



# HOW TO SPOT A REPLICAS!



## THE ROLEX GUIDE

The Rolex Guide 2004.

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# INTRODUCTION

Genuine brand watches can cost anything from £500.00 to £100,000.00, as most people cannot afford the real thing a much cheaper alternative is to buy a replica.

Replica watches are, quite simply, imitations of the more expensive brand named watches, at a mere fraction of the price. These imitations have the same general look, feel and ability, at a much more acceptable price.

The quality of a replica can vary depending on the cost. A £20.00 replica would obviously be of a far better quality than a replica costing £400.00 and much easier to identify.

This guide is mainly based on Rolex wrist watches as they carry the largest number of replicas in the market place. Some Omega examples are also included.

This guide will show you how to avoid the replicas, as it states this is a guide and should be used for that purpose only. If you are unsure of a watches authenticity then don't buy it. The only way to be 110% sure its not a replica is to be direct from a Rolex dealer.

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# REQUIREMENTS

- **BOX & PAPERWORK**

In order to consider purchasing a Rolex watch I would recommend that it **MUST** have accompanying paperwork and a matching box. If the watch does not have the box and paperwork I would personally not buy it.



*Box & Paperwork Example*

- ***Box***

All watches when purchased come with a box. If you are spending a large amount of money on a watch then you usually keep the box. The box will usually be of a high standard either leather bound or wooden as shown in the below example.

Most expensive watches have an inner better quality box with a cardboard outer box.

Both the inner and outer boxes will usually have a symbol and mark relating to the watch.

Some of the better quality replicas come with box and paperwork, the font quality on the replicas will be of a poor quality and can be worn or blurred.

A watch without its box can lose upto 30% of its value, it is therefore wise for the owner to keep it safe.

If the watch does not have a box then it probably is a fake.

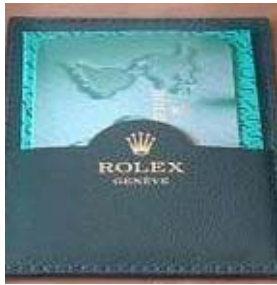


*Rolex Wooden Box & Cardboard Outer Box*

- ***Paperwork***

All watches when purchased have paperwork. Where the paperwork refers to reference numbers and models these should be confirmed to match with the physical watch. Paperwork can be in the form of the following:-

***A warranty card***



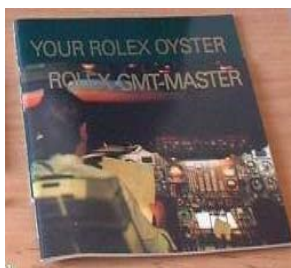
This card holds reference numbers and purchase dates. The reference numbers should match the reference found on either the back of the watch or strap. Note that not all watches carry reference numbers.

***A Leather/Plastic documents wallet***



The wallet holds all the paperwork relating to the watch. It is usually marked with the watchmakers stamp and is in the same colour as the box.

***An Operating Instructions Booklet***



This contains specific details about the watch such as changing the time and date.

## *A Service Centre Booklet*



Most top brand watches have a service centre guide which shows you lists of agents throughout the world.

## *A Receipt*



This will show when and where the watch was purchased; also it will show you exactly how much was paid for the watch.

## *A Seal (Rolex)*

All Rolex watches carry a Red Seal. Note the bright coloured cotton and frayed ends on the replica. On some occasions a green seal is also attached.



