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European Travel Report (Part II) - The Omega Museum!

Posted By: **Don Aldo**

Date: **February 4, 2007, 12:28 p.m. PST**

I love visiting Europe whenever I can. I always wish I could bring back the food, the drink, and the architecture with me... but damned airlines would charge me a fee for the extra weight. But if I were to choose where I could live on the old continent, it wouldn't be England, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, etc. etc.... no, it would have to be... the OMEGA MUSEUM!!!

If you're familiar with the expression "I felt like a kid in a candy store.", then how about "I felt like a kid in a candy *factory* and I indulged in very candy I'd ever hope to eat." While not terribly accurate, it does come closer to describing my experience at... the OMEGA MUSEUM!!!

As some of you know, I'm a self confessed Lemaniac and chrono-nerd so the photos I took just sort of, maybe, kind of, in a way, reflect that.

So without any further ado, here are the photos.

Surprise surprise, here's a Lemania built Omega calibre 33.3:



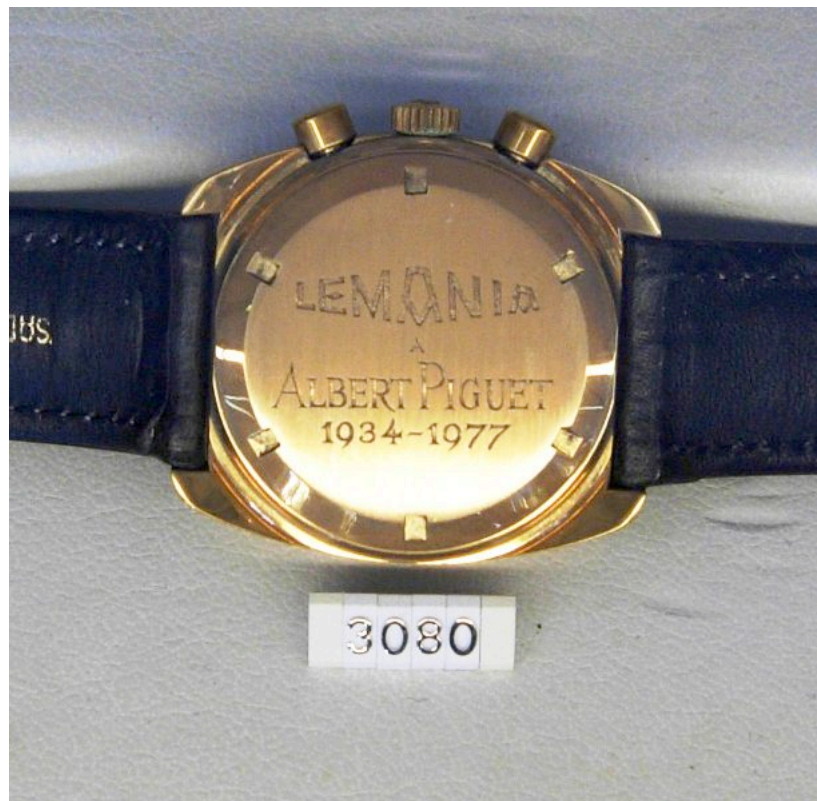
Here are several variants on the 24 size Omega-signed Lemania calibres:



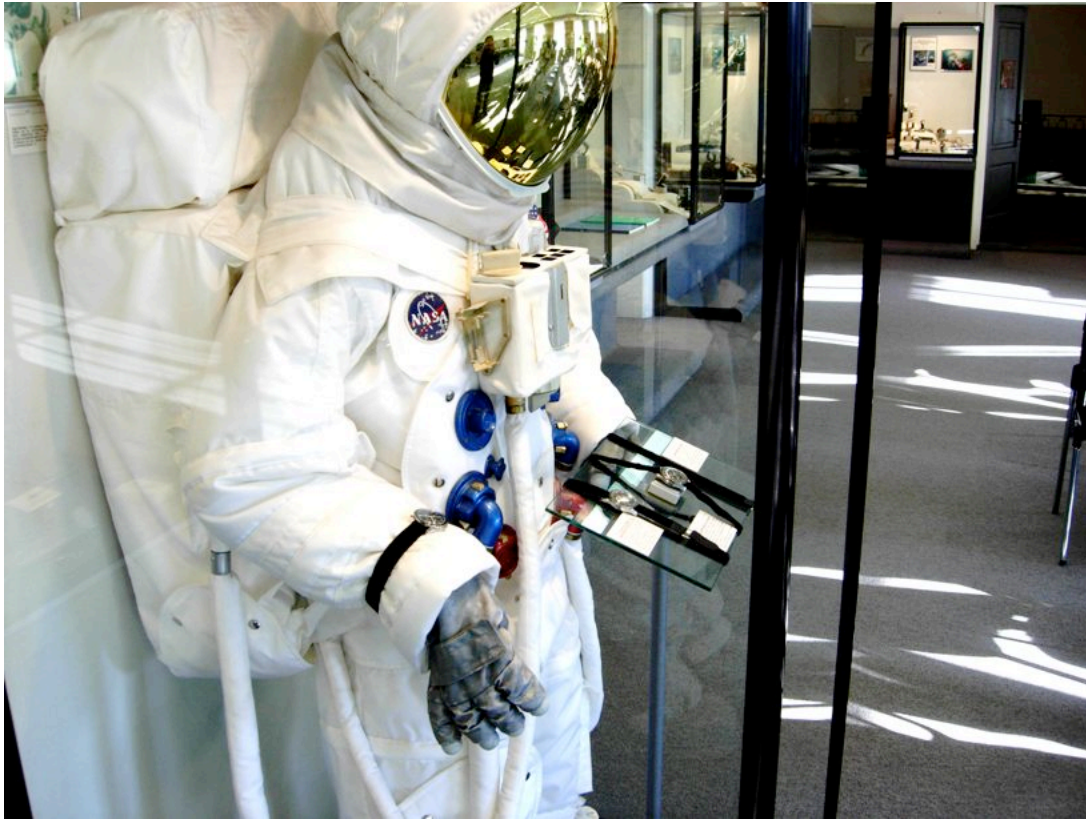
Here's an example of how not to ship your Speedmaster (mm-hm... I mean, how not to ship a *cosmonaut's* Speedmaster):



When I asked Herr Schneider why this inscription was on this caseback, I got a blank stare. Therefore, it is my assumption that this likely was a retirement gift for Mr. Albert Piguet from the Lemania watch company. As some of you know, Mr. Piguet helped design some of the calibres we know and love including the Lemania cal. 27CH (or Omega cal. 321).



I'd never seen a spacesuit before!!



But I'd seen that watch before!



The first watch in space... well not really... but close. The watch on the left is like the one that astronaut Walter Schirra wore in 1962 during the Mercury 8 mission. How do I know that this isn't Schirra's watch? The text, written in French, mentions how the real watch is actually being exhibited at the Space Center in Houston until

2005. I know, we're 2007, so is this still the replacement watch or is it really Schirra's? My people are working on it and I'll let you know asap, on the double.

The French language text also mentions how the watch was privately purchased by Schirra (therefore, not issued by NASA).

The watch on the right was worn by Richard Gordon on his Apollo XII mission.



The first Omega wrist chrono! Produced in 1913 (look out for the pusher at 6 o'clock).



I like this one, I like it a lot. This watch was worn by commanding officers and pilots serving under Italian Air Marshal Italo Balbo (likely on their transatlantic flights).



Aircraft chrono used in the 24 planes that Italo Balbo used in his famous Rome-Chicago flight in 1933 to commemorate Mussolini's 10th year in power.



The display of submersible watches:



Nice chrono, and it beats the modern Breitlings in terms of legibility (ooh, low blow, low blow!):



Various chronos, the ones at the top right are likely equipped with cal. 321 movements, methinks.



Vintage chronos and I have no idea which calibre the movements happen to be (likely either the cal. 321 or 33.3)



This one made me laugh. It's one of those modern-converted pocket to wrist watches. I pointed this out to Herr Schneider – that while the movement is likely completely authentic, the case dial and hands aren't. He shrugged and said "maybe". I wonder if that information will have any impact (likely not, but my people are also working on this one).



Some Lemania bling bling! A 24 size Lemania rattrapante movement (signed "Omega" of course).



