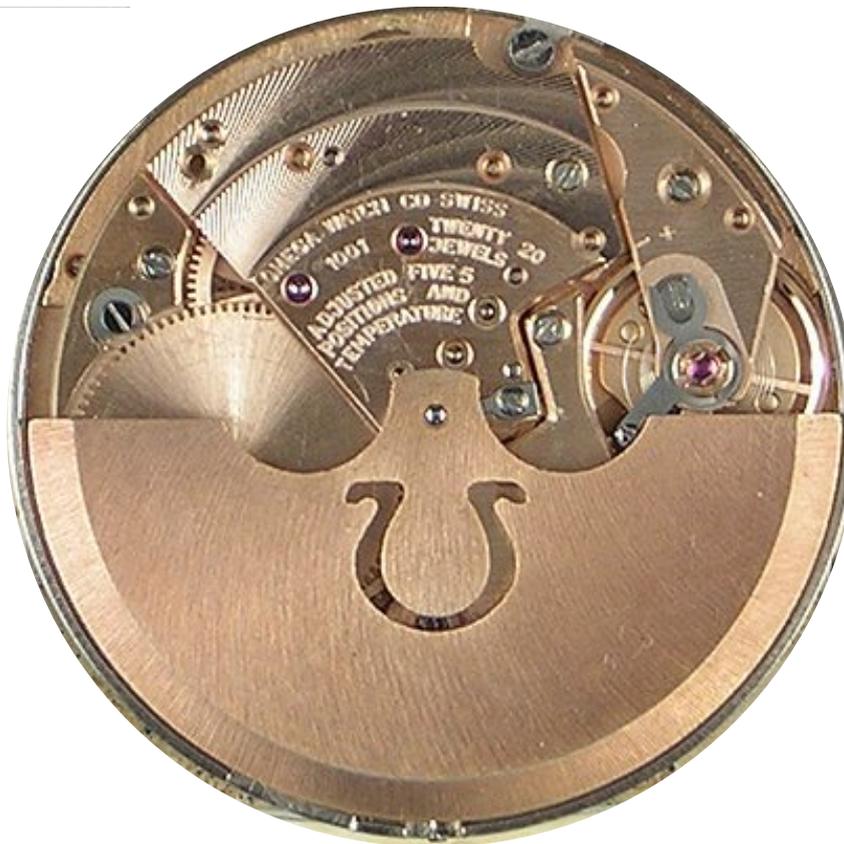


The Constellation 1000 Family

In this the final in a series on Omega Constellation 'in-house' movements, the 1000 family of movements is reviewed. Members of the 1000 family are generally not regarded as favourably by collectors as their predecessors. And yet, they do have their supporters. In the course of writing this review, I have encountered spirited defences of this series by some who have had the opportunity to work on them over time and appreciate their strengths as well as weaknesses.

A review of the 1000 series would be incomplete without brief sojourn into the relative merits and potential drawbacks of fast-beat technology, because the adoption of a 28,800 bps movement to power Omega Constellations may have contributed to the decline in status of the marque in the minds of collectors and most certainly heralded a shift in Omega's manufacturing ethos.

This article also represents a confluence of considered opinions on the series, and I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Paul Naylor, Arthur Panos, Jim Hodek, Evan Morgan, Ryan Rooney and a range of other Omega service specialists who took time to recount their experiences with the 1xxx series.



The ill-fated Calibre 1001, the first of the 1000 series Constellation movements

In 1968, the Omega 1000 series calibres came into this world with what are said to be significant birth defects. The broader reaction to this and other design setbacks and ill-advised commercial decisions was delayed somewhat, because the 1000 series (all movement calibres with 10xx numbers) was one of the best selling of all Omega self-winding movements. More than 1.5 million were sold, not only as certified chronometers in Constellations, but also as power units for Seamasters, Geneve's and even Omega Ploprofs. Omega, for reasons of cutting costs, replaced this last in-house Constellation movement in 1984 with the ETA ebauche

2892-2. Named calibre 1111, its job was the help Omega stay afloat during the quartz tsunami that inundated most of Omega's traditional markets.