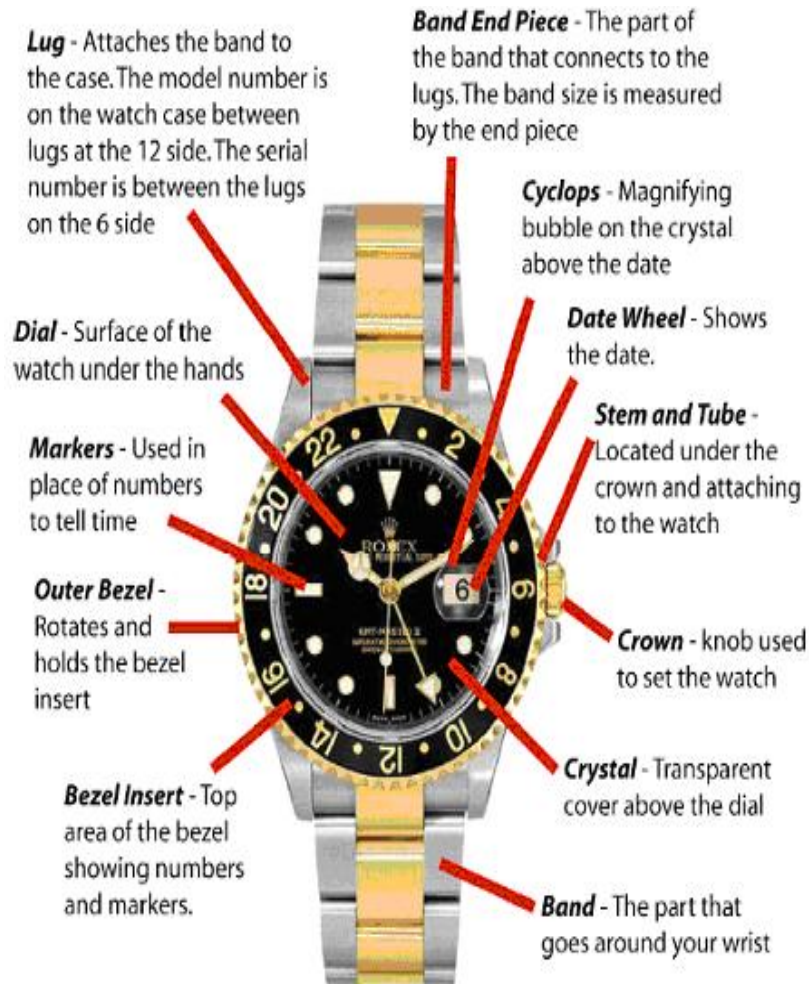
*Genuine*



*Replica*



# TERMOLOGY OF WATCH PARTS



# REPLICA SPOTTING

## *The Origin*

A Swiss based company would not sell a watch that is made in Indonesia, so if you notice that the watch's origin doesn't match the origin of the company, then the chances are the watch is a fake.

## *The Band*

The edge on a genuine watch will have a smooth edge; this is because the band was made out of three pieces of metal. One rolled piece with two outer edges.

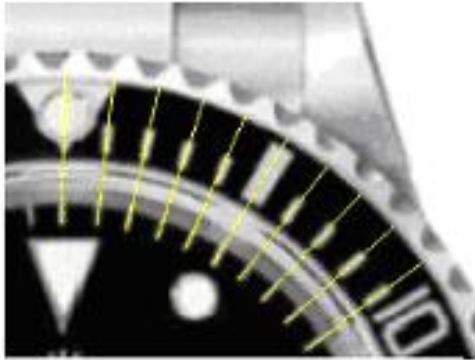
With most cheap watches each link is made of a single piece of metal, which is rolled to create the link. This is easy spotted as the edge of each link is rolled like a “Swiss Role” and has a poor quality finish.



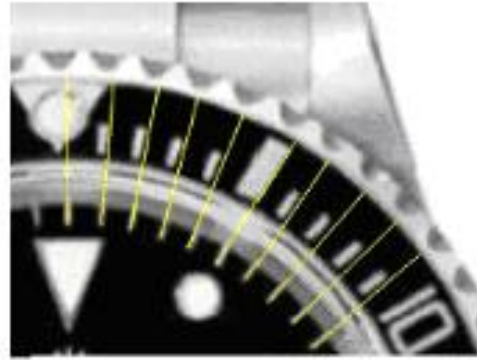
*Replica*

## *The Bezel*

The Bezel if moved should line up exactly with the minute markers on the dial. On a genuine both markers will line up perfect.



*Genuine*

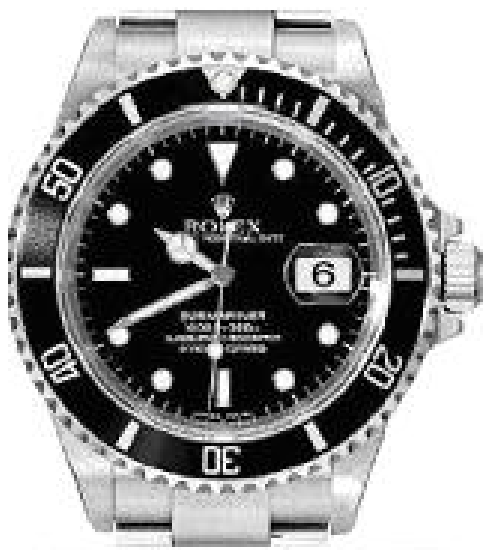


*Replica*

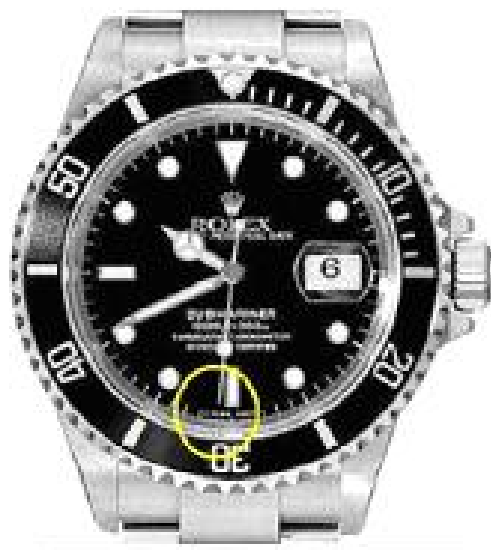
## *The Second Hand*

All Rolex watches will have a sweeping second hand. If the second hand “tick tocks” then it is definitely a copy.