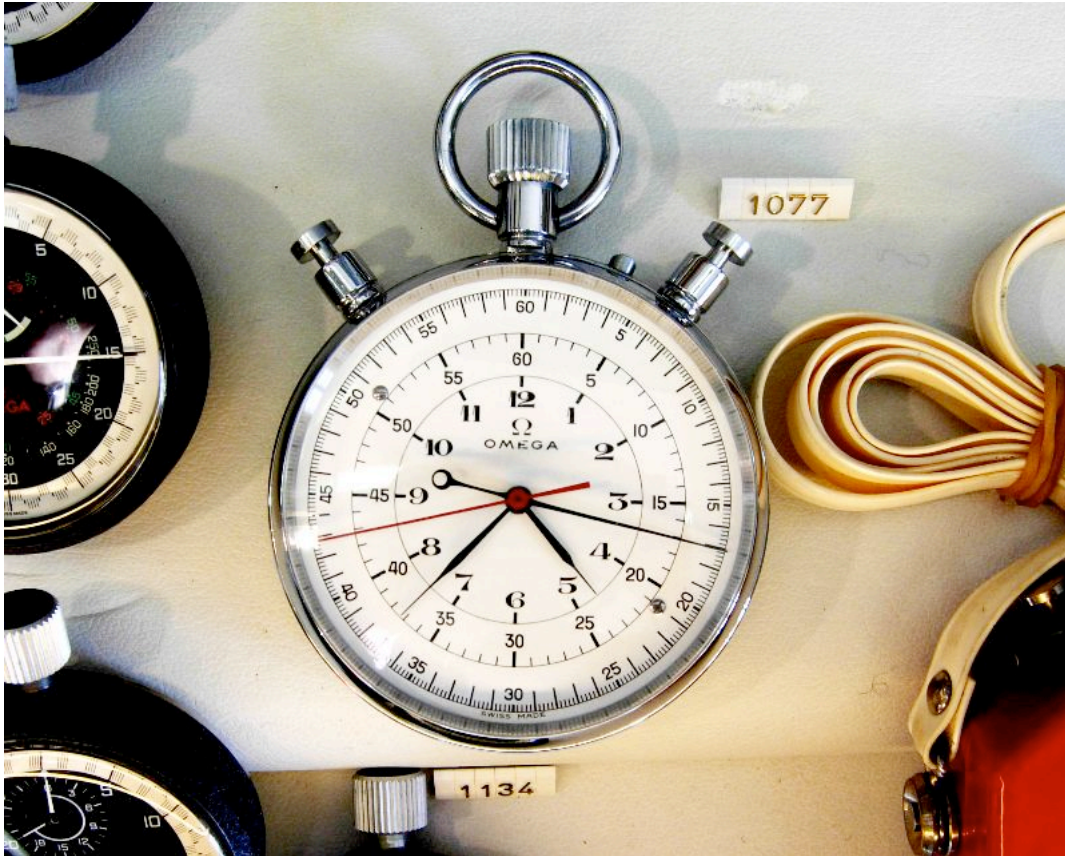
Like I said, a kid in a candy factory.



More 24 size chrono fun!



Bring it on!



As far as I know, this particular timepiece houses a 24 size movement. Now the standard size for a watch that houses a 24 size movement is roughly 65mm. This timepiece is about the size of a wall clock. As far as I know, this type of Lemania chrono was used by the Italian navy in the 1930s/40s.



If I could have fit this machine in my bag, I would have.



1976 Olympic 24 size timer, in that year the Olympics were held in my hometown as well as my girlfriend's - neat coincidence.



Drool.



I don't know what this was used for. I should have looked it up in one of the printed guides, but I was so busy taking photos for you! In any case, I like it.



As per the museum, this is the largest Omega watch ever made:



BTW, almost every Omega calibre ever produced is on display. Here are a few:



Speedmaster variants (part 1)



Speedmaster variants (part 2)



I was very surprised to see this particular (and supposedly issued) wrist timer. No info was given on any caseback markings of any kind. Has anyone ever seen an example of this watch before? It houses a modified Lemania cal. 15CHT movement... how do I know this? I have an unsigned version of the same timepiece.



Here's mine:



And here's the movement:



Meanwhile, at the museum.... Here's their RAF 53 Omega, which is also pictured on their website... but here it is without sexy lighting and Photoshop touch-ups:



Here's a 6B/159 or HS/18 Omega (on a god awful strap!):



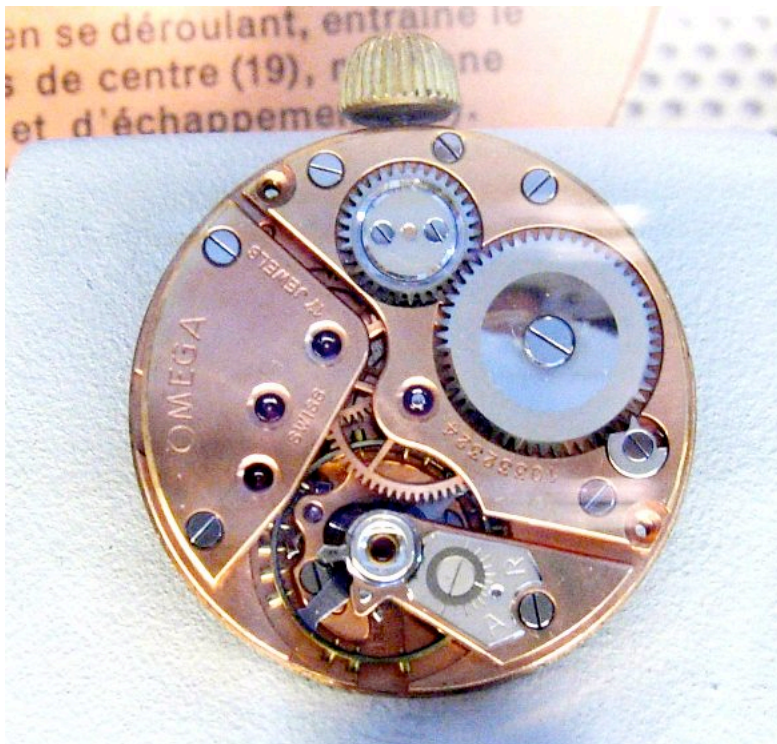
I like wristlets.