It's generally accepted that Omega phased out the 500 generation (including calibre 751) and introduced the 1000 series primarily to reduce costs. This decision marks another significant milestone: the point at which the Omega manufacturing ethos changed from that of manufacturing to a vision of quality, durability and artistry supported by efficient mass-production to that of manufacturing to a price.

While the early 1000 calibres are now portrayed as a disaster, the later 101x and 102x series calibres also have a somewhat poor approval rating. Kreuzer, in 'Omega Designs' sums up the general consensus of opinion about the whole series when he suggests that 10xx calibres were "far from the quality and sturdiness of the successful Calibre 500 generation". But, does a whole series of calibres deserve to be damned for the genetic flaws of their ancestor, or can a case be built for the rehabilitation of the reputation of at least some of the 1000 family?

The certified chronometer calibre 1001 was the first of the series to power Constellations. Designed by Kurt Vogt under Alfred Rihs, it continued the ultra-thin trend and was an impressive 4.25mm thick compared with the 5mm thick mid-500 series. It incorporated a number of design improvements, such as a hacking feature to allow more accurate time setting, instantaneous date and a thinner rotor to slow down and create less stress and wear on the newly evolved winding mechanism. The mainspring barrel contained a problematic slip spring which in later Omega service bulletins was the subject of a recommendation to replace it at every service.



Calibre 1011 Chronometre movement. Notice the simple grained finish of bridges and rotor, inelegant regulator and micro screw, but, nevertheless, the aesthetics of this movement can be pleasing to the eye

Perhaps the most balanced and accurate explanation of the problems with the early 1000 calibres is provided by Omega itself, and I quote *"The calibre 1000 had certain problems with its winding mechanism, Nevertheless, thanks to its excellent basic design, its high frequency and a series of quickly introduced improvements, as well as the discontinuation of certain supposed improvements, such as self-lubrication and the instantaneous date in particular, its successors, the 1010, 1020 and 1030, launched in 1973 and 1974, held their own against the electronic calibres taking the market by storm in the early Seventies"*

Clearly there was a time lag between the release of the movement and the surfacing of reliability issues in the early 1000 calibres. The odium of an imperfectly designed movement in a flagship model, however, is not easy to dismiss and even a small rise in the number of difficulties at the service end can spread like wildfire and become a 'disaster'. It was at this point that the myths and truisms around the 1000 series began to build, ultimately sullyng the reputation of Omega Constellations and the technical standing of Omega in general.



Calibre 1021 COSC certified day/date movement

During the development of this new family in 1967/68 there were no bigger players than Omega and Rolex in the production watch genre (assembly-line manufacture of movements and accoutrements). They were second tier only to the haute horlogerie establishments. Sales figures and statistics on chronometer certification support the

contention that the Constellation was regarded by the watch buying public as the better choice of chronometer. The price of Omega Constellations in the 1960s was respectably higher than Rolex chronometers of a similar ilk. It is testament to Rolex's marketing skills that, today, comparable quality Omega production watches sell for much less than Rolex production watches.

The point being laboured above is that because of technical and commercial issues Omega fell as the mighty fall, and it was a very long drop. The introduction of the base calibre 1010 did little, seemingly, to ameliorate the longer-term damage to the model's reputation. As the old marketing adage goes, it's far, far easier to lose customers than to get them back again. The same applies to brand or model reputation.

But, is it not wrong to swallow contemporary inclinations to dismiss the 1000 base calibre as a complete basket case? Many horological experts would argue that, apart from its known faults, its basic architecture was good. Further design improvements, together with the elimination of the faulty winding and lubrication system, transformed the movement into a worthy successor of earlier series, at least as far as the technical and mechanical laws of watch making are concerned.