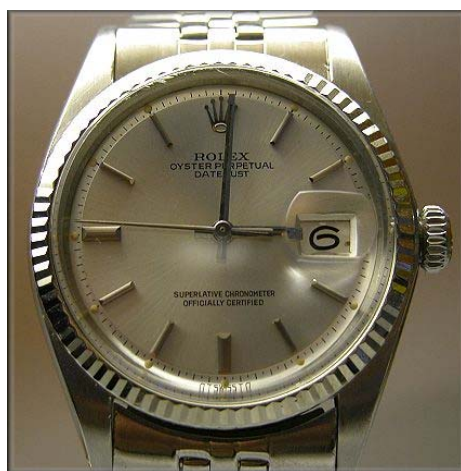
The Rolex second hand should reach the second markers, if it is short by 2-3mm then it is a replica, the illuminated circle on the second hand should hit the top of the 12 o’clock triangle exactly. On most replica watches when the stem is pulled out, the second hand continues to move. On a genuine watch the second hand should stop once the stem is pulled out.



*Genuine*



*Replica*



*Genuine*

## *Minute Hand*

Genuine Rolex *Yacht-Master* models feature a "minute" hand, which is considerably thicker than those on other Rolex sports models. However, to save money, counterfeiters will often use the same hands found on the *Submariner*. This can be easily identified when viewed side-by-side (as shown in the example below).



*Genuine*

*Replica*

## *Daytona Hands*

Counterfeiters will often use hands which are of the wrong size and/or shape. In the example shown below, the genuine *Daytona* features a "minute" hand which reaches all the way to the outer "hash" marks. However, the counterfeit model shown features much shorter hands. This is often the case because counterfeiters use whatever stock of parts they have available, which is usually whatever is the cheapest.

You will also note that the "shape" of the hands on the counterfeit is incorrect. modern *Daytona* models feature hands which are "rounded" on the tips. Again, counterfeiters will often use whatever hands they have available, and in this case they have used hands from a *Day-Date* model, which are flat on the tip.

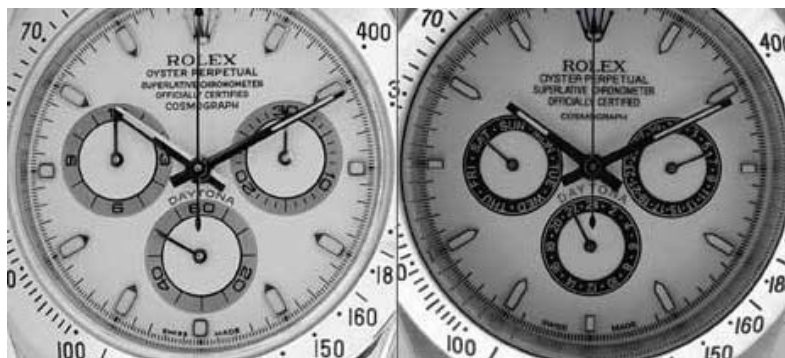


## *Daytona Registers*

Genuine Rolex *Daytona* models feature mini-registers on the dial which perform *Chronograph* "stop watch" functions (i.e. elapsed hours and minutes). It is also worth mentioning that the large "sweep" hand on the dial is also part of the *stop watch function*, and is not the primary second hand-- the second hand for the watch is the small 20/40/60 register.

However, counterfeit models will rarely perform these functions, but rather will be used for "day of week", "date", and "24-hour time". (*Please Note: not all counterfeit models will be "printed" with these incorrect functions, but their operations will still be incorrect.*)

Furthermore, the size and position of these mini registers will often be incorrect on counterfeits. As shown in the example below, the counterfeit model features much smaller registers which are positioned too far inward on the dial, while the genuine *Daytona* features registers which are positioned much farther outward--almost touching the 3-6-9 hour markers.



*Genuine*

*Replica*

### *The Crystal Glass/ Micro Etched Crystal*

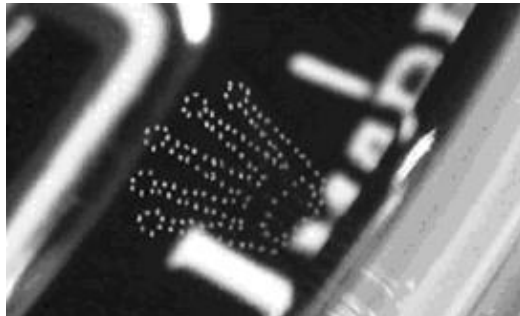
Brand new for 2002, Rolex has started *micro-etching* a tiny "coronet" (or crown) logo into the crystal, at the 6 o'clock position. This mark is quite small, so it is difficult to see with the naked eye. However, when viewed under a loupe, the faint outline can be distinguished, as seen in the examples below.