Railmaster!



30T2 RG:



Here's a modern yet fugly bling-bling remake of the 24 size rattrapante chronos (all it's missing is a diamond encrusted bezel):



On the left is what is likely a mini camera clock, at centre is a beautiful 1920s/30s pilot watch and at the bottom right is another pilot watch... I'm not sure whether this example is original or whether it's the modern remake...methinks it's original:



Mark V non-lum British military pilot's pocket watch:



A wall of mini Olympic posters:



If you're traveling to, or live in, the old continent do try and make a stop at the Omega Museum if you get the chance. You need to set up an appointment ahead of time. You won't regret it. Stay tuned for Part III of the series when the Don takes you to - Paris! It may be the city of love, but there's also room for... the watch lover!

Messages In This Thread

- **European Travel Report (Part II) - The Omega Museum!** Don Aldo on February 4, 2007, 12:28 p.m. PST
 - [Great report. I too love that museum \(nt\)](#) Foggy on February 4, 2007, 12:46 p.m. PST
 - [Great stuff - many thanks Donald \(nt\)](#) DavidE on February 4, 2007, 1:06 p.m. PST
 - [Fantastic eyeeful. Thanks. \(nt\)](#) Tony on February 4, 2007, 1:10 p.m. PST
 - [Thanks for the great post! \(nt\)](#) cj610 on February 4, 2007, 1:16 p.m. PST
 - [First Omega chrono \(image\)](#) ghost.dog on February 4, 2007, 1:32 p.m. PST
 - [They also had this chrono... \(image\)](#) Don Aldo on February 4, 2007, 1:41 p.m. PST
 - [Wonderful pics, Don!](#) David Woo on February 4, 2007, 2:06 p.m. PST
 - [Thanks David, I didn't see a Speedmaster book for sale...](#) Don Aldo on February 4, 2007, 2:31 p.m. PST
 - [here's the scoop...](#) David Woo on February 4, 2007, 4:19 p.m. PST
 - [thx! about that tape-covered speedy >>> \(image\)](#) walter on February 4, 2007, 2:18 p.m. PST
 - [LOL! Great info! Another collector has posted an article on the Omega Museum...](#) Don Aldo on February 4, 2007, 2:45 p.m. PST
 - [For years I believed the story about the U.S. space pen and the Russian pencil, but...](#) Jonney on February 4, 2007, 7:05 p.m. PST
 - [Indeed - even the Fisher "Space Pen" was developed without NASA funding](#) Rrryan on February 4, 2007, 10:04 p.m. PST
 - [great reading, don ! i know, how you feel, visited it 3 times ; last time guided by Mr. Diethelm.\(more\).....](#) watchyouwant on February 4, 2007, 3:48 p.m. PST
 - [Mr. Diethelm authenticated a couple of pieces for me...](#) David Woo on February 4, 2007, 4:31 p.m. PST
 - [Nice watches, Achim. If I could make my way into the Museum's storage room, I think they would have to pry me out! :\) \(nt\)](#) Don Aldo on February 5, 2007, 3:40 a.m. PST
 - [WOW. Omega heaven. Great report Don. \(nt\)](#) JoeW on February 4, 2007, 4:10 p.m. PST
 - [Gorgeous Balbometer.](#) Biggles on February 4, 2007, 4:53 p.m. PST
 - [That answered one question for me...](#) George W. Olney on February 4, 2007, 7:28 p.m. PST
 - [thnx don,just fascinating,its like a dream come true. \(nt\)](#) manish on February 4, 2007, 9:19 p.m. PST
 - [Would take that with a grain of salt](#) Rrryan on February 4, 2007, 10:08 p.m. PST
 - [Thank you! Really enjoyed your post \(nt\)](#) shepcs on February 4, 2007, 11:25 p.m. PST
 - [Wonderful report Don. \(nt\)](#) Hal in London on February 5, 2007, 10:55 a.m. PST
 - [Don, GREAT shots... Would you mind me archiving/hosting your report on my site?](#) Chicagoland Chuck Maddox on February 5, 2007, 11:47 a.m. PST

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