sale to the public - in 1936 - featured a plastic frame with the classic Aviator shape.

1937 Ray-Ban Trademark Registered

The name ANTI GLARE was too generic. It did not distinguish the new eyewear clearly from rival products. In 1937, the **Ray-Ban** trademark was registered and marketed, gracing a new model with a metal frame. The name Ray-Ban was chosen for the new product to emphasise that the eyewear could block out glare and protect the user's eyes from the sun's rays. The **Large Metal** model immediately leapt to fame with the name **Ray-Ban Aviator**.

1938 Early Ray-Ban Models

During the early years, Ray-Ban's marketing strove to foreground the functional aspect of the new eyewear, targeting sports enthusiasts and lovers of the outdoor life. In 1938, the first **Shooters** were launched. These were available in two types of lens, **Ray-Ban Green** and **Kalichrome**, a pale yellow lens for use in misty or foggy conditions. Shortly afterwards, a third, ground-breaking, metal-frame model hit the market. This was **Outdoorsman**, originally called "Skeet Glass" and designed for specific user groups such as hunting, shooting and fishing enthusiasts.

1939-1940

Ray-Ban eyewear became increasingly popular among pilots, police officers, hunters, anglers and all those involved in outdoor activities. Hollywood was just beginning to have an impact on the world of fashion.

1940s

Ray-Ban went to war. American air force pilots used Ray-Bans on their missions because of the brand's outstanding lenses. In the 1940s, a new kind of lens was developed for commercial use, despite the huge commitment to research and development for military purposes. This was the **gradient mirror lens**. It featured a special coating on the upper part of the lens for enhanced protection, and no coating lower down for a clear view of instrumentation and other objects.

1950s

In a certain sense, the 1950s was a decade of profound change, or at least of development, because fashion was becoming increasingly important. Consumers were beginning to perceive eyewear as a fashion accessory, probably under the influence of the film industry. Glasses were no longer just objects to be worn for practical reasons.



1951

In response to a specific request from the U.S. Navy, Ray-Ban developed the grey-lenses **N-15**.

1952

This was the year when Ray-Ban launched a new model, the **Wayfarer**. Like many other Ray-Ban models, Wayfarer glasses had a simple design and were easy to wear. Destined to become classics, they immediately attracted the attention of the film industry.

1953

A new type of lens was developed to replace the N-15. Another classic, it was called **G-15** and featured a grey lens that transmitted 15% of visible light and was suitable for general use.

1957

In 1957, Ray-Ban launched its fourth metal-frame model, **Caravan**, which introduced a squarish lens as an alternative to the now celebrated Aviator eye shape.

1958

For the first time, the Ray-Ban catalogue included two pages of plastic frames for women, offering a wider choice of products. This was the launch year for **Smart Set**, a model featuring coloured “wings”. New motifs, colours and even rhinestones were used to create ever more imaginative eyewear that kept pace with the fashion of the day.

1960s

The 1960s witnessed an authentic boom in sunglasses. Ray-Ban became world leader by concentrating on product quality and durability, then communicating these concepts to the end user. In this period, Ray-Ban also had a wider range of products than its competitors. From the roughly 30 models on sale at the beginning of the decade, the catalogue expanded to the 50 models of 1969, featuring eyewear for men, women and children. Ray-Ban offered an equally extensive range of prices.

1961

“The Most Distinguished Name in Sunglasses”: Ray-Ban took an important step in 1961 by moving into Hollywood. The company's Wayfarer glasses were used during the shooting of the celebrated Audrey Hepburn film, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Ray-Ban also provided customers with holders to make sure their glasses remained in good condition. The leather or vinyl holders were made from top-quality materials to satisfy the needs and tastes of both men and women. Each Ray-Ban product had its own specially made holder. End user purchases were promoted by eyewear display units to be placed in retail outlets or for use in window displays. From the early years, the company made all kinds of display units, in different shapes and sizes. Ray-Ban assigned great importance to communication, publishing pictures in some of the day's leading newspapers and magazines, including the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies Home Journal*.

1962

Ray-Ban started to manufacture glasses with impact-resistant lenses. Here, too, Ray-Ban was ahead of its time. Only ten years later did the United States enact the FDA regulation which made impact-resistant eyewear lenses compulsory.

1965

1965 saw the launch of another two important models in the Wayfarer range, **Olympian I** and **Olympian II**.