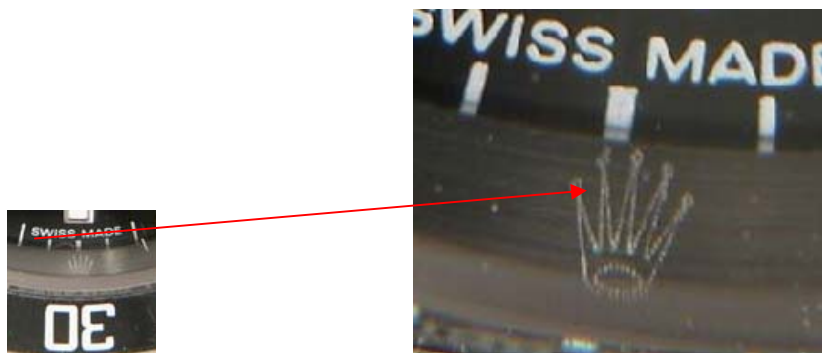
*Replica*



Please Note: Rolex has just started phasing-in this micro-etching process and, to date, not all models have the etching. It is believed that the etching should appear on most (if not all) new models produced by the end of 2003, or early 2004.



*Genuine*



*Replica*

You will notice that the fake etching is "similar" to that in the genuine example, the biggest difference being that the "balls" on the tips of the fake are too small. The etching also is not precise.

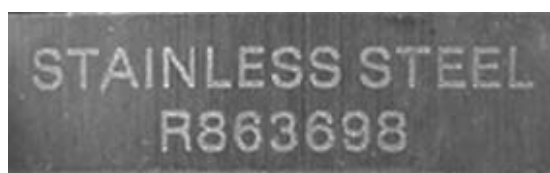
## *Case Reference Number*

Probably the most accurate way to identify a genuine/counterfeit Rolex watch is by locating the *Serial* and *Case Reference Numbers*. These special identification numbers are engraved on the side of the case, located between the lugs (as shown in the below example). These reference numbers should match with the paperwork supplied with the watch.

As you can see in the examples below, the engraving between the lugs of a genuine Rolex feature very fine lines, which actually catch the light similar to that of a diamond cut edge. However, (some) counterfeits will feature a sandy (acid) etched appearance, as seen in the example below. Furthermore, the spacing on these numbers is often too close together. It is worth mentioning that counterfeiters frequently use the SAME numbers on their watches. Thus, the example shown above: "R863698" is seen quite often, and is a pretty good sign of a fake.



*Genuine*



*Replica*

## *A Brief Explanation of the Rolex Serial Numbering System*

In 1927, Rolex began issuing every Rolex Oyster case a unique serial number to distinguish them from one another. Around 1953, the numbers reached the 999,999 mark, at which time Rolex decided against adding a 7<sup>th</sup> digit, thus continuing into the "millions"--Instead, they started the sequence over at 100,001.

Around this same time, Rolex had initiated another dating system--They stamped the inside of the case back with a code consisting of a Roman numeral and two numbers. The Roman numerals were I, II, III, IV, which represented which quarter of the year the watch was produced. The numbers simply represented the two-digit year in which the watch was produced. Therefore, the code III 53 would represent the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (i.e. July-September) of 1953--this code continued until around 1970.

In the early 1960s, Rolex once again reached the 999,999 mark, but this time added a 7<sup>th</sup> digit and continued until mid 1987, when the numbering reached 9,999,999. At this time, Rolex elected to start numbering with a letter prefix (e.g. R000001).

The system started with the letter "R", which was then subsequently followed by L-E-X. Thus spelling out the word "ROLEX" with the "O" being omitted, to help avert any possible confusion with the number "0". This sequence continued through November 1991, when a *new* numbering system was introduced utilizing the letters N, C and S, which took them through 1993. In 1994, Rolex started yet another sequence with the letters: W, T and U, then A, P, and K in subsequent years.

To add to the confusion, many of these prefixes have run concurrently over the past few years, giving the appearance of a *random* numbering system. Therefore, only Rolex knows *exactly* when any particular watch was made and they aren't talking.

The following list is comprised of known serial numbers for the years listed. By checking a particular serial number against this list you should be able to date a watch with reasonable accuracy. However, it is no guarantee as to when your watch was shipped from the factory.

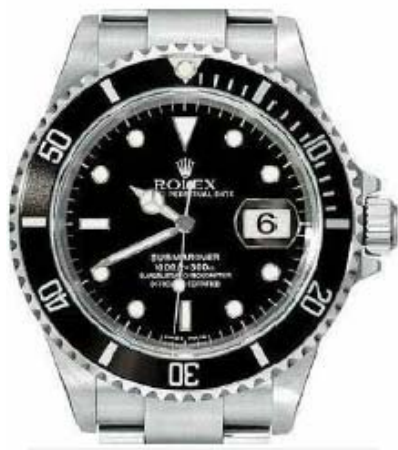
Click below or enter the below address into your Internet Search Bar.