Omega's Fast-Beat Generation

Most informed collectors agree that the 500 family of slow-beat automatics represents the ultimate in production watch manufacturing. The mid-500 series was certainly the best automatic production movement that Omega ever produced. There is also a general consensus that these earlier Constellation movements had a higher degree of cosmetic finish, better regulators and certainly enjoyed a reputation for greater robustness than their successor. But, to be fair, apples have to be compared with apples in determining whether the 1000 series deserves its reputation. Comparing slow-beat movements with fast-beat movements may not be the way to do it.

Fast-beat movements had been on the agenda as theoretical concepts for decades prior to their introduction. What made fast-beat technology feasible was the invention of special lubricants for the drive train and escapement. These lubricants could cope with the high centrifugal forces that caused oil reserves to dry out through migration and friction. The synthetic oils differed significantly from the organic oils of the past. Some were 'dry' and made from bismuth, molybdenum sulphide and other compounds, and some were designed for specific parts of the movement, such as the pallet where friction was extreme. And so, with new means of lubrication, the race was on to leverage the advantages of high beat rates.

One question we will explore in this survey of the 1000 series is whether Omega used 28,800 beats per hour technology as part of a strategy to compensate for the use of poorer quality materials, design or finish. This assertion is sometimes made by detractors of the 1000 family, and it's important to establish if there is any truth to it.

The consensus is that a fast-beat movement will outperform a slow-beat movement any time. All things being equal it will, undoubtedly. With the higher levels of potential accuracy delivered by fast beat movements, manufactures could cut the expense of labour-intensive positional adjustment. This did not completely do away with the hitherto painstaking process of regulating a movement to meet chronometer grade specifications, but movements could be regulated with greater ease and in much less time.

Fast-beat movements offer better ability to maintain their beat 'rate' as the mainspring unwinds. Another major benefit is their resistance to the jolts and shocks that are commonplace in daily wear. These 'disturbances' caused by wrist movement impinge marginally on the oscillating performance of the balance wheel. Fast-beat movements recover more quickly than slower beat movements and hence the impact on accuracy is considerably less.

Fast-beat movements afford, with little adjustment, better performance in both vertical and horizontal positions because they experience a smaller drop in amplitude when moved from position to position. This is one of the

key benefits of fast-beat technology and it was one of the main reasons why makers of production watches took to them with such enthusiasm in the late 1960s. So, in adjusting the 1000 series to meet COSC standards, Omega saved money in not having to invest as much labour in positional adjustment. It follows that the Omega standard of employing 25% of its labour force in quality control was diluted at this point.

There are said to be a number of drawbacks to fast-beat technology. Chief amongst them are issues of friction and stress which can lead to serious wear problems in the automatic winding systems, greater stresses and wear through the drive train as well as the more easily detected signs of deterioration in the escapement.

Because optimal rate or consistency is achieved when a movement is running within the flattest part of the mainspring's torque curve, the mainspring has to have a much greater power reserve. The standard in most quality movements is to provide roughly double the power required over a 24 hour period, thus ensuring that the best possible isochronism is achieved. Fast-beat movements, however, are the horological equivalent of a gas-guzzling V-12 automobile engine and, naturally, they need more energy in reserve to achieve best isochronism. A stronger mainspring is required to store the extra power needed and the resulting increase in torque causes significantly more stress on the whole of the drive train, increasing the prospect of gear and pivot wear.

To continue with the automobile analogy, conventional wisdom would have it that the increased stresses and strains caused by having to have more gallons in a bigger tank to cover the same distance means more trips to the service centre. Omega tried to stymie this theory in part with the design of a slower winding system, but we know that the technical aspects of the design were flawed and it was modified.

In essence, it's believed that over time a fast-beat movement will need more regular replacement of parts because of wear and more regular servicing (cleaning and oil) to ensure that lubrication failure does not hasten the demise of the movement. But, it isn't that simple. Favre-Leuba, in a collaborative experiment with a number of manufactures that ran over two years, tested a range of fast-beat movements and found little evidence of excessive wear in well-lubricated movements. As long as factory-specified lubrication was kept up, wear rates were comparable to similar quality slower beat movements. Laboratory tests are one thing, but wearing a watch in the real world in a range of conditions is another, and this, I believe, points to the Achilles Heel of the 1000 family.