1967

The celebrated **Balorama** model appeared on the market for the first time.

1968

Launch of **Olympian I Deluxe**. Ray-Ban glasses continued to have model-specific holders. Ray-Ban developed new display units to hold twelve, fifteen or more items, as well as display cases, the first single-item display units, and Ray-Ban clocks.

1970s

The 1970s signalled the emergence of a more sophisticated eyewear market than in previous decades. The sector developed in two distinct directions: fashion glasses and sports eyewear. Ray-Ban tracked the trends of the new decade, developing more products and striking out in several new directions. In the sports sector, the company concentrated on ski eyewear, launching a **Ski & Sports Collection**. There were two models, **Vagabond** and **Stateside**, with two types of lens, the G-31 mirror lenses and standard G-15 lenses. These glasses were sold with a special holder to enhance the image of quality projected by the product. Another new type of eyewear launched during the 1970s was mountaineering glasses, designed for climbers who require good protection from sunlight and wind. These had mirror lenses to protect the wearer's eye from reflected snow glare, and also featured leather side shields, again to provide protection from sunlight. Stability was guaranteed by curved nylon temples that hugged the shape of the ear. There was also a special retainer cord to make sure the glasses were not lost accidentally. The same lenses were also used in combination with the standard frames already on sale. In the 1970s, Ray-Ban began to produce optical eyewear, but maintaining the eye shapes of the sunglass models in the range. This signalled the launch of **Ray-Ban Large Metal** optical eyewear, offered in five different colours.

Fashion also influenced the retail catalogues for consumers, which were printed with more colour and featured typically American faces and more sophisticated images. Advertising was boosted with campaigns in popular publications of the period, including *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Glamour* and *Mademoiselle*. Ray-Ban continued to produce new display units to support sales in optical outlets.

1970

A new colour joined the classic Arista tonality widely used for metal eyewear. Specially treated chrome could yield an intense black that became known as **Black Chrome**. A small collection of golf eyewear was also introduced. It comprised four Ray-Ban models that were endorsed by Arnold Palmer, the most famous golfer of the day.

1973

A new model was added to the Classic Metals collection, **Large Metal II**, a broader version of the existing Large Metal model.

1974

Lenses and lens quality have always been keys to success throughout the history of Ray-Ban, and the range of lenses expanded even further in 1974, with the creation of the grey, light-sensitive photo chromic lens. **Ambermatic** lenses were also produced for use in sports. A special lens that can change colour depending on light conditions, **Ambermatic** highlights outlines and shapes, even on snow. When the light is especially intense and the temperature is low, **Ambermatic** lenses darken to block glare. Like all Ray-Ban lenses, they offer excellent protection against UV radiation. Ray-Ban's objective is to offer skiers, tennis players and other athletes the opportunity to enjoy excellent vision in all weather conditions, with the same kind of eyewear. Glasses with **Ambermatic** lenses are sold in a special plastic holder with its own distinctive styling and colour scheme.

1979

A new seven-model women's collection was launched in 1979, **Ray-Ban Naturals**.



1980s

The success of Ray-Ban keeps on growing, thanks to the enlargement of the line and to the attention received from the press and the cinema. These are the years of Blues Brother's, Risky Business and later Top Gun. These years are also signed by the launch of the Wings Collection, the first shields in sunglasses history.

1999

Luxottica Group acquired Bausch & Lomb frames business, including brands like Ray-Ban, Arnette, Killer-Loop Eyewear and REVO.

2003

Luxottica Group launched two new Ray-Ban collections: Ray-Ban Optical and Ray-Ban Junior. The **Ray-Ban Optical** Collection has enjoyed since the launch in 2003 an extremely positive reaction from eyewear users, quickly achieving enormous commercial success all over the world. All models in the Ray-Ban collection are the product of meticulous, original styling that succeeds in translating the best of the latest trends into a contemporary eyewear range that reflects the unique Ray-Ban lifestyle: a style seen on the faces of millions of people around the world. Also in 2003, Luxottica Group introduced the first sun collection dedicated exclusively to kids aged from 8 to 12 years. The **Ray-Ban Junior** models are designed to meet the needs of younger eyewear users, ensuring functionality, comfort and fit, as well as maximum eye protection. Innovative contemporary design characterises the materials and colours used and the styling of the frames themselves. A legendary world leader, the Ray-Ban label is synonymous with a unique style that stands out for its design, quality, performance and dependability. Luxottica has now instilled those distinguishing features into the Ray-Ban Junior Collection.

