HOLY GRAIL ONLY



The Ultimate Reviews

Issue #2

The Ultimate Reviews
Issue #2

Grégoire Rossier • Anthony Marquié

HOLY GRAIL ONLY

- WATCH BOOKS ONLY -



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	6
What's in a name?	10
Components	14
Production & Statistics	34
The Ultra Holy Grail	38
Acknowledgments	42

OMEGA



FOREWORD

The OMEGA Speedmaster automatic reference ST 376.0822, nicknamed Holy Grail by collectors, is considered one of the rarest Speedmasters and thus has been highly sought after since years.

However its early days were hardly promising, the model did not sell well and its production time was very short (1987-1988).

The first person who started serious research about this model was Chuck Maddox and since then, a lot of information about it has been made available on the web. Most of these studies aim to be serious and have based their conclusions on observations. However, they most of the time lack reliable sources to validate these observations and mistakes have been unintentionally propagated and anchored in collectors' mind.

That is why we decided to undertake extensive research on it.

Collectors must be extremely cautious when they look for information on the web. Incorrect information could lead them to conclude that their model is in a wrong configuration, and to change some components. This would be catastrophic if an original component stated as wrong / service, would be replaced.

Therefore, the observation & validation cycle is a fundamental rule and a necessary step to get the guarantee of reliable information when analyzing and collecting vintage watches.

This is the method we applied during the MOONWATCH ONLY journey and that we will continue to apply with our future research projects. We are however aware that this is not always possible: in this case, the readers must be warned about the uncertainty of the outcomes.

All the information has been verified, unless stated.

OMEGA

ONE CAL TON CAL TONS





OMEGA brochure mentioning the Speedmaster ST 376.0822 (Italian version, 1988).

NAMES IN A

THE GRAIL

OMEGA used the caliber 1045 movement (derived from the Lemania's 5100) for several Speedmasters since 1975 (ref. ST 176.012, ST 176.014, ST 176.015, ST 176.016 and ST 345.0806 a bit later).

In September 1986, the first datasheet for a new Speedmaster Day-Date Automatic was produced, with the reference ST 376.0822 (PIC 3341 B new code in 1988).

This model, unlike the ST 176.01x series, had a Moonwatch-like case,

which means a tachymeter bezel outside of the dial, improving legibility.

This legibility is even accentuated with the extension of the minute scale with a 1/5th seconds scale painted on a ring fixed on the glass.

Chuck Maddox, one of the greatest OMEGA collectors and experts, called it "the Grail" because he has been chasing it for a very long time.

You will understand later the main reason why it took ages to Chuck to find his own Grail.

Main features

- Ref. ST 376.0822 (PIC 3341B new code since 1988)
- Self-winding caliber 1045
- Day-date, with a 24 hours subdial
- 12 hours chronograph
- Moonwatch-like case (thicker to accommodate the automatic movement), featuring crown and pushers integration
- Large dial aperture and legibility, with a glass ring showing the 1/5th seconds scale

		Ω	OMEGA S.A. SIENNE PRODUIT	FICHE TECHNI	QUE BOITE
				DESCRIPTION & T T	ERMINAISON
REFERENCES	376.0822		Spe Lur des Car de con des	te:ronde ouverture ronde é edmaster ette: acier avec bague tac sous polis rure: biseau supérieur lap corne à l'autre. Bande sat nes partie intérieure sati sous polis d: bande et biseau polis,	hymétrique, bande et bis nidé, glace d'une extrémit inée horizontale, dessus née, entre-cornes et
MATI	SI				
	0		STANDARDS	TECHNIQUES	DIMENSIONS
			2 PIECES	GLACE: TYPE:	
GROUPE	0		3 PIECES ®	SAPHIR O PLAT (OUV. 5-9 : 29,50 OUV. 6-12 : — EXT. 3-9 : 39,70
õ	0			Plexi Hesalite H.T.	EXT, 6-12 1
Ö) VE			METALLISATION	HAUT.S/GLACE : 15.25
	0	POSSITION COMMONHE	3 н.		ENTRE-CORNES: 20.00 LARG, INTEGRE:
	8	POSSITION PCLSSOIR	2 p.2h + 4 н.		EP. CADRAN : 0.40
CALIBRE	1045	MEDAILLON S/FOMD	FRAPPE &	GRAVE O PLAQUE GALVA	ANIQUE/LAMINE AUTRE REVET
FOUL	Lemania	300 divisions décalquées			2N16 O
		8		Tital .	\ "e+ 0
	e	MATIER	E REPERENCE	MBOUT	DESCRIPTION
LIGNE	SPEEDWASTER	BRACELE	1450 r	808 Bracelet acier maillons	massif à 3 rangs de
			GHATURES	DISTRIBUTION	EDITION EDITE
ġ.		SECT. ME	B.T.H. A.Q.	CREATION 1 FINANCES AGHATS HAS, 2 CATALOGUES	1 1. 1 2. 9.9.86
E TUDE NO.	î	DATE	28.8.8	Ass.Qualité 3 FOURNISSEUR	VISA VISA
3.				S.A.V. A DIR PRODUIT	Lale

OMEGA Speedmaster ST 376.0822 original Product Sheet (September 1986, OMEGA Museum Archives, with permission).



