

It's All About MOY, Except When It Isn't.

MOY is something you can be absolutely certain about but never 100% sure!! It is, however, an extremely useful test to apply to Constellation dials as the first amongst a number of other steps in the authentication process.

Re-finishing houses are becoming more adept at getting MOY right, although generally they have a long way to go before they reach the point of perfection where the rest of the dial is also flawless. So, while MOY should never be the only visual test you apply to a dial, it is a good starting point.

In most cases, if a dial is out of MOY then you can be reasonably confident that it is re-finished. But complete certitude is never an option when collecting vintage Omega Constellations, and contradictions appear in some dials produced in the last 1950s – early 1960s and the later 1960s.

The Standard Test

MOY is a standard test for authenticity that can be applied to *almost all* Constellation dials manufactured up until the change of Constellation script in the later 1960s. In both cross-hair and plain dials that contain the full script underneath the applied Omega symbol (or symbol and Omega logo in later dials) a line can be drawn from 1200 to 0600 and it will pass through the centre of the first chevron (upside-down V) of the M in AUTOMATIC and through the centre of the O in CHRONOMETRE. Some variations occur where the line is slightly to the right of the centre of the O. The line carries on to the right of the Y in OFFICIALLY, barely missing the upper serif. The above right photograph shows how the MOY rule also applies to non-crosshair dials. Rarely, however, does the line pass through the exact centre of the applied Omega symbol.

The Exceptions

Note the emphasis above on 'almost all'. While the examples opposite from the early and late 50s and the mid-60s all comply with the MOY standard, there are some dials manufactured by dial contractors on behalf of Omega that do not conform to the standard. They will be out of MOY, but still containing three lines of centred/balanced upper case lettering. They will have the correct serif upper case font and the Constellation lettering will meet all tests. The minute index will also be at the 'correct' distance from the facets/edge in Pie Pan dials. These dials crop up from time to time and are often incorrectly discounted as earlier re-finishing jobs.



Mid 60s dial calibre 561



Late 1950s calibre 505 dial. Note overall smaller font sizes



Pre-1955 Dial: Notice crossed second T in Constellation



In the above highly magnified dial from a calibre 561 pie pan dial produced in the early 1960s you can notice that the dial fails the MOY test. The line has been drawn on an angle as the picture was taken slightly off-centre. This is an authentic Omega dial which can be confirmed by the quality of the lettering: correct serif fonts, perfect boxed As, all of the Rs have the correct short stroke running from the top loop and fall within the parameters of the loop and the Fs have the shorter horizontal second stroke.

Further, from the picture below you will notice that the Constellation lettering meets fully the specifications for the script of this period (See the essay, Dials Part 2). The lettering is correctly embossed (raised slightly from the dial surface), and this is a key point in authenticating Constellation dials because in most re-finished dials the lettering is flat and not embossed.



Finally, in this instance the chapter ring was fully examined: the minute indices were perfectly placed (marginally distanced from the pie pan facet edges – see over) and each index was evenly spaced and of consistent length. As you will note from the picture overleaf, the Swiss Made lettering was of the correct and matching font, and when the angle of the picture is taken into account, evenly spaced from the 0600 marker.



Thus, while the dial certainly failed the MOY test, a battery of other visual tests confirmed that the above was an authentic Omega Constellation dial. Note the size of pictures generally required to confirm the status of the dial. If a dial is out of MOY and appears to be O.K., the only way you can be certain of authenticity is to demand high resolution close-ups of the dial. If a seller will not play ball or, in the case of a bricks and mortar dealership, does not allow you to take close-ups of a suspect dial, the best advice is to pass, particularly if you wish to acquire a Constellation that fully meets specifications.

The picture opposite shows another genuine early 1960s calibre 561 dial, this time a Grand Luxe model, which is clearly out of MOY. Again, the red line compensates for the angle of the watch. You will notice that, as in the previous case, the oval O (as opposed to fully rounded O) in CHRONOMETER accounts for the discrepancy. This is often, but not always, the case.



In some instances you will encounter the fully rounded O in CHRONOMETER and a different M replacing the double chevron M, and generally the dial will pass the MOY test. These normal variations are explained by Omega's use of a number of different dial manufacturers. Another thing to note with out of MOY dials is that often the M and the Y will fulfil their part of the MOY test and it is the O that is out of line.

Font Sizes

Depending on which manufacturer produced the dial batch for Omega and the period of manufacture, you will encounter some variation in actual font sizes. This can be seen in the examples on page one in the calibre 505 example. Normally, the upper case word AUTOMATIC will just fit within the boundaries of the applied Omega logo (see blue lines in above picture), but when smaller font is used the above blue line test does not apply. Never-the-less, smaller font examples do pass the MOY test. Note also in the above example how the C and R of CHRONOMETER fall outside the line and show how the script in general is balanced or centred.

Doing the Test Correctly



The above dial illustrates pointedly why the MOY test must be done correctly. This dial was the subject of some debate as to its authenticity. One of the points advanced in the case for its genuineness as a period dial from the 1960s was that the upper case script passes the MOY test.....and so it does, in a fashion (shown above as the green line). Notwithstanding a number of other discrepancies, such as dial finish, double T at six o'clock (no tritium at all on the dial), inconsistency of serifs and a chapter ring printed too boldly, this is a very, very good re-finishing job: a job that may have passed muster if one simply drew a line through the upper case script, rather than beginning the line from the exact centre of the 1200 marker and continuing it through to the exact centre of the 0600 marker. By drawing the line so, the misalignment of the upper case and CONSTELLATION lettering can be seen clearly – the script bears to the dial left too much (see yellow lines). And so this dial can be ruled out as a genuine period dial.

Summing Up

Automation of dial manufacture meant consistency and consistency means that batches from different dial manufacturers will show constant but minor variations to what could be considered the standard. There were two periods where out of MOY dials appear to have been prevalent – at the turn of the 1960s and in a small number of calibre 564 models of the later 1960s.

So what is the collector to think? Firstly, it's probably a good idea to consider MOY the standard because most genuine dials pass the MOY test. Secondly, one must consider that an out of MOY dial will always be subject to questions about its authenticity, and, therefore, it's important to have proof of its originality at the ready if the time comes to sell the watch. Thirdly, perceptions are important in vintage watch collecting, and genuine out of MOY dials can be labelled as rarer than their standard counterparts. In many collecting genres, such as stamps and coins for instance, imperfections on genuine examples are often the subject of intense appeal and often command significant premiums. However, in vintage watch collecting, it is doubtful that the less common out of MOY dial will attract such interest.

As the picture below demonstrates there is a particular charm in a genuine MOY dial. The kerning of the lettering divides exactly the word CHRONOMETER, providing balance and visual appeal. Personally, I would only collect an out of MOY dial if the model was either rare or in uncommonly pristine condition, but then, that is simply a personal preference.