[www.iq-enterprises.com/pages/serial\\_number.htm](http://www.iq-enterprises.com/pages/serial_number.htm)

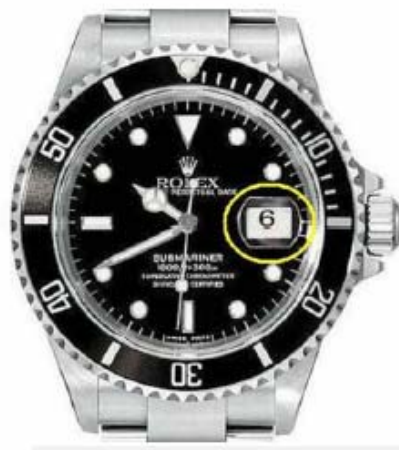


### ***The Font.***

The fonts used for the numbers should align exactly with the second hand as it passes over them. The numbers in the date bubble should be exactly in the centre of the magnified Cyclops. On virtually all replicas the date will either be high or low in the date window.



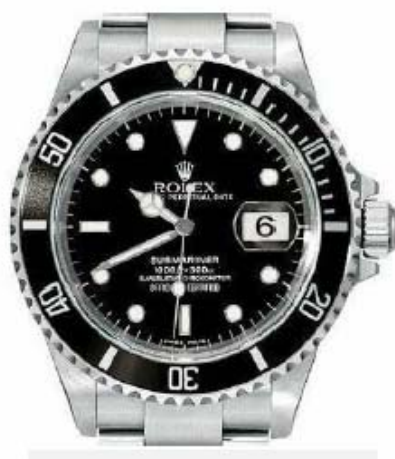
***Genuine***



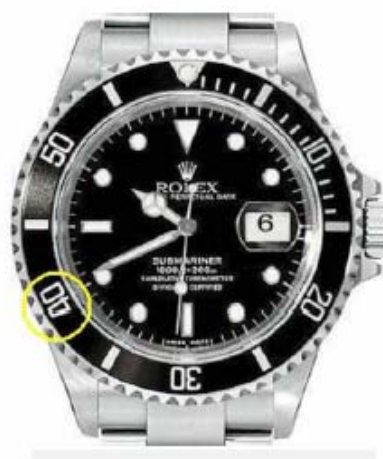
***Replica***

### ***The Number 4.***

On a genuine Rolex the inside of the number 4 will be formed of 4 small edges. If you look closely at the number 4 and see four distinct edges you are looking at a replica.



***Genuine***

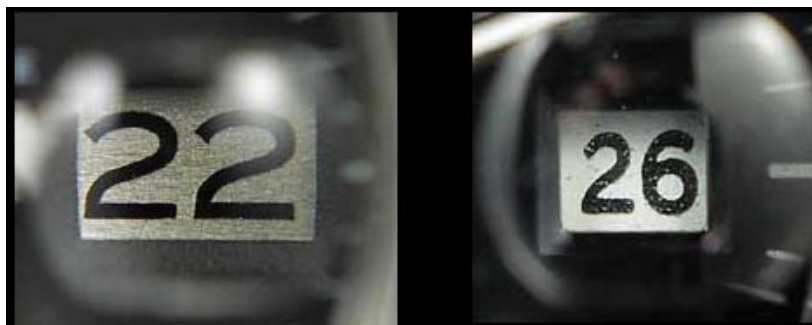


***Replica***

### *The Date Bubble/Cyclops*

The Cyclops on a genuine Rolex watch will be magnified by 2.5. A replica will have either no magnification or a very small amount of magnification. On a genuine the date should practically fill up the Cyclops.

The Cyclops will also have a sharp edge where the Cyclops meets the crystal. This is hard to see with the naked eye but can be felt quite easily by running your fingers around the Cyclops.



*Genuine*

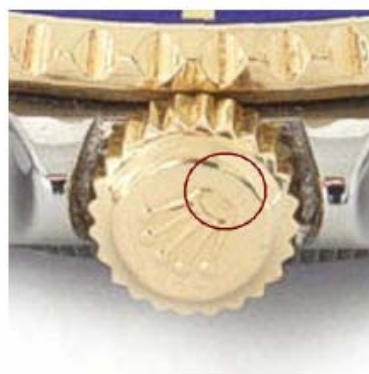
*Replica*

## *The Crown/Winder*

The crown on an expensive watch such as a Rolex will be made out of a single piece of metal. On a fake watch the logo that is placed on the crown is glued on after the watch is made. The small glued seam can be seen when using an eyeglass. The crown will also have three small dots or a line as shown in the picture.