2004

Ray-Ban enters Formula One as Team Partner of Lucky Strike B A R Honda.

2005

Following the huge success of Ray-Ban Junior sun launched in 2003, Ray-Ban has expanded its catalogue as of January 2005. It now includes the **Ray-Ban Junior optical**, thus rounding out the Ray-Ban line of products. The Ray-Ban Junior models are designed to meet the needs of younger eyewear users, ensuring functionality, comfort and fit, as well as maximum eye protection. Innovative contemporary design characterises the materials and colours used and the styling of the frames themselves. The Junior optical collection is made entirely in titanium, a hypoallergenic, rustproof and extremely lightweight yet sturdy metal. All Ray-Ban models in the Junior collection carry the hallmark Ray-Ban signature, silkscreen-printed, engraved or pressure-applied.

2006

For the new SPR/SUM 2007 collection, Ray-Ban designed and crafted the original Ray-Ban Wayfarer version from every point of view: the materials and attention to style details, the dimension of the profile, the structure of the circle, the proportions of the arms and hinges, the geometry of the lenses and the distinctive Ray-Ban signature in metal on the arms and silkscreenprinted on the lenses. The sophistication of the aesthetic detail and very high quality materials make the new Wayfarer – an authentic reproduction of the original, down to the tiniest detail – a tribute to the model that became the icon of the anti-conformist rock spirit from its launch in 1952.

2007

Ray-Ban presents the new strategy and the worldwide communication plan: NEVER HIDE. Aiming at refreshing and making the brand more compelling, especially towards the younger target, Ray-Ban presents a very strong communication plan and an extremely innovative media plan. NEVER HIDE is the claim of the new campaign which effectively represents the Ray-ban core, sunglasses that place you at the centre of attention beyond trends, transcending time and strongly customizing whoever wears them.



2008

Ray-Ban presents RAY-BAN REMASTERS: a communication program to consolidate Ray-Ban's strong bond with music and its positioning as a global iconic brand. In concrete Ray-Ban Remasters consists of a partnership with eight international music artists who recorded a song of their choice from the fifties and sixties remastered exclusively for Ray-Ban and performed live in a series of three events in North America, China and Europe. The Ray-Ban style associated to this program is the Clubmaster which was officially introduced in 1986 and it is one of the most popular icons from the Ray-Ban collection inspired by the fifties and sixties' looks.

2010

In May 2010 **Ray-Ban Aviator** celebrates one of the most iconic accessories of all time, with the help of music's most influential names past and present.

Along with the **Classic** model, Ray-Ban launches six exciting new re-imaginings of its ageless Aviator style – **Ray-Ban Aviator Titanium**, **Ray-Ban Aviator Craft**, **Ray-Ban Aviator Metal Glide**, **Ray-Ban Aviator Ultra Gold**, **Ray-Ban Aviator Road Spirit** and **Ray-Ban Aviator Tech**. The Ray-Ban Aviator is the heart of Ray-Ban collection and now it represents a complete family of models.

About Ray-Ban:
www.ray-ban.com

About Luxottica Group S.p.A.

Luxottica Group is a leader in premium fashion, luxury and sports eyewear, with over 6,200 optical and sun retail stores in North America, Asia-Pacific, China, South Africa and Europe and a strong and well balanced brand portfolio. Luxottica's key house brands include Ray-Ban, the best known sun eyewear brand in the world, Oakley, Vogue, Persol, Oliver Peoples, Arnette and REVO, while license brands include Bvlgari, Burberry, Chanel, Dolce & Gabbana, Donna Karan, Polo Ralph Lauren, Prada, Salvatore Ferragamo, Tiffany and Versace. In addition to a global wholesale network covering 130 countries, the Group manages leading retail brands such as LensCrafters and Pearle Vision in North America, OPSM and Laubman & Pank in Australasia, LensCrafters in Greater China and Sunglass Hut globally. The Group's products are designed and manufactured in six Italy-based manufacturing plants, two wholly-owned plants in China and a sports sunglass production facility in the U.S. In 2009, Luxottica Group posted consolidated net sales of €5.1 billion. Additional information on the Group is available at www.luxottica.com.

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