COMPONENTS

THE CALIBER

All the Holy Grail models are fitted with the caliber 1045.

It is a selfwinding movement with the functions of chronograph, 24 hours, day and date. We have not researched yet if it shows differences from that used in the 70s for the Mark 4.5 model.



Caliber 1045.



THE CASEBAND

The case of the Holy Grail was manufactured by Charles Rodolphe Spillmann & Co (engraved C.R.S. in the caseback) in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

It looks like the Speedmaster Professional Moonwatch case, but is thicker to accommodate the selfwinding movement. Furthermore, the right side is slightly different, with a better integration and protection of the pushers and the crown.

We have not observed any variations for this case.

On the pictures on the right, you can clearly see the difference between the Holy Grail case shape (on the left) and the Moonwatch case shape (on the right).

With its selfwinding movement, the Holy Grail doesn't need to be wound daily, allowing the crown to be more integrated and protected.







Difference between a Holy Grail (left) and a Moonwatch (right), and detail showing the integrated crown.





Features

- Asymmetrical caseband
- The right side integrates the pushers and the crown
- Lyre-shaped lugs
- Brushed sides and top, polished oblique surfaces

Dimensions

- A (between lugs): 20.0 mm
- B (excluding crown): 42.2 mm
- C (including crown): 43.0 mm
- D (bezel): 39.7 mm
- E (lug to lug): 48.4 mm
- F (thickness including caseback and glass): 15.5 mm

THE DIAL

There is only one original dial for the Speedmaster Holy Grail.

All these dials have been made by Singer & Cie SA in La Chaux-de-Fonds.

They have a perfect design that allows an excellent legibility with a lot of information:

- it has 3 subdials (at 12 o'clock: the 0-24 hours indication; at 9 o'clock: the small seconds; and at 6 o'clock: the hours counter for the chronograph),
- it has 2 apertures for the days and dates at 3 o'clock,
- the Ω logo, OMEGA and Speedmaster AUTOMATIC inscriptions are figured at 3 o'clock,
- the main hour indexes are associated with a number indicating the minutes, except 15, 30, 45 and 60,
- the SWISS MADE inscription is painted above the minute scale.

We have no explanation for the absence of Ts (usually flanking SWISS MADE), meant to indicate the presence of tritium on the dial. We have observed the same incoherency on other dials from the 70s or 80s.



Speedmaster ST 376.0822.

Main Features

- Luminous index at 3 o'clock
- Close box round the day / date apertures
- No 1/5th seconds scale markers on the dial (it is on the glass ring)
- Short and wide "S" of Speedmaster
- Presence of the "10" under the index at 2 o'clock



Details of the Speedmaster ST 376.0822 original dial.

Current service dial

There is one current service dial for the Speedmaster Holy Grail.

The actual version (OMEGA reference 064WJ1868501), is quite difficult to distinguish from the original, because the printing is nearly 100% identical.

One might observe less space between the main numbers and the main indexes, and there are no or very light concentric circles in the subdials.

The most important difference is the luminova (white) on the indexes for the service parts and tritium (yellowish) on the original dial.

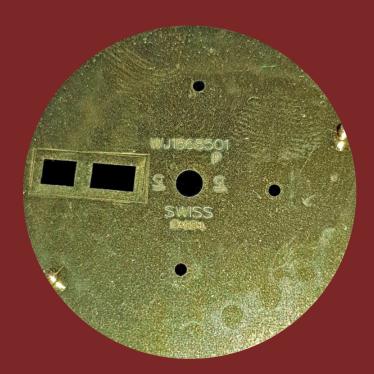
The inscriptions on the back of the dial are different from the original version.



Detail of the current service dial package.



Holy Grail current service dial (front).



Holy Grail current service dial (back).



Example of a Mark 4.5 service dial, not correct for the Speedmaster Holy Grail.



Example of a Mark 4.5 service dial, not correct for the Speedmaster Holy Grail.

Speedmaster Mark 4.5 dials

Sometimes the dials originally intended for the Mark 4.5 models (reference ST 176.0012) are used as a replacement for the Holy Grail.

