

Counterfeit Constellation Cases

There are a number of ways in which to assess whether a stainless steel Constellation case is genuine or counterfeit. Depending on the case number, there will be specific features against which you can match a suspect case to the genuine article.

The most commonly counterfeited stainless steel cases are 14900, 167.005 and 168.005. In this short essay, the dog leg lugged 14900 (earliest version of this style) and 167.005 will be reviewed.

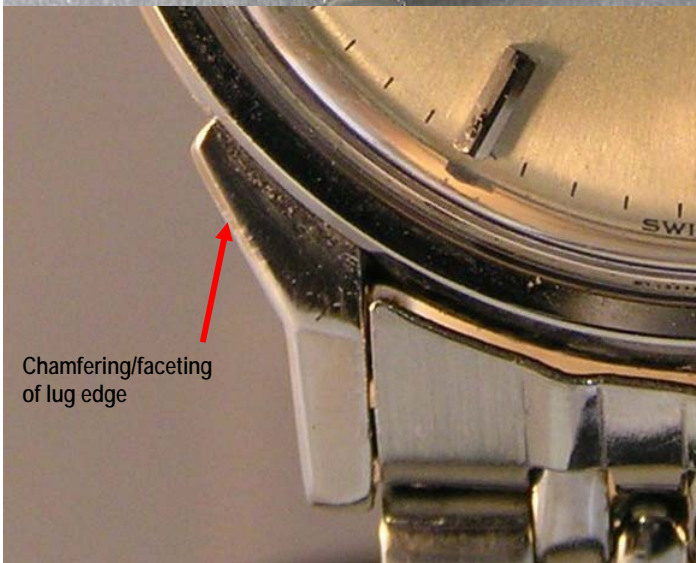
The case 167.005 opposite is a fake case with a fake dial. The correct case for a mid-500 date series should be 168.005, but the first thing a keen eye will notice on this case is the absence of faceting between the upper parts of the lugs and the outer sides of the lugs. Even over-polished lugs generally show some remnants of chamfering or faceting.

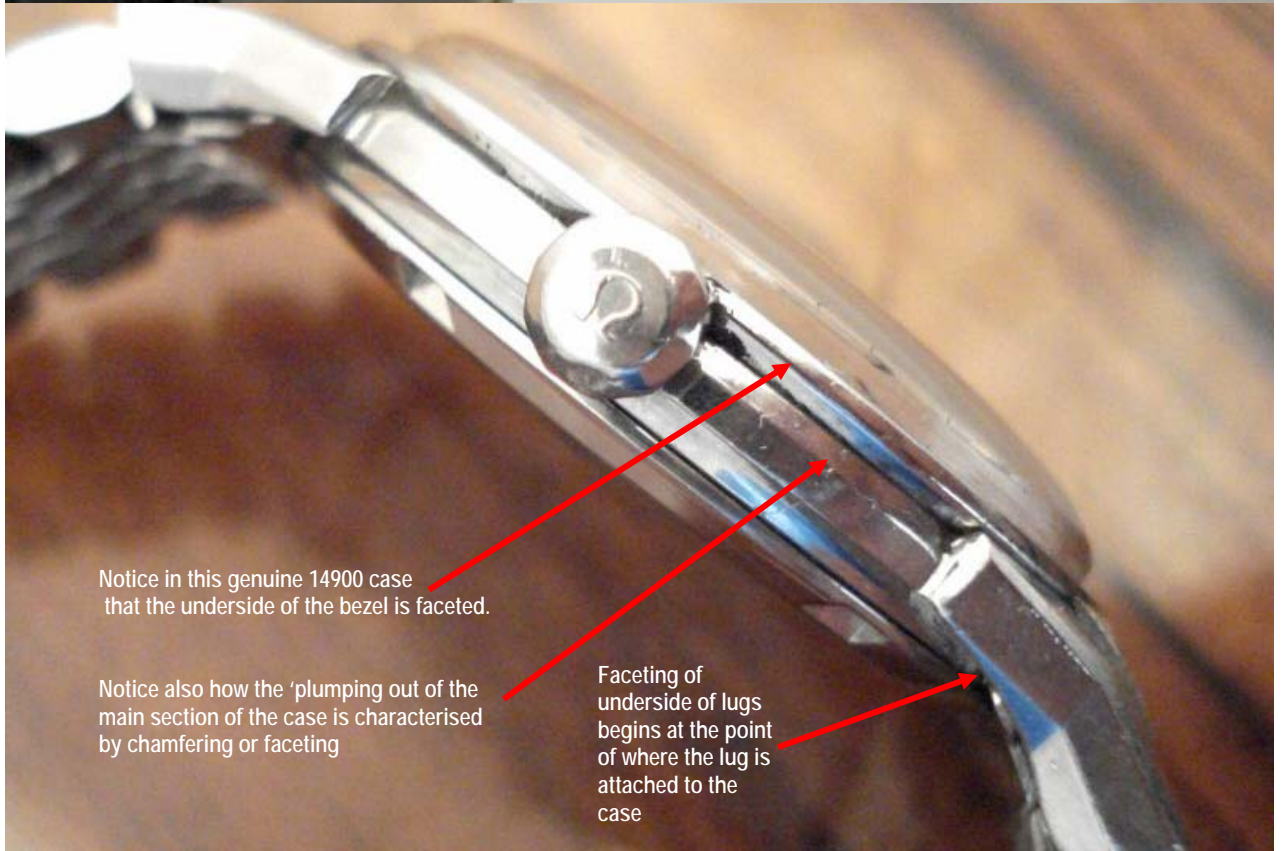
The side view of the case clearly shows a sharp angle at the point where the upper part of the lug meets the side of the lug. This view also shows a lack of chamfering or tapering on the underside of the outer lug. The taper on a genuine case starts at the point underside where the lugs meet the case and continues to the end of the lugs. In the example opposite, the outer lugs should appear to fall away in an angle but they are the same single plane all the way to the underside edge.

