

The Guardian

Reflected
glory

Macron's
glasses are
big hit for
French firm

Kim Willsher
Paris

The world leaders and chief executives meeting in Davos this week were meant to be discussing the most complex and alarming geopolitical crisis most could remember. Instead, all eyes were on Emmanuel Macron.

The French president's appearance in reflective, Top Gun-style aviator sunglasses was the image that launched a thousand pithy jokes, memes and questions. Had he been injured while sparring in the boxing ring? Had he injured himself while working out in the gym? Did he simply, some wondered, want to avoid looking Donald Trump in the eye?

Few could have blamed Macron for channelling Tom Cruise in a

'It has not been a typical day. I feel honoured that he is wearing our glasses'

Stefano Fulchir
CEO of iVision Tech



▲ There was speculation that Emmanuel Macron wore sunglasses at Davos after a boxing injury PHOTOGRAPHS: DENIS BALIBOUSE/REUTERS; SOAZIG DE LA MOISSONNIÈRE

the film Rocky III starring Sylvester Stallone. For those too young to get the reference, it was a "mark of determination", he added.

For the artisan workers at Maison Henry Jullien in Jura in eastern France, where glasses have been made for more than 100 years, it was publicity impossible to buy.

Stefano Fulchir, the chief executive of iVision Tech, the Italian company that owns Henry Jullien, said the first he knew of the presidential endorsement was when French opticians rang him to say: "The president's wearing our glasses!" When news spread, the company website crashed for most of the day.

"My first reaction can be summed up in three letters: wow! It has not been a typical day. I feel very honoured that the president is wearing our glasses," he said.

Macron's office had contacted the company in 2024 to buy a pair of €659 (£573) sunglasses as a gift during the G20 summit and a second pair for himself, he said.

"I said I would be happy to send him a pair, but they said no. He wanted to purchase them. The French president paid a lot of attention to whether the glasses were entirely made in France."

iVision acquired Henry Jullien, founded in 1921, in 2023. Fulchir said the team of 10 staff at the factory in Lons-le-Saunier produced about 1,000 pairs of the sunglasses worn by Macron a year.

They are hand assembled and made using what iVision calls an "ancient technique", where gold is bonded rather than plated to the base metal, making it harder wearing. The blue-tinted UV lenses are produced by Dalloz, another Jura-based company.

Fulchir said the company had yet to find a UK distributor.

Jimmy Mohamed, a doctor and media commentator, told the French broadcaster RTL he believed Macron had worn the sunglasses for "aesthetic reasons". "The glasses protect his image, but not really his eye," Mohamed said.

mission impossible to neutralise the US president's plan to take over Greenland and impose 200% trade tariffs on French wine and champagne. Some, like the communication specialist Philippe Moreau Chevrolet, saw the president's decision to wear the French-made eyewear as symbolic in the context of France's strained relations with the US.

The real reason was more prosaic: Macron was stylishly disguising a subconjunctival haemorrhage, a burst blood vessel in his right eye – a condition he described as "totally benign".

But even he was not immune to clichés. Addressing troops at a military event last week, Macron had described the problem as "*Poeil du tigre*" (the eye of the tiger). The comment referenced the 1982 song by the rock band Survivor used in