The flip side of Favre-Leuba's findings is that in a fast-beat movement that is not lubricated to factory specifications, or where the lubrication has either failed or is no longer present, the greater forces on the drive train and opposing tensions between mainspring and rotor torque will cause abnormal wear and at times considerable damage to the movement. If those conditions continue to prevail, it is entirely conceivable that a fast-beat movement will beat itself to death.

In the heyday of the mechanical watch, owner behaviour influenced heavily how long a watch kept good time and how long a watch lasted before it needed to go into the workshop. From countless anecdotes we know that apart from a small percentage of sticklers, the normal behaviour of consumers was to wear a watch until it dropped, or at least until it began to lose accuracy.

Therefore, a combination of normal consumer behaviour in wearing watches until something goes wrong and the serious problems that can occur in fast-beat movements if they are subjected to infrequent servicing, offers at least a part-explanation of why the 1000 series, including the 1010 and 1020 base calibres, have attracted less than glowing press. The question is, has the extent of the bad press been fuelled by fact or mythology?

A Review of Anecdotal Evidence

One way in which to establish if the later members of the 1000 family, in particular the chronometre certified calibre 1011 and 1021 movements, are worthy candidates for image rehabilitation is to ask those who have worked with them over time and in numbers. I spoke with a range of Omega official service agents who had

lengthy experience in servicing them to Omega specifications and a number of respected watchmakers who, again, had serviced many of the 101x and 102x family.

Let me say at the outset that my inclination has been to follow the Kreuzer line and view the series as inferior and not as robust as the mid-500 series, and so I was rather surprised at the responses I received. The consensus was that the later members of the 1000 family were a well designed movement that with regular servicing performed well. In fact, several service agents said that they had no trouble in regulating these movements - now edging towards forty years old - to plus or minus 10 seconds day. Clearly, maintaining regular service intervals (between three to five years depending on use) and ensuring the movement was serviced to the standards dictated in Omega service bulletins was the key to maintaining these later members of the 1000 family.

In respect to problems with the sealed reverser wheels on the winding system there were no reports of widespread failure (In previous models the reverser wheels could be taken apart and cleaned separately). The general view was that reverser wheels could be properly cleaned in a machine; however, one official agent reported that he changed the reverser wheels as a matter of course during servicing.

Problems with third wheel wear and third wheel pivot wear were reported in movements that had not been regularly serviced and one service agent commented on pallet wear in movements that were incorrectly serviced by watchmakers who were unaware of the need for "special pallet lubricant".

Problems with the plastic date change lever were reported, although Omega redesigned that part to improve its durability. The plastic date spacer, which if not correctly set, can cause difficulties. Some reported that broken pinions on the 102X date change were an occasional problem, but a minor issue when the movement is considered as a whole.

Because of the greater gear ratio on the 1000 series, a number of respondents observed that people with sedentary lifestyles complained that the watch stopped or didn't wind effectively, although in more active people that particular issue never presented itself. One agent reported that it took around three hours on a winder to get a fully wound-down movement going.

The consensus amongst those I spoke with was that the rotor posts were too weak and the rotor bush wasn't up to scratch. Some made the observation that to get the movement down to a size of 4.25mm, Omega had to reduce the thickness of metal parts, but none complained of any loss of robustness owing to thinner components. The feeling was that a balance between thickness and durability had been struck, with some suggesting that, within limits, good design has more to do with accuracy and durability than thickness.

Some commented on the replacement of the swan neck regular with a "cheaper-looking" version that compromised the aesthetics of the movement, but notwithstanding the less-than-elegant-looking system of regulation, the movement could be regulated to excellent tolerances.