In a genuine case, when you position the watch 12 O'clock up and 6 O'clock down (or vice-versa) you will notice that the shape of the lugs look vaguely triangular.

Another sign of a counterfeit case is the shape of the bezel. In many examples of fake 14900 and 167.005 cases I have seen, the bezel is rounded. Compare the bezel shape in pictures 1 and 2 with picture 3 which shows a close-up of both the faceting of the lug and the bezel.

In the genuine case 168.005 seen opposite you will notice a relatively sharp angle to the outer diameter of the bezel. Importantly, notice that the bezel is flat and not rounded.





An important point to remember is that the distinctions made above *refer only to stainless steel cases*. Gold capped case numbers 14900, 14902 and 168.005 for example (as shown overleaf) do not have heavily faceted undersides of the lugs whereas solid gold examples do, so please do not think that case designs can be generalised across all models and metal finishes. The point to remember is that in counterfeit cases faithfulness to original design varies and the trick is to find those discrepancies.



Case 168.005 with dog legged lugs – correctly showing no under-lug faceting

In many instances the inner case back also is able to be compared with genuine case backs and sizeable differences noted in the quality of the finishing. In the example below left we see very poor perlagging and deeply etched machine marks on the surface of the case back. This is not to Omega standards.

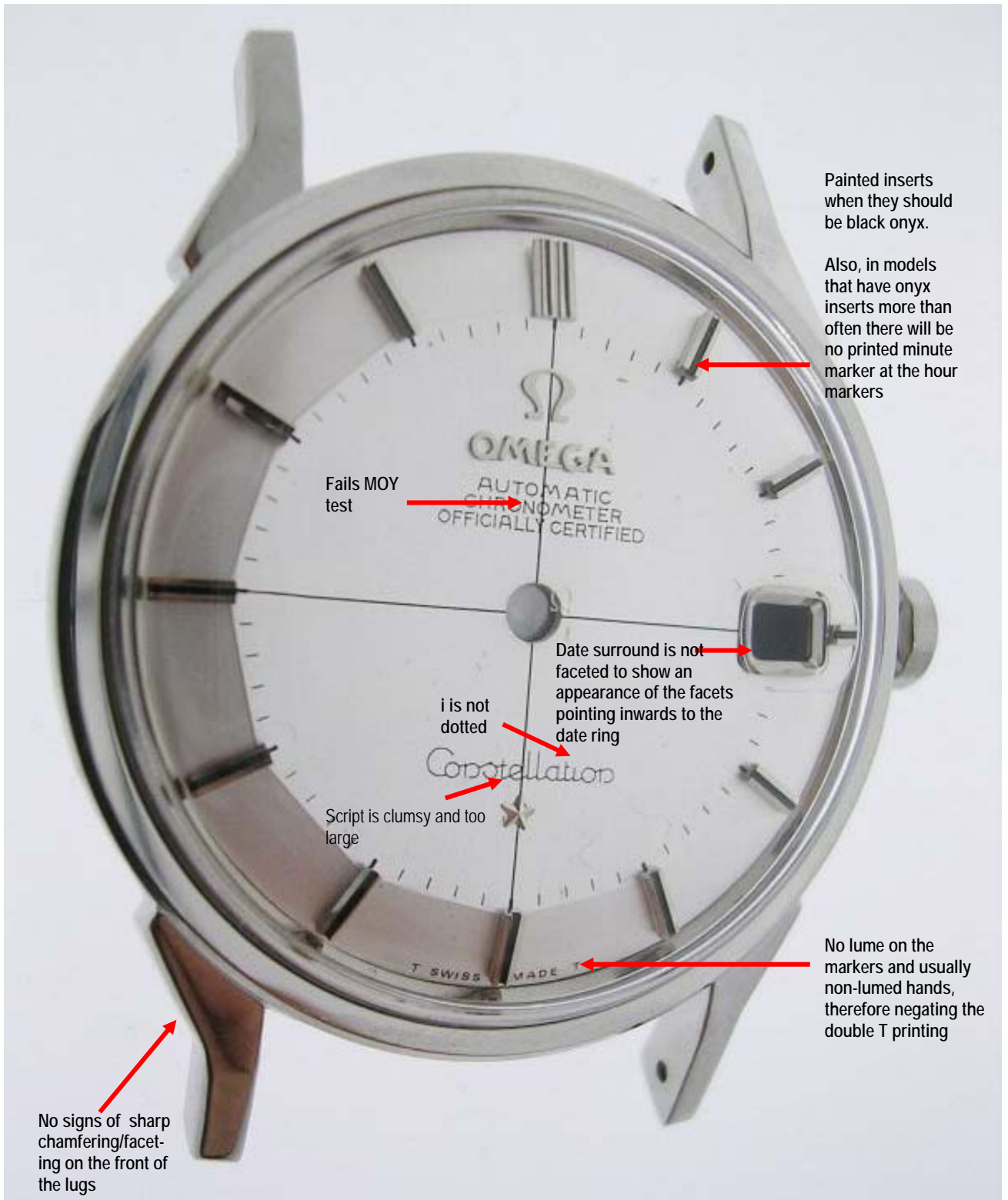