This is not an original configuration.

These Mark 4.5 dials (actually there are a few types of them, original or service) can be identified immediately thanks to:

- the lack of the "10" under the index at 2 o'clock,
- . the presence of a seconds track,
- the line around the day-date function is missing on the right side,
- some of them have a gray zone in the subdial at 12 o'clock.

THE BEZEL

Two original bezels (1)

As for the Moonwatch, the bezel shows a black tachymeter located outside the dial. It consists of a support and an insert or ring of aluminum (according to OMEGA literature).

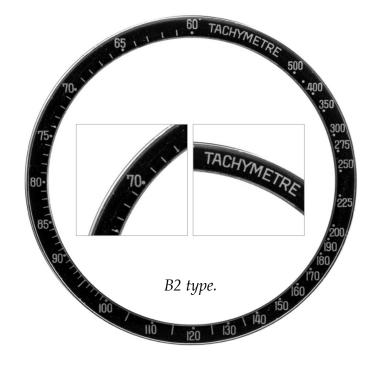
It was commonly admitted that only one type of bezel was originally fitted on the Holy Grail (which correspond to the B2 type in the MOONWATCH ONLY nomenclature). However, our research shows that a second version (identified as B4) is systematically found on late production Holy Grails.

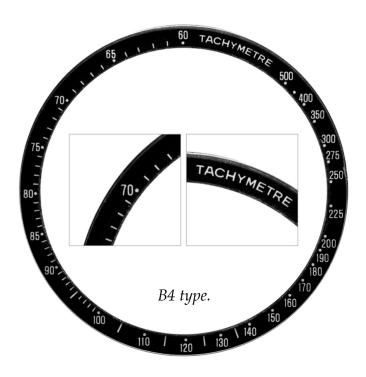
B2. Dot Close To 70 - Narrow C

- . March 1987 to February 1988
- No accent in TACHYMETRE
- Tall fonts
- "C" stretched and closed
- "7" with serif

B4. Dot Close To 70 - Wide C

- From February 1988
- No accent in TACHYMETRE
- Small fonts
- "C" round and open
- "7" without serif





⁽¹⁾ There is no specific service bezel for the Holy Grail. Therefore the modern ones of the Moonwatch (with an accent on the "È" of TACHYMÈTRE, B5 or B6 type in the MOONWATCH ONLY nomenclature) can be used.

It might sound astonishing that the type B4 was used for the Holy Grail while it appeared only in 1990 on the Moonwatch. We have not found any reason for this except that the Holy Grail is NOT a Moonwatch.

We conducted a specific research in order to validate this observation.

The table presented on the right lists 50 ST 376.0822 identified by their serial number (S/N), for which we have a front picture and the production date.

It is ordered by production date and one can clearly see that models produced in 1987 and up to 9 February 1988 have the type B2 bezel, whereas all models produced at a later date have a type B4 bezel.

It is likely that some late Holy Grails have had their bezel replaced with a B2 unfortunately, but at this point, we have not observed any exception to this. Note in this table that the serial numbers are not correlated with the production date.

Block 1 - Type B2

Block 2 - Type B4

S/N	Delivery Date	Bezel
48'231'53X	24/03/1987	B2
48'231'56X	24/03/1987	B2
48'231'62X	24/03/1987	B2
48'231'52X	07/04/1987	B2
48'231'69X	19/05/1987	B2
48'231'90X	19/05/1987	B2
48'231'06X	21/05/1987	B2
48'231'65X	21/05/1987	B2
48'231'67X	21/05/1987	B2
48'231'97X	26/05/1987	B2
48'231'78X	07/07/1987	B2
48'231'10X	26/08/1987	B2
48'233'93X	14/10/1987	B2
48'231'24X	20/10/1987	B2
48'233'85X	20/10/1987	B2
48'233'9XX	20/10/1987	B2
48'231'47X	21/10/1987	B2
48'231'48X	22/10/1987	B2
48'231'46X	26/10/1987	B2
48'231'46X	26/10/1987	B2
48'231'79X	26/10/1987	B2
48'231'79X	26/10/1987	B2
48'231'04X	27/10/1987	B2
48'233'95X	27/10/1987	B2
48'233'83X	09/02/1988	B2
48'233'67X	19/02/1988	B4