*Genuine*

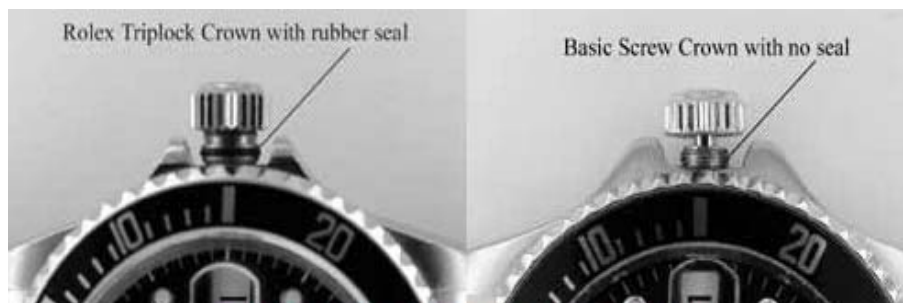


*Replica*



*Genuine*

Rolex models featuring the *Triplock* crown (i.e. *Submariner*, *Sea-Dweller* and *Daytona*) utilize an extra seal within the threads of the winding crown's tube. This gasket resembles a black o-ring and can be visible when the winding crown is unscrewed fully. As shown in the example above, (most) counterfeit models will not feature this o-ring seal, but rather will have basic screw-down threads. It is worth mentioning that some new counterfeits will feature a "similar" looking rubber seal, but upon closer examination you will see that it is merely cosmetic, and is not functional.



*Genuine*

*Replica*



## *The Pins*

The pins holding the strap to the watch on a genuine will be threaded. If you look through an eyeglass at the end of the pin you should see a small slot for a fine flat head screwdriver.



*Genuine*



*Replica*

## *Logo*

The band on a genuine Rolex will always have the Rolex logo. The absence of this logo is a dead give away the watch band is a replica.



*Genuine*



*Replica*

## *The Case Back*

An authentic Rolex will have a screw down back with exactly 144 small teeth. You can only open a Rolex case with a special Rolex tool.



Reference Numbers will be etched in the positions as indicated above by a red circle. If you see no reference numbers then the watch is a fake.

To date Rolex have never made a watch with a clear or see through back. This is also known as a skeleton back which allows you to view the movement. These clear back watches are a common Rolex fake.



## *Replica*

Rolex watches do not have engraved backs. Genuine Rolex watches will have either a smooth case back or a smooth case back with a hologram showing a reference number.



***Replica***

### ***Holograms***

This usually is found on the reverse of the watch. Genuine Rolex watches are shipped direct from the factory with a hologram showing the makers stamp or symbol and then a model reference number.

On a fake watch the number is written on after the Hologram is created. As the numbers are placed on after the hologram is produced you often see on the replicas numbers have worn away.



**Genuine**

**Replica**

This sticker features the trademarked Rolex "crown" positioned above the watch's case reference number. The hologram can be easily identified by viewing it from different angles, thus causing the background pattern to change.

However, "most" counterfeit stickers are not holograms at all, but rather simply a repetitious "Rolex" pattern, which does not change in appearance when viewed from different angles.

Even if the watch has an authentic hologram you should still be cautious as holograms are available to purchase over the internet.

It is worth mentioning that the genuine Rolex hologram stickers did not feature the "crown logo" as a part of the hologram until (around) 2002, when the sticker was redesigned. At that time, the Reference number was also changed from gold lettering to black, as it is currently.



*Genuine*



*Replica*

## *Text*

All text found on either the watch or box should be crisp and clear. Replica items will never have the same quality as the original.

See in the below example how the font is completely wrong on the replica. Note the extra thickness of the words Rolex and also the pin prick holes in the crown.

The lines of the crown are also not crisp.



*Genuine*

*Replica*

# GRADING REPLICAS

For your information the below table shows where the better quality replicas are produced and how good the replica is.

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<b>Origin</b>	Switzerland	Japan	Japan	Japan	Asia ?
<b>Movement</b>	ETA 25-Jewel	ETA 21-Jewel or 25-Jewel	Generic copy of the ETA movement	Miya Co. 21-Jewel	China ?
<b>Hacking Mech</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some	No
<b>Gold Finish</b>	Triple Wrapped As good as you can get without being solid gold	2-Tone: Triple Wrapped All-gold: Single Wrapped	Gold Plating	Gold Plating	Gold Coloured Metal?
<b>Colour of Gold</b>	Same as Genuine	Some Exact Some Poor	Brownish	Shiny	Shiny
<b>Stainless Steel</b>	Solid 440 Grade	Solid Low-Grade	Solid Low-Grade	Plated	Plated
<b>Weight</b>	Almost Same as Genuine	Up to 20% Light	Up to 20% Light	Up to 35% Light	Up to 50% Light
<b>Water-Resist.</b>	30m Diving	Short Swimming	Short Swimming	Wash Hands Shower	None
<b>Crystal</b>	Genuine Sapphire	Low Quality Sapphire	Mineral	Mineral	Plastic
<b>Retail Price</b>	\$700-\$1200	\$500-\$700	\$300-\$500	\$150-\$250	\$70-\$150
<b>Warranty</b>	1 year	9 months to 1 year	6 months	3-6 months	1-3 months
<b>Approximate Durability</b>	10 Years	normally, maybe a little more	1 year is pushing it	Maybe 6 months but not much more	3 months if you are lucky
<b>Comment</b>	A very nice time piece. Although a little pricey for what you get.	OK quality as far as watches go. Definitely not worth the money.	Cute watch. A little expensive. Might fool someone at a glance.	Ugly and not very well made. Will not fool anyone.	Pure trash. Good for a laugh and little else.