All agreed that the cosmetic finish of the watch was not as high as Omega's previous standards and some complained that the electroplated copper finish was thinner and didn't wear well. However most argued that the functional finish (the polishing of the surfaces of intermeshing parts and edges) had not been compromised, and while perhaps not as well finished as its predecessors, it was of a good standard.

Almost all agreed that the fast-beat 1000 series could not sustain as much owner neglect as the mid-500 series, for reasons outlined earlier in this article. While there may be a certain amount of bias from Omega service agents, the repeated suggestion that 101x or 102x movements should be serviced by watchmakers who are up to date on Omega service recommendations for these movements appears to be good advice.

In Conclusion

So, is Kreuzer right when he says that the 1000 family was “far from the quality and sturdiness” of the earlier mid-500 series? Perhaps Kreuzer erred in two aspects? Firstly, there appears little evidence that the quality of the 1000 series was in anyway “far” from that of the mid-500 calibres. If anything, there was a marginal difference in the quality of functional finish and less attention paid to cosmetic finish. In terms of sturdiness, it may be inappropriate to compare a fast-beat movement with a slow-beat movement because they are quite different pieces of technology and have different strengths and weaknesses.



Earlier Calibre 1011 with 'Adjusted' script on the wheel bridge



Bridge of a later calibre 1011 showing the decal with serial number, calibre number and adjusted script

manufacture) appear to have been intelligently made and did not essentially degrade the overall quality of the watch.

However, if apples are compared with apples and a fast-beat Constellation is compared a fast beat Rolex calibre 3035 from the same period, one sees a line of problems in the Rolex including rotor assembly issues, worn reversers, damaged axels, cracked jewels, entangled hairsprings and other wear problems. So, it could be said that, notwithstanding some minor design and wear issues, calibres 101x and 102X can hold their own with their major competitors. Given that the technology was in the earlier stages of its development, it can still be argued that the chronometer calibres powering Constellations met the criteria for 'high-value' movements.

Some collectors regard the later 1000 series calibres as 'ugly', but the 1000 family is designed for flatness and does not have the 'character' of a mid-500 series movement. In terms of aesthetics it reflects minimalist lines and quite successfully places the bridges in an almost jigsaw puzzle manner. The brushed finish of the bridges and rotor continue the minimalist approach, however the finish on the crown and ratchet wheels and regulator is unattractive compared with its predecessors.

In terms of “quality” the later members of the 1000 family have it where it counts most – in the functional finish of the movement. The burnishing of the pivots is to a good standard, all sharp edges are rounded, the gearing is up to the job and the escapement, lubricated by special oils, is well engineered and finished.

Cost cutting was a factor in the design and production of the later 101x and 102x calibres, but the design and engineering compromises (as there always are in production watch

Servicing intervals are critical in maintaining the life of the later 1000 series movements. As mentioned earlier, fast-beat movements cannot sustain the same degrees of neglect that may have been commonplace amongst the watch buying public. This, more than any other factor appears to have fed the negative mythology around the series and coloured the attitudes of both collectors and some watchmakers.

If a calibre 1011 or 1021 movement is serviced within guidelines (three to five years depending on usage) and it is lubricated to Omega specifications, there is no reason at all why the movement will not keep on syncopating well into your, and its, sunset years.

Calibres to Collect – Calibre 1011

Calibre 1001 and 1002 are best avoided, except by those who can repair and maintain them. Much discussion about early 1000 series calibres has occurred above and so no further attention will be paid to these calibres. Incidentally, during the preparation of this article, I encountered examples where well-serviced calibres 1001 were still running efficiently.

The date model calibre 1011, with an additional six jewels added to the upper and lower winding system over the base calibre 1010 will always carry the COSC “Officially Certified Chronometer” appellation on the dial. This is one major way in which to determine, without opening the back of the watch, if it left the factory with a certified movement.

Naturally, it's essential to see pictures of the movement to ensure that movement dial and case belong together and also to gain some impression of the condition of the movement.