48'233'76X	19/02/1988	B4
48'233'79X	19/02/1988	B4
48'233'70X	25/02/1988	B4
48'233'56X	17/03/1988	B4
48'233'50X	25/03/1988	B4
48'233'23X	28/03/1988	B4
48'233'68X	19/04/1988	B4
48'233'68X	19/04/1988	B4
48'233'44X	26/04/1988	B4
48'233'44X	26/04/1988	B4
48'233'28X	27/04/1988	B4
48'233'39X	27/04/1988	B4
48'233'39X	27/04/1988	B4
48'233'05X	26/05/1988	В4
48'233'05X	26/05/1988	B4
48'233'22X	26/05/1988	B4
48'233'24X	26/05/1988	B4
48'233'29X	06/06/1988	B4
48'233'47X	22/06/1988	B4
48'233'43X	05/07/1988	B4
48'233'01X	18/07/1988	В4
48'233'04X	18/07/1988	B4
48'233'40X	01/11/1988	B4
48'233'40X	22/11/1988	B4

THE HANDS

Original hands (tritium)

There is only one original configuration for the steel ST 376.0822 Holy Grail model. All seven hands are white.

- The hours and minutes hands are pointed baton hands with a long lume track.
- The small seconds hand is a standard pointed baton.
- The chronograph seconds hand has the shape of the corresponding classic Moonwatch (flat counterweight and lozenge-shaped insert).
- The chronograph minutes hand has a particular hand with a point in the shape of an airplane.
- The chronograph hours hand is a standard pointed baton.
- The 24-hour hand is triangular with lume).

Service hands (luminova)

It seems that the hands of the Speed-master Mark 4 or Mark 4.5 have been used also as replacement hands for the Holy Grail.

- The hours hand is broader.
- The hours and minutes hands have a shorter groove, and are less pointed.
- The chronographe seconds hand may have the lozenge-shaped insert (similar to the Mark 4) or not (as pictured, similar to the Mark 4.5).



Speedmaster Mark 4.5 hands, not correct for the Speedmaster Holy Grail.



Speedmaster ST 376.0822 with original hands.

THE CASEBACK

Outside engravings

No engraving surrounds the central medallion, which shows the Speedmaster inscription, the seahorse and the Ω logo.

Inside engravings

- . Ω logo and OMEGA WATCH CO in a triangle
- FAB. SUISSE
- SWISS MADE
- ACIER INOXYDABLE
- ST 376 0822
- . C.R.S.





Speedmaster ST 376.0822 caseback.



THE CROWN AND THE PUSHERS

As far as we know, there is only one original type for each of them.

As described in the Caseband chapter, crown and pushers are more integrated compared to the Moonwatch.

Dimensions

• Crown's diameter: 6.5 mm

• Crown's height: 2.7 mm

• Pushers' diameter: 5.0 mm

• Pushers' height: 3.5 mm





Speedmaster ST 376.0822 crown and pushers.

THE GLASS

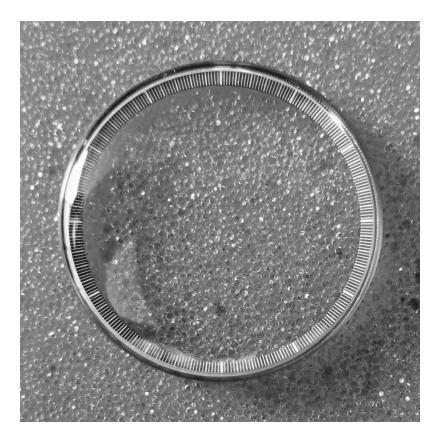
The glass is always in hesalite.

Its main difference compared to all other OMEGA hesalite glasses is that its rehaut (ring) includes a seconds scale showing markers for 1/5th of a second.

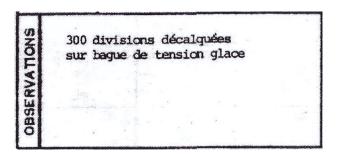
If the utility of this feature is quite limited, it produces at least a spectacular aesthetic effect, giving the illusion of an increased dial surface.

Many Speedmasters from the 1980s have a specific hesalite glass with no Ω logo in the center. We have no explanation at this stage about this peculiarity.

We have observed many original Holy Grail models fitted with this kind of glass, but there is no document formalizing this specific feature.



Detail of the seconds scale on the glass ring.



Detail of the OMEGA Product Sheet mentioning the 300 divisions on the glass ring.

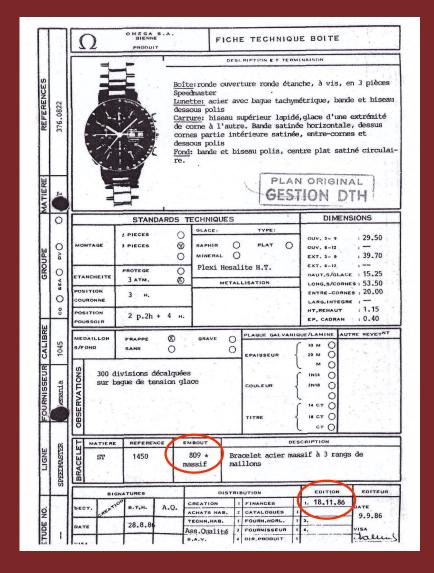
THE BRACELET

There is only one original bracelet for the Speedmaster Holy Grail, the reference 1450.