# ROLEX MODELS

## *President*

The president is made of three rows of gold links and includes both a day of the week and a date window function with a 2.5 times Cyclops except the ladies model which only have a date window. The President is available in 18ct Gold, 18ct two tone gold, and Platinum. A Super President is available which has a Diamond set bezel and band.

Approx: £3000.00 to £10,000.00.



## *Datejust*

The Datejust is the best known model of Rolex watch and was introduced in 1945. When the name Rolex is mentioned this is the model most people immediately envision. The Datejust comes in a variety of dial and bezel options including Diamond set. The Datejust is 36mm with a 2.5 Cyclops magnifier with a sapphire scratch proof crystal dial. It comes in stainless steel, two tone stainless steel and in 18ct gold.

Approx: £3000.00 (Stainless) to £10,000.00 (Diamond).



## *Air King*

The Air King is a very basic design as far as Rolex watches go. The Air King is sleek with clean elegant lines. It is 34mm, is available in only stainless steel.

Approx: £1500.00 to £5000.00



## *Oyster Quartz*

The Oyster quartz is a rare Rolex with, as the name suggests, quartz movement that requires a battery. The Oyster quartz is available in stainless steel with Diamond bezel optional.

Approx: £1500.00 to £5000.00





## *Explorer I & II*

The explorer was introduced in 1954 and is made of all stainless steel. It has a 36mm case. Later the explorer II was produced, the explorer II had a fourth hand which enabled the owner to keep track of a second time zone. The dial has the date window and a 2.5 Cyclops. It comes with a black or white dial.

Approx: £1500.00 to £5000.00.



## *Submariner*

The Submariner is one of the most popular models of Rolex. It comes available in four styles; stainless steel, two tone stainless steel and 18ct gold. As the name suggests the Submariner is a favourite diving watch. It is 40mm and comes with or without the date window.

Approx: £1500.00 to £10000.00 (Gold)



## *Yacht Master*

The Yacht Master comes in stainless steel and 18ct gold. It has a date window with a 2.5 Cyclops date magnifier. The gold model has a rotating Platinum bezel. The watch was designed for men or women.

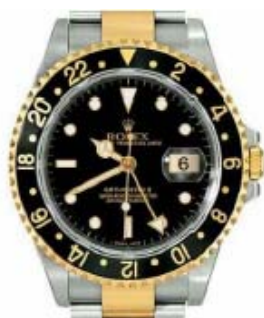
Approx: £4500.00 to £10000.00



## *GMT Master*

The GMT Master has the ability to track two different time zones at the same time. It has a rotating bezel and 2.5 Cyclops. It is available in stainless steel and 18ct gold. It can have a blue, red or black bezel.

Approx: £4500.00 to £10000.00



## *Daytona*

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The Daytona is a distinctive and highly desirable watch. The Daytona is a true chronometer with stopwatch and split time capabilities. The bezel of the Daytona is engraved with hourly speed markings that enhance the chronometer functions of the watch. The Daytona chronometer buttons screw into the bezel. It is available in stainless steel and 18ct gold. It can come with either a leather or 18ct white gold band. Approx: £5500.00 to £10,000.00.



## OMEGA REPLICAS

As with most branded watches Omega also has a large following of replica fakes.

As with Rolex, Omega is a branded quality watch and should therefore carry a high standard of workmanship. The attention to detail should be perfect.

All Omega's come in a fancy inner box and cardboard outer box. As with Rolex, Omega watches also can have fake box's and paperwork.



The replica companies sometimes completely mix up names and features from completely different models, occasionally making up very odd or nonsensical watches.

The below Omega Seamaster has many problems. At first glance it looks fine but the face of the watch for this particular model should have two extra dials. You can see we have the buttons for the dials but no dials.

The date within the Cyclops bubble is not aligned correctly. The bezel of the whole watch does not align up with hands.



*Omega Seamaster*

The below watch is Speedmaster Chronograph except once again this watch has no dials or buttons.

The wording on the dial mentions Seamaster but the watch is a Chronograph.



*Omega Chronograph*

Below is the Omega Seamaster Pro James Bond Watch. It has a GMT hand, which tells the time in more than one occasion. This watch is not supposed to have this feature. On the fake watch below it does not even move.

The watch itself is labelled with the name Ocean Master. Omega does not produce this model.



*Omega Seamaster James Bond Pro*

The Omega Speedmaster below is a scramble of watch bits. The bracelet, case and hands are Speedmaster style. Extra GMT hand like off of a Flight master. Diver's rating and second hand of a Seamaster Professional. The most obvious is the Omega name on an applied plate.



*Omega Speedmaster*

A common giveaway on fakes Omega watches is that the main part of their watch casings (excluding the bezel, crystal, and back) are often noticeably thicker than the real thing. The fakes can be as much as twice as thick and the real models they are trying to resemble. Also notice that because the cases are so much thicker, that the lugs that hold the bracelet or strap have to curve much more than on the real ones to compensate for the added thickness.



