

## The Last Omega Constellation Pie Pan Standing

Most people would scoff at the idea of a Pie Pan being produced as late as 1974. But, strange as it may seem the last Pie Pan standing in the Omega Constellation range was not at the end of the Second Design Phase (culminating in the production of the calibre 564 monocoque Pie Pan Constellations) but well into the middle age of the Third Design Phase.

In fact, the revival of the Pie Pan in the 1970s was a direct homage to the great Gerald Genta designed dog leg lugged model 14900 which morphed into cases 167.005 and 168.005. Genta also designed the onyx insert markers with matching black-insert Dauphine hands in a refreshed Pie Pan dial in the early 1960s, and these two design elements were featured in the 'homage' model 168.0065.

I first alerted the Omega museum to the existence of this model around three years ago, and, subsequently, the museum added a listing to the Omega database under case number 168.0065. The first model I encountered in more than 20 years of collecting was unearthed by Omega aficionado and dealer, Tim Mackrain. He originally contacted me to query whether I knew anything about the example he had acquired, which led to me initiating conversations about the watch with the Omega museum. After the submission of photographs and movement serial numbers, the museum uncovered records of a model that appeared to have been produced solely for the Japanese market. See pictures below:



The 168.0065 case has strong similarities to the 14900/168.005 cases in appearance only, because the only common features are the lugs and bezel. Notice the non-bevelled and flatter date surround designed to complement the flatter profile of the dial. There is no Constellation star, but the signature Dauphine hands with black inserts have been used. The case is not as thick overall as the earlier models and the flat case back reflects the slimmer dimensions of the movement.



The 168.0065 was powered by a certified chronometer calibre 1011 movement, the successor to the famous mid-500 series of movements.

According to Omega records this particular example was shipped to Japan on May 28th. 1975.

The omega museum advised that the 168.0065 collection was produced for the Japanese market. It was a deliciously ironic step to send these models into enemy territory during the height of the Japanese quartz invasion, particularly when the Japanese had caused so many casualties in the Swiss watchmaking industry. Maybe it was the Omega Company's signal to the Japs that while they may have won many battles, the war was still well and truly to be decided.



The next model I encountered was pointed out to me by collecting compatriot, Evan Morgan. We corresponded over its authenticity when it first appeared on an auction site. The watch had found its way to Hong Kong and Evan ultimately won the watch at auction. See opposite.

Evan's example has retained the exceptionally strong lines on the case and has a nice dial patina. You can notice in the picture opposite the sharpness of the chamfers on the edges of the lugs. Notice also that the minute hand and second sweep penetrate deeply into the chapter ring, a feature common in the homage model.



The lugs on the 168.0065 are a faithful replication of the lugs of their early 1960s counterparts. On the underside, the deep chamfer on the lug join runs through to the lug ends. The flatter case back supports the overall thinness of the case which is designed to house the 4mm thick calibre 1011.



Evan Morgan has blood-hound prescience when it comes to sniffing out information on the Internet. He uncovered this example of the 168.0065 on a website of a Japanese watchmaker who posted pictures of the various models he had worked on. While the watch shows some damage to the lower lugs, it is in very good condition overall.

Evan also uncovered another version of the 168.005 with a flat dial in the “sold” section of yet another Japanese watch site. The pictures overleaf reveal the dial to be in pristine condition.

Third Generation design dial furniture has been used in the flat dialled model. The ‘jet line’ onyx insert markers - another Gerald Genta innovation first used on the Constellation C-Shape models - are complimented by solid stick hands and a rhodium plated centre sweep. This dial does not have the applied Omega logo, however close inspection reveals it to be a genuine Constellation dial.

The 168.0065 model also featured a round crown as shown in the examples in this essay rather than the decagonal crown that was standard in the earlier models. The flat polished bezel represents faithfully the original Genta design.



The fifth example of this rare model I encountered is a model acquired for my collection (overleaf). The design consistencies in the five models unearthed so far allow us to describe confidently their main features. The cases were polished to a reasonable but not black-polished gloss; the upper lug chamfers were sharp and were faithful to the original early 1960s models; the date surround was flat and un-faceted; pie pan dials replicated the original to a high degree of detail with the exception of the Constellation star; the dial lettering was Third Design Phase and the crowns were rounded rather than ten-sided.

The 168.0065s were produced from 1974 – 1977, however the quantities are believed to be relatively small. Omega as a matter of policy only ever awards the label “Limited Edition” to models it decides will be promoted as such. I believe that the 168.0065 probably falls into the unofficial category of limited edition. The fact that so few examples have surfaced is testament to an uncommonness that borders on rarity.

Prices realised for these models range from around USD\$ 500.00 to \$1250.00. There is volatility in values, most likely attributable to a general unawareness by the collecting community of the existence of these rare homage models and their collection value. I expect that that may change over time as the last Constellation Pie Pan standing gains its rightful place in the collecting aspirations of Constellation devotees.

I expect that others will be enthused to join the search for examples of the 168.0065. If you uncover one of these models, I would love to hear from you so as to document any further discoveries in this essay.