1011s were sold between 1972 and 1979 in a range of cases including the C-Shaped with knurled bezel and the famous integrated bracelet line. Many of the cases were sealed with four screws and it's important that you do not succumb to protestations about the difficulty of opening these cases. In collecting these calibres, it's essential that you confirm that they are marked on the movement as chronometers.

A well looked-after and regulated calibre 1011 will serve you well – a neglected one may cause you much trouble. Make a point of asking about service history or choose to purchase recently serviced examples of this calibre.

Are they collectible? I believe good examples that have been treated well will increase in value over time, particularly the solid gold and stainless steel examples with rounded-square dials and integrated bracelets. Models 368.0852, the Octagonal model 368.0855 with the rounded square dial opening with 14K solid gold bezel and integrated steel/gold bracelet, and the rounded case 368.0850 are selling at the level C-Shaped calibre 564s were sold two years ago and represent good value.

Calibres 1012 and 1020

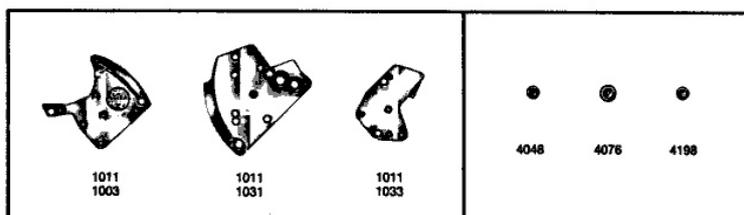
The 23 jewel calibre 1012 was used mainly in Seamasters and Geneves, but in 1977 during the Swiss meltdown Omega produced a large, square-rounded model with leather strap bearing the case number 166.0228. It featured a 40 micron 22K gold plated main case body with a stainless steel case back. Calibre 1012 was not a certified chronometer, but again it was a quality movement. Some examples can be seen with gold plated bracelets which were normally purchased at the time the watch head was acquired.

While not having the collectibility of the certified 1011 calibre, for those who are collecting a representative spread of what have been called ‘Haute Bling’ 1970s Constellations, there are good reasons to include this model in a collection. Prices should be discounted accordingly and only models with exceptionally clean movements, pristine dials and unmarked cases should be acquired. On a good day, you should be able to acquire this model for around USD \$200.00 to \$300.00, or less at times.

CALIBRE 1011 (27,90 T1 RA SC PC CAL CORR STS BULL 23 P)

Pièces de rechange différent de celles du calibre:
Spare parts which differ from those of the calibre:
Piezas de recambio que difieren de las del calibre:
Ersatzteile, die sich von denjenigen des Kalibers unterscheiden:
Pezzi di ricambio differenti di quelli del calibro:

1010 (27,90 T1 RA SC PC CAL CORR STS 17 pierres)