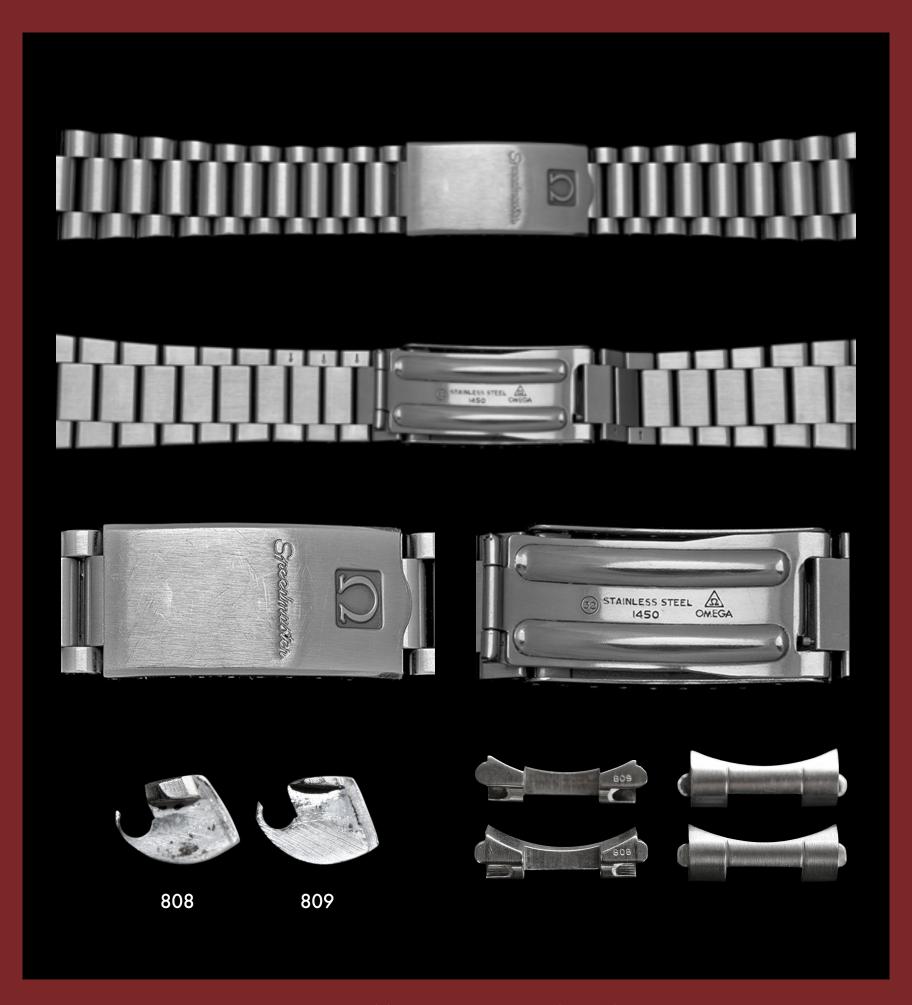
On September 9, 1986, a first datasheet for the case of ST 376.0822 was produced by OMEGA. An updated version of this document, dated November 18, 1986 shows only one difference: the 808 end links have been replaced by the 809.

We could then imagine that the 808, designed for the Moonwatch case, underwent a structural modification to better fit the Holy Grail case. The central part of the 809 end link is larger and the small ledges (holding the 809 engraving) are thinner.

We could logically conclude that the 809 end links indicated in the updated datasheet would correspond to the version used in production. However, as a significant number of Holy Grails have the 808 end links, it is possible that both versions were installed on the production models.



OMEGA Speedmaster ST 376.0822 updated Product Sheet (November 1986), showing 809 endlinks instead of 808 (OMEGA Museum Archives, with permission).



Bracelet 1450 and differences between 808 and 809 endlinks.

THE ACCESSORIES

It is not always easy to determine precisely what kind of boxes were used for a specific vintage model, because neither clients nor dealers attached too much importance to those details at that time.

However, we have observed only two different types of boxes for the Holy Grail (see pictures opposite). Based on our observations, they seem to be the typical ones for this model.