Comparing the perlage on a genuine case back 168.005 shown below right, notice how the finish is of a vastly superior quality. The perlage on the genuine article shows the overlapping of the machined circles whereas the fake case back shows individually machined circles.



Many later cases have a finely grained (what could be described as 'frosted') finish on the inner case back, but in my experience most of the fakes have poor perlagging as shown above left.

Some of the distinctions between fake cases and their original counterparts are quite fine, however with a little attention to detail you will develop an 'eye' that will allow you to notice the difference in 'quality' and craftsmanship. The most commonly faked stainless steel cases are 14900 and 167.005. They are usually accompanied by a fake dial, which, in my opinion, is a flag to examine the case in some detail.

Omega made tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of stainless steel dog leg lugged models and so there is a fair chance that, with patience, you will encounter the real deal. Haste to purchase pushes you into the arms of the fakers and their pimps, but with caution and attention to detail you can foil them! Overleaf is a picture of a new fake 14900 case and dial ensemble with notations about what makes it so.



Painted inserts when they should be black onyx.

Also, in models that have onyx inserts more than often there will be no printed minute marker at the hour markers

Fails MOY test

Date surround is not faceted to show an appearance of the facets pointing inwards to the date ring

i is not dotted

Script is clumsy and too large

No lume on the markers and usually non-lumed hands, therefore negating the double T printing

No signs of sharp chamfering/faceting on the front of the lugs