∅ encageage **27,90 mm**
 Hauteur totale **4,25 mm**
 Fréquence **28 800 A/h**



N°	DÉSIGNATION	DESIGNATION	DESIGNACIÓN	BEZEICHUNG	DESIGNAZIONE
1011.1003	Pont de rouage	<i>Wheel train bridge</i>	Puente de rodaje	<i>Räderwerkbrücke</i>	Ponte del ruotismo
1011.1031	Pont supérieur du dispositif automatique	<i>Upper bridge for automatic device</i>	Puente superior del dispositivo automático	<i>Obere Brücke für Automatvorrichtung</i>	Ponte superiore del dispositivo automatico
1011.1033	Pont inférieur du dispositif automatique	<i>Lower bridge for automatic device</i>	Puente inferior del dispositivo automático	<i>Untere Brücke für Automatvorrichtung</i>	Ponte inferiore del dispositivo automatico
4048	Pierre de roue d'armage, dessous	<i>Jewel for winding gear, lower</i>	Piedra de rueda de tensión, debajo	<i>Stein für Spannrad, unten</i>	Pietra della ruota di carica, sotto
4076	Pierre de roue d'armage, dessus	<i>Jewel for winding gear, upper</i>	Piedra de rueda de tensión, encima	<i>Stein für Spannrad, oben</i>	Pietra della ruota di carica, sopra
4076	Pierre de mobile entraîneur de rochet, dessus	<i>Jewel for driving gear for ratchet wheel, upper</i>	Piedra del móvil de arrastre de rochete, encima	<i>Stein für Antriebsorgan für Sperrad, oben</i>	Pietra del mobile conduttore del rocchetto, sopra
4076	Pierre de petit renvoi de roue d'armage, dessus	<i>Jewel for small connecting wheel for winding gear, upper</i>	Piedra de rueda pequeña de transmisión de rueda de tensión, encima	<i>Stein für kleines Zwischenrad für Spannrad, oben</i>	Pietra del rinvio piccolo della ruota di carica, sopra
4198	Pierre de grand renvoi de roue d'armage, dessous	<i>Jewel for large connecting wheel for winding gear, lower</i>	Piedra de rueda grande de transmisión de rueda de tensión, debajo	<i>Stein für grosses Zwischenrad für Spannrad, unten</i>	Pietra del rinvio grande della ruota di carica, sotto
4198	Pierre de petit renvoi de roue d'armage, dessous	<i>Jewel for small connecting wheel for winding gear, lower</i>	Piedra de rueda pequeña de transmisión de rueda de tensión, debajo	<i>Stein für kleines Zwischenrad für Spannrad, unten</i>	Pietra del rinvio piccolo della ruota di carica, sotto

Omega parts manual showing additional parts added to base calibre 1010 to bring movement up to Constellation specifications

In 1978, a gold-capped non-certified version of the C-Shaped case was released in the 17 jewel calibre 1020. This day/date model with a solid gold knurled bezel – 166.0247 - came as shown below with an attached 1040 gold capped bracelet. It was also sold as head only with a leather strap. I believe the bracelet model has some collecting value because of the relatively late use of rolled gold which was much thicker than the 40 micron gold plating used at the time and also for reasons of rarity detailed below. The example below sold for just under USD\$400.00 in June 2007 because of its exceptional overall condition of case, bracelet and restored movement. One often sees replacement bridges in the later 101x and 102x calibres, as is the case below, arguably due to wear caused by infrequent servicing.



During the Swiss crisis Omega rarely submitted Constellation movements for COSC certification. Here is a calibre 1020 authentic Constellation 166.0247 with a non-certified movement. While this watch has some collectibility it also signals the beginning of the decline of the Constellation as a 'high value' brand

Soon after the release of 166.0247, came the solid 18k gold model 166.0253 that featured an 18k integrated bracelet 1155. Known as reference number 366.0859 this model, like its calibre 1020 stable mate, was only on the market for around twelve months. A degree of rarity makes both of these watches somewhat collectible, but not at the prices one would pay for a COSC movement, so choose consider a discount of approximately 30 percent on comparable COSC powered 1970s Constellations.

Calibre 1021

Calibre 1021 is really the last of what some people call the 'bona fide' chronometer Constellations. Released in 1972 this day-date movement powered the attractive cushion case 368.0851 featuring round dial and integrated bracelet. It came in solid gold and stainless steel and looked identical to the earlier 168.045 calibre 751 model, of which it is often confused. This watch was launched alongside a C-shaped version with point of sale brickwork bracelets. The rounded square case 168.0060 (368.0854) with integrated bracelet was offered in the following year's catalogue.