Maybe some other boxes from the 1980s have been delivered with this watch, but we invite the readers to be very cautious in case of more recent boxes (typically the standard red imitation leather box from the 1990s) which can not be original.

Regarding the documents, one should find:

- the typical burgundy booklet from the 1980s, with the Ω OMEGA INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEE mention on the cover (the last page has to be filled in by the retailer, and the country code is important and must be coherent with the country of delivery of the watch),
- the instruction manual for the caliber 1045 (it seems that all the manuals indicate the Mark V model on the cover).

Typical OMEGA box from the 1990s, not correct for the Speedmaster Holy Grail.







PRODUCTION & STATISTICS

2'000 HOLY GRAILS

For the first time, accurate production figures can be unveiled: we can definitely state that 2'000 pieces have been produced.

Main figures

- Serial numbers are in 2 blocks of 1'000 watches: 48.231.xxx and 48.233.xxx.
- 41.5% of the production was sold to Germany, 24% to Italy, 15% to Switzerland, and 19.5% to the Rest of the World.
- Only 1 (ONE!) was delivered to the USA, which can now easily explain why it took so long to Chuck Maddox to find one. One can bet that if more were sold in the USA at the time, it would never have received its nickname "Grail".
- The first examples were delivered in Germany on March 19, 1987 and the last on November 22, 1988 in Canada.
- The reference ST 176.0822 PIC 3340 B exists. It corresponds to the version sold with a leather band. We found records for 51 of them: 50 sold to Italy and 1 to Austria. Unfortunately data are missing, but we are convinced that there are more ST 176.0822 examples.
- 1'800 watches have been produced in steel, and 200 in steel and gold.

Production figures

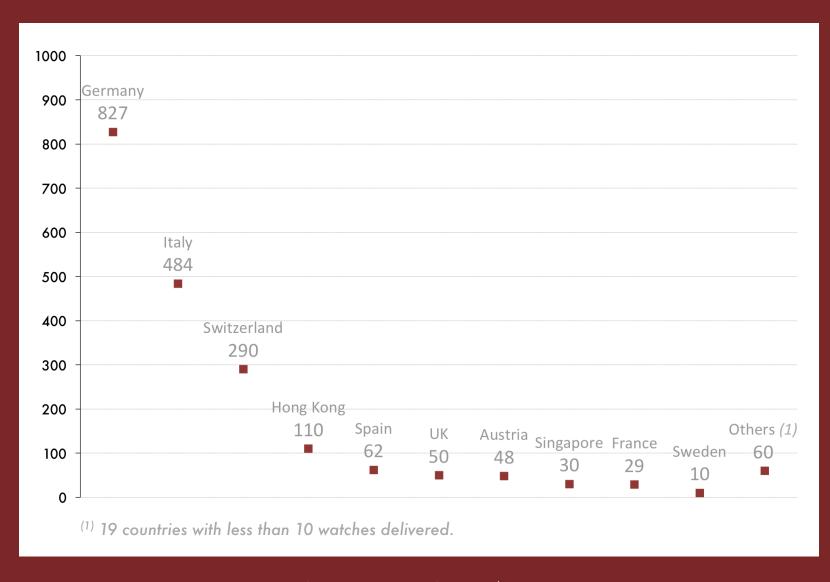
2′000 watches 1′800 steel 200 steel & gold

48.231.xxx (1'000) 48.233.xxx (1'000) March 1987 - November 1988

Volume

S/N blocks

Deliveries



Speedmaster Holy Grail deliveries / countries.



THE ULTRA HOLY GRAIL

STEEL AND GOLD MODELS

The study of the Holy Grail production leads us to introduce a very rare, almost unknown version of the Holy Grail, that has been destined to Italy only: a dual-tone steel and gold edition, with the engraving xxx/200 on the caseback, meaning that it was produced in 200 numbered copies.

The Steel & Gold Holy Grails we have observed have all been delivered in 1988, toward the end of the production of the 2'000 copies. They were referenced by OMEGA as DA 176.0822 ("DA" is the code for 18ct gold and steel models), although "ST" (for steel) is indicated on their invoices, as well as engraved inside their casebacks. It is likely that all of them have been sold on a leather band, probably with reference ST 176.0822, but again data are missing in the OMEGA archives to certify that.

To add to the mystery, a few known examples are reported in the OMEGA archives as standard steel ST 376.0822.

(1) Note that the position and alignment of engraving are sometimes not perfect and do not correspond to OMEGA standards: actually the engraving was made locally in Italy and not in Bienne.

It is known that these models were all sold to Italy and it is interesting to note that all the watches we have observed so far have an English calendar.

