

Top 10 Most Accurate Replica Watches

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Last Updated Thursday, 15 April 2010

digg_url = 'http://digg.com/gadgets/How_to_Spot_the_Top_10_Most_Accurate_Replica_Watches';

Whenever you assemble a "Top 10" list it's always opinionated and ephemeral. Opinionated in that the quality scale and ratings come from from an individual or group with a very subjective view of things. I have things that I consider important points when it comes to determining accuracy of replica watches that someone else might consider trivial for example.

It's also ephemeral in that the industry is constantly changing. What's on the top of the pile today may end up on the bottom of the heap tomorrow. I say this all to mean don't shoot the messenger. :) If this list doesn't include what you envision it to need to be a comprehensive list please email me. I'll be happy to create updated lists as time goes by.

The criteria for this list is simple: Be as accurate of a copy of the genuine watch as possible without modifications or factory parts. I also spread the coverage of the list to include as many brands as possible. While some brands are replicated more accurately than others, I felt a broader approach was a better example.

Rolex Explorer I

The Rolex Explorer I is a simple yet effective design. Its simplicity makes it easier to replicate than other Rolex models. Unlike the Rolex Submariner that has crown guards and a cyclops date magnifier, this design lacks the elements that are the most difficult to replicate.

Chopard Gran Turismo XL

The GT XL is a design that is based on a ETA movement as a genuine watch, which makes it easier to replicate. The crystal and cyclops are highly accurate, as is the date wheel and caseback on the higher-end examples of this replica. There are slight inaccuracies on the dial (the C H O P A R D is not spaced exactly the same, for example) and stickers instead of engraving on the rotor, but both of these are difficult to spot unless you know what to look for.

Panerai Ferrari Series

Most Panerai replicas are easy to spot because of certain common flaws: Incorrect or ill-fitting crown guards, canon pinion too short, bad date wheel or cyclops, etc. The Ferrari Panerai replicas avoid most of these flaws making them the most accurate Panera replicas on the market.

Graham Chronofighter Oversize

The Graham Chronofighter is an odd choice to replicate, yet the replica manufacturer went to great lengths to ensure accuracy. Comparing a genuine model to a counterfeit there are few ways to tell them apart short of opening the case. The lever mechanism is looser on the replica Graham than on the genuine. Otherwise this is a perfect example of why

you should buy a high-end watch from a reputable dealer.

Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore

The Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Offshore has been replicated many times over the years. The most recent example has corrected several common flaws that made these counterfeits easy to spot. The seconds subdial is correctly offset at the 12 o'clock position, and the under-the-crystal cyclops is accurate, as is the date wheel. There are still several flaws, such as poor or inaccurate luminosity on the dial and the position of the date window is too far to the right.

Breitling SuperOcean Steelfish

Breitlings have always been a popular brand to counterfeit, and the Steelfish is probably one of the best examples of a Breitling replica I've ever seen. The metal quality is high-grade, and all the pieces have a "genuine" quality to them. Look for a blue-ish tint to the Anti-reflective coating and some puckering around the hour markers on the dial. Still, this is a highly accurate replica and purchasing a Steelfish on the secondary market should be done with caution.

Bell & Ross BR01-92

The Bell & Ross BR01 and BR03 series are some of my favorite watches. The simple case design has lent itself to being replicated almost since the watch was available. Up until recently the replica BR01s were easy to spot because of fake case screws on the caseback. Recent counterfeit BRs have real screws in place of the fake screws making them more difficult to spot. Look for poor luminosity on the dial and hands and cheaper quality bands and rubber straps. The replicas come in many variations and colors.

Franck Muller Casablanca

There are several Franck Muller replicas on the market but the Casablanca is of a higher quality than many of them. Its simple design means less details that have to be copied and therefore easier manufacturing. Replica Casablanca come in varying qualities, but the high-end versions use Swiss ETA movements and sapphire crystals. Sometimes you can look for poor quality bands and incorrect caseback markings to spot these watches.

Omega Planet Ocean 45mm

The replica watch manufacturers have spent the past two years perfecting the Omega Planet Ocean copy. Over this time several "generations" of this counterfeit watch have been available, this latest example corrects many of the flaws that existed in earlier copies. The higher-end examples are tough to spot. Look for dial irregularities such as an incorrectly-sized Omega logo and an incorrect date wheel font. But this watch has been easy to modify with genuine parts and therefore difficult to detect.

Hublot Big Bang

The Big Bang has been wildly popular and a big success for Hublot. Hublot has released a large number of variants, which the replica watch market has faithfully duplicated, even down to the ceramic bezel. Quality varies greatly in replicas of this watch, but the high-end are quite accurate, making them difficult to spot without knowing where to look. Recessed date wheels and stickers on the rotor are two quick things to check. Band quality can be substandard to the genuine (poorer-quality rubber) and the clasp can be finicky on replicas.

You'll note that several popular models aren't on this list: Rolex Submariner, Rolex Daytona, most Panerai, Patek Philippe, Cartiers... That's because the flaws on those replica watches are blatant for the most part and with some foreknowledge (such as reading this site!) most people can detect these replicas quite easily. This may change over time as the replica manufacturers improve their technique. We've seen this already in the number of generations it took to improve the Omega Planet Ocean.

Conclusion

The basic conclusion to this list is that it pays to buy your watch at an authorized dealer or at least a very reputable secondary market dealer. This minimizes the chance of inadvertently buying a replica watch instead of a genuine. In some cases an inexperienced seller might not even KNOW they're offering a counterfeit watch since there is a lot of reselling going on on sites such as eBay. Also, just because a watch is offered at a great price doesn't make it a deal. There's never a free lunch; if the price is off the market norm there may be a reason. Caveat Emptor!