*Original*



*Replica*

Another major characteristic of authentic watches is extreme attention to detail. Genuine Swiss watches don't leave obvious gaps, crowd or otherwise poorly space or centre dial markings, have useless or non-working buttons or markings, or forget to include required labelling.



*Omega Seamaster with the display back showing the watch is half hollow*



Quick giveaway that the above is a fake: it doesn't say "Swiss Made" on the dial. Also notice the same scales are inaneely duplicated on the dial and the inner bezel.

The below link is an excellent resource for viewing replica Omega watches.

<http://www.repicalover.com/omega%20a.htm>



# GENUINE OMEGA WATCHES

## *Omega Constellation*

Generally considered to be Omega's flagship line. Starting in the 1990's, the Constellation line adopted the highly contemporary look originated by the Constellation "Manhattan" in the 1980's and is now Omega's "style flagship" line.



## *Omega DeVille*

Omega's traditional dress watch line. After the Constellation series changed focus to a style flagship line, the DeVille series has become the horology flagship line.

The current DeVille line is divided into several series: the DeVille Coaxial, DeVille Prestige, DeVille Symbol and DeVille Classic. Of these, the Coaxial is the newest, featuring the Daniel's Coaxial Escapement--the most significant advancement in mechanical wristwatch technology in many decades.

The remaining series of DeVille models mostly use the same movements used across most OMEGA model lines. The differentiation between these DeVille series are the case and bracelet styles. The "Symbol" derived its name from the first models in this design bearing art symbols--such as the oriental Yin-Yang--on their dials.

Very few watches in this series bear the DeVille name on their dials. The DeVille line keeps to very clean, classic designs. So

dial labelling is normally kept to an absolute minimum of one or two lines of descriptive text. The DeVille Coaxial Limited Edition is the one notable exception. OMEGA broke from their normal tasteful conservatism by issuing the initial coaxial models with its dial cluttered with four lines of descriptive text, including one *over* the OMEGA logo and name.



### *Omega Speedmaster*

Originated in the late 1950's, the Speedmaster line of chronograph watches was catapulted to fame by their selection by NASA for use in manned space missions starting in the 1960's. The Speedmaster "Moon Watch" is the best known and most enduring OMEGA model.



## *Omega Seamaster*

Originating in 1948, the Seamaster series now represents two distinct of high water resistant watches. The Seamaster 120 line continues the classic dress-style. The Seamaster Professional series is a bolder, more rugged, professional grade diving watch.



## *Omega Dynamic*

A special line that OMEGA uses to introduce alternative styles. The latest Dynamic models are the fourth series issued under the Dynamic name, and were produced from 1998-2000. This release features two models reviving the style of some of OMEGA's 1940's military watch designs. Generally considered by OMEGA collectors to be greatly overlooked by the watch buying public and one of the best values in new and near-new used OMEGA watches currently available.



## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

There are many sources available to you for finding out information about watches. The largest being the Internet.

I would advice before purchasing a watch take the time to study watches in jeweller's.

Pick up as many brochures as possible and have a close look at some of the watches available, try them on and get a feel for the originals. The jeweller won't mind if he thinks he is getting a sale.

Study the prices of old and new models, make notes and ask questions!

The best link I have found on the Internet is shown below. It gives retail and second hand prices.

<http://www.watchfinder.co.uk/>

An excellent source to view the latest replica watches is shown below. This site gives excellent quality close up pictures of copies and replicas.

<http://www.repicalover.com/>

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- [www.rolex.com](http://www.rolex.com)
- [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)
- <http://www.repicalover.com/>
- [www.replicacentre.com](http://www.replicacentre.com)
- <http://chronocentric.com/galleries/>
- <http://www.replicacenter.com/index.html>
- <http://www.perfectswiss.com/>
- <http://www.goreplicas.com/>
- <http://www.planet4watches.com/>
- <http://www.blitzwatches.co.uk/>
- <http://www.antiquewatchcouk.com/LINKS.htm>
- <http://www.finestwatches.co.uk/>
- <http://www.watchfinder.co.uk/>
- <http://www.repicalover.com/>

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- <http://www.dream-watches.co.uk/>
- <http://www.replicawatch.org/>
- <http://www.watchjunction.co.uk/>
- <http://www.watchesuk.com/>
- <http://www.kelkoo.co.uk/>
- <http://www.secondtimeround.com/>
- <http://www.antiquewatches.co.uk/>
- <http://www.watchmakers.com/links.html>
- [http://www.brittons-watches.co.uk/trade\\_parcels.htm](http://www.brittons-watches.co.uk/trade_parcels.htm)
- <http://www.finestwatches.co.uk/mens.htm>
- <http://www.redwatches.com/>
- <http://store.thefinestjewelry.com/>
- <http://www.diamond.com/>