This bicolor version is visually very close to the Speedmaster Professional Moonwatch "Italy Special - Black & Gold", produced in two series of 500 numbered copies in 1987 and 1988 exclusively for Italy too. Do these two models share a similar genesis? This is what we are going to see in the forthcoming history next page, unveiled for the first time.

Differences between the Steel & Gold (DA 176.0822) and the standard (ST 376.0822) versions

- Gold subdials
- Gold line around the day / date windows
- Black small hands
- Solid gold bezel (B3 type, MOON-WATCH ONLY nomenclature)
- Gold plated pushers and crown
- Engraving xxx/200 on the caseback bevel (1)



Speedmaster Holy Grail Steel & Gold.



AN ITALIAN STORY

We have been lucky enough to meet the Italian watchmaker who was responsible for the assembling of these particular Steel & Gold Holy Grails in the 1980s.

For the very first time, we are able to tell the true story about this almost forgotten edition, and it is also extremely interesting for a better understanding about how these things used to work at that time.

The Italian market was covered by SMH Italia (the Italian subsidiary of the SMH Group, who became the Swatch Group in 1998). That is the reason why many local marketing initiatives were suggested by the Sales Department of SMH Italia.

Those ideas were proposed to the Headquarters in Switzerland, and once accepted, the whole execution was then operated and organized directly in Italy by SMH Italia.

In the mid 1980s, the Italian market (and maybe the international market too) was not so easy for the Speedmaster, and the local Sales Director was continuously searching for new ideas in order to enhance the sales.

He proposed a few series of steel and gold watches based on the standard steel models but fitted with:

- specific black and gold dials,
- specific black small hands (improving the legibility on the gold subdials),
- solid gold bezels and gold plated crowns and pushers.

This same idea was applied to three editions:

- 2 identical series of Moonwatches (the first one numbered 1 to 500, and the second one A1 to A500), assembled from July 1987 to July 1988,
- 1 series of Holy Grails (numbered 1 to 200), assembled in March and July 1988.

All these watches were delivered by OMEGA to SMH Italia as standard steel versions. They were then personalized locally by an Italian watchmaker, who was responsible for:

- replacing the standard dials, hands, bezels, crowns, and pushers by the specific ones (those parts being sent separately by OMEGA),
- managing the numbering of the watches (actually they were not engraved by the watchmaker but by another local supplier).

Interesting information is that the watches arrived in Italy without any bracelet. A specific leather band was fitted locally.

We are extremely grateful to this Italian watchmaker for having shared his story with us. This is a major contribution to the understanding of these previously mysterious series of steel and gold Speedmasters and in particular of the 200 copies of this highly sought-after "Ultra Holy Grail".



Above: Speedmaster Moonwatch Italy Special. Below: Speedmaster Steel & Gold Holy Grail.



The first person who started serious research about this model was Chuck Maddox.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks go to the OMEGA Museum (Petros, Alain, Charles and David) for their precious help during our research.

We were extremely happy to learn the Italian stories from Sebastiano and Andrea, and we would like to thank them sincerely for their kindness. Thanks also to Grégoire for the pictures of his beautiful Ultra Holy Grail.

We are very grateful to Chuck Maddox for all the work he has done on the Speed-master subject, and we would like to mention also our friend Pascal who has always been a Holy Grail true enthusiast and expert.

The magnificent watch photos are the work of Luca, our friend and talented photographer to whom we offer our deepest thanks.

A special thought for our friends and their unfailing support.

To all, our heartfelt appreciation.