CALIBRE 1021 (27,90 RA SC PC CALD CORR CORJ STS BULL 23 P)

Pièces de rechange différant de celles du calibre :

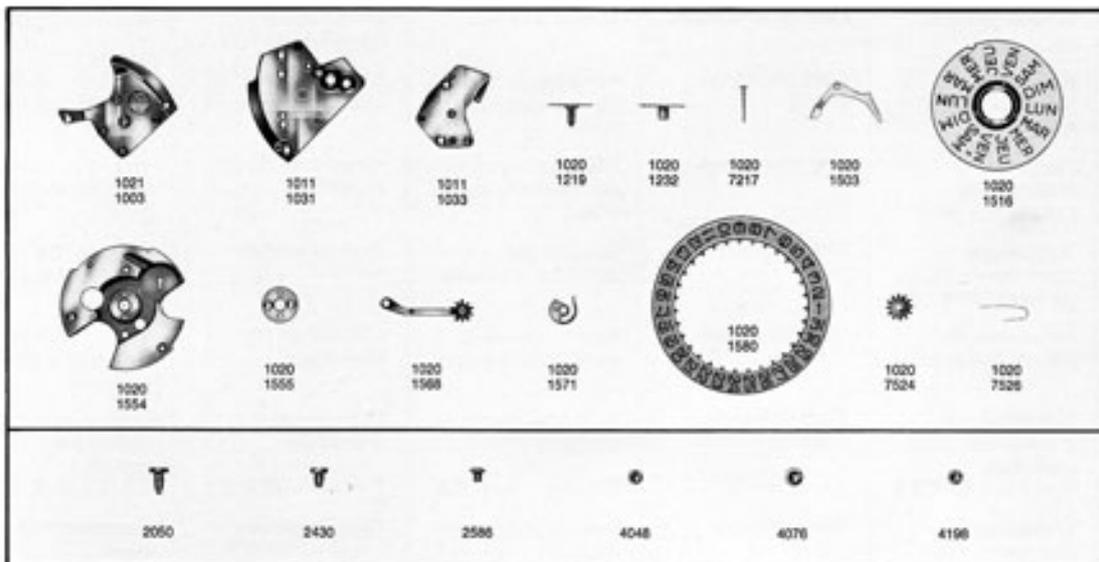
Spare parts which differ from those of the calibre:

Piezas de recambio que difieren de las del calibre :

Ersatzteile, die sich von denjenigen des Kalibers unterscheiden:

Pezzi di ricambio differenti di quelli del calibre :

1010 (27,90 T1 RA SC PC CAL CORR STS 17 pierres)



∅ **encageage** 27,90 mm
Hauteur totale 4,80 mm
Fréquence 28 800 A/h



Omega Parts Manual showing the differences in parts between the chronometre calibre 1021 and calibre 1010



Non-COSC Calibre 1022 in case 166.0219

Calibre 1022

The Omega database does not record the day-date Calibre 1022 as having powered Omega Constellations. However, the Octagonal case 166.0219 was indeed fitted with a 23 jewel calibre 1022 movement as were some other Constellations of the time.

The Swiss watch industry was in turmoil in the later 1970s and Omega made a decision not to seek COSC bulletins for these models.

Case 166.0219s, because of their attractive styling and more than often matching non-integrated bracelets are quite popular and can still be purchased for under USD \$300.00.

Again, purists will probably not bother collecting this calibre, however it's value is more in its representation of late 1970s watch styling and may deserve a place in a broader collection that includes examples of all in-

house calibres that powered Constellations.

Conclusion

There is increasing interest in Constellation watches powered by the 1000 family of movements, and this is not surprising when BIG and BLING have become inseparable playmates in the evolving design story of the noughties. The most collectible models are the COSC certified 1011 and 1021 calibres. The most collectible metal is stainless steel or solid gold because of the wear issues implicit in the gold plated models.

It would pay to remember that the earlier members of the 1000 family of calibres are inching towards their fortieth birthday, and some, through wearer abuse or neglect, will show the inexorable signs of a hard life. Others, having been treasured, coddled or kept in a state of good repair will still retain the glow and resilience of youth. The trick is to acquire one of the latter, have it serviced by a watchmaker who has access to up-to-date Omega service bulletins and has the correct lubricants, and ensure you keep to recommended service intervals.

Arguably, any member of the 1000 family if serviced properly can be taken for frequent outings with the sure knowledge that its case design will turn a few heads and its engine will purr along contentedly.