- WATCH BOOKS ONLY -

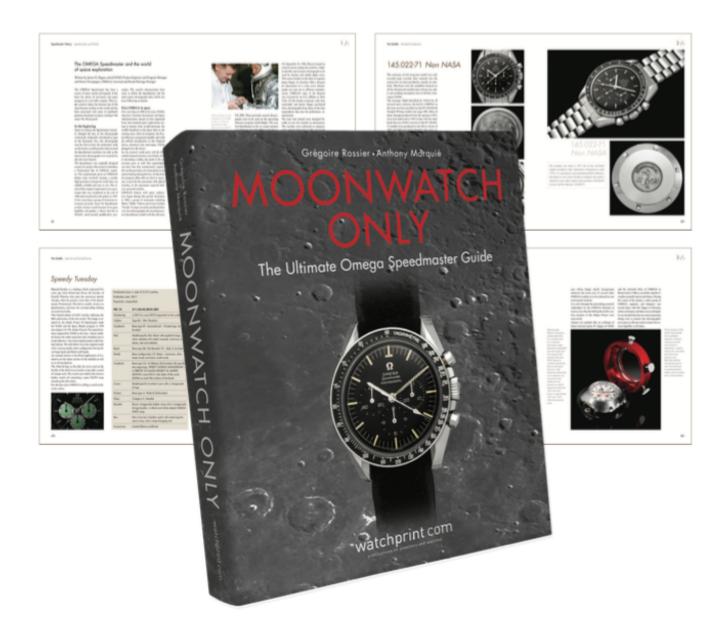
From the same authors

MOONWATCH ONLY, The Ultimate Omega Speedmaster Guide

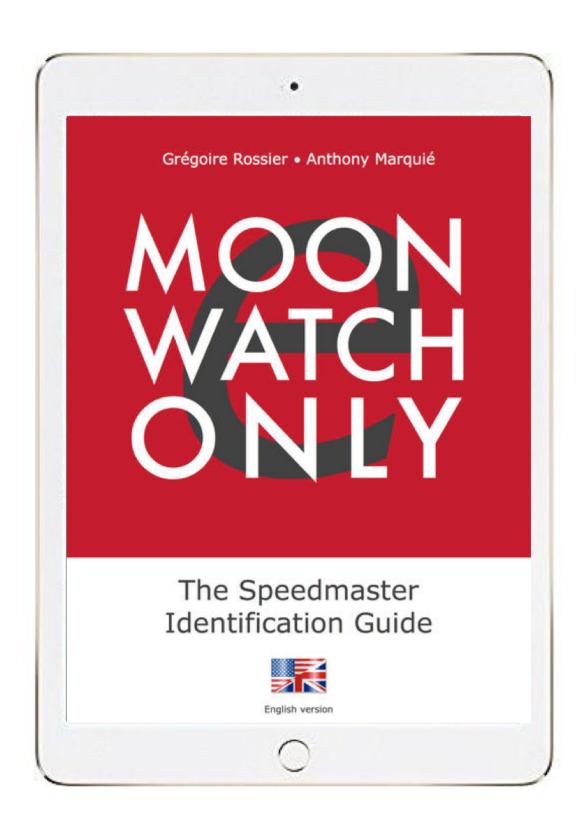
The reference work for this model (third edition).

598 pages, hardcover, more than 1'000 illustrations, 25×30.7 cm.

ISBN: 978-2-940506-30-9.









eMOONWATCH ONLY, The Speedmaster Identification Guide

In addition to the original book, the perfect mobile guide.

Available on the iBooks Store.

From the same authors

FLIGHTMASTER ONLY, The OMEGA Pilot's Watch

224 pages, hardcover, 448 illustrations, 25 x 30.7 cm.

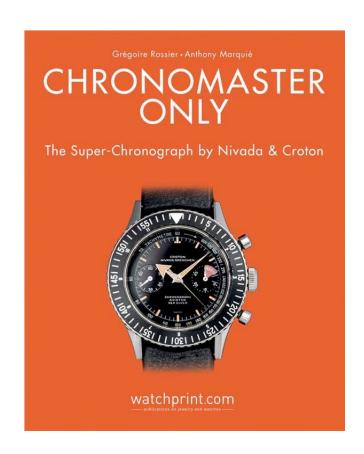
ISBN: 978-2-940506-20-0.

CHRONOMASTER ONLY, The Super-Chronograph by Nivada & Croton

288 pages, hardcover, more than 1'000 illustrations, 25 x 30.7 cm.

ISBN: 978-2-940506-25-5.





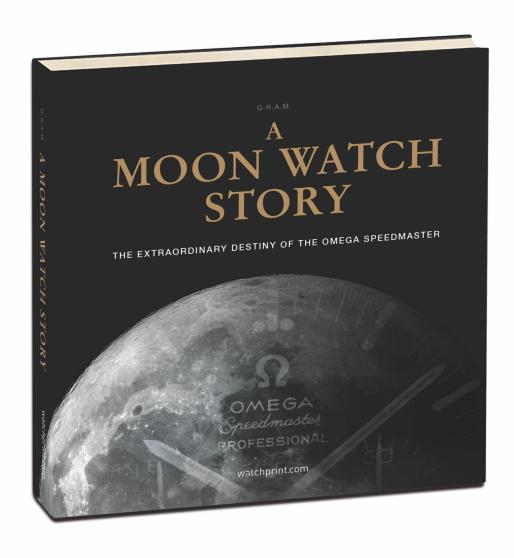


A MOON WATCH STORY

The Extraordinary Destiny of the OMEGA Speedmaster

224 pages, hardcover, 276 illustrations, $22 \times 22 \text{ cm}$.

ISBN: 978-2-940506-33-0.





Issue #1: SPEEDMASTER 125 ONLY

Issue #2: HOLY GRAIL ONLY



Visit our website

www.watchbooksonly.com