



The Omega Seamaster 120 'Recife' has serious bragging rights

The vintage Omega Seamaster 120 'Recife' is a weird and wonderful rarity that's relatively affordable. That is, if you can find one...

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Style, as seen in the rearview mirror, is a cyclical thing. The decades seem to move through “passé” to “tasteless” to “challenging” to “classic” – psychologists would probably put it down to the childhood nostalgia of the reigning connoisseurs. The 1970s watch world long ago completed its transition from kitsch to cool and now the 1980s are being reappraised. Our advice? Get comfortable with quartz, because there are some rare design gems to be found.

Omega’s Seamaster 120 collection, born in 1966, has always played second fiddle to the [Seamaster 300](#) Professional, but the lower depth rating (more than ample for 99 per cent of users) allowed for a slimmer, stylish case. These models were usually, therefore, low-key dress-divers. In 1985, however, [Omega](#) took a detour into the twilight zone with the Seamaster 120 “Recife”.



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Meaning “Reef” in Portuguese, the Recife certainly had a “craggier” look to it, with deeply ridged scallops on the uni-directional bezel. The overall design was sleek, functional and futuristic, but in an 1980s way – more *Terminator* than *Barbarella*. The case and fully integrated bracelet were made from oxidised steel, but at first look you would swear it's titanium – a gentle nod to Porsche Design's Ocean 2000. At 38mm diameter and only 8mm thick, the Recife would happily slide under a cuff, but the dial details meant serious business; the hands were borrowed from Omega's deep-sea beast the “Ploprof” and the hour markers were deep dots of tritium. Powering the watch was Omega's quartz calibre 1430. This thin, robust and well-made movement was found in several of the brand's collections, including dress Seamasters and Constellations.

The Recife is something of an enigma. Its predecessor, the “Calypso” – with similar, albeit less radical, styling – had a run of a few years before being discontinued, going through three evolutions between 1981 and 1985. The Recife, however, was there in 1985 and then it was gone for good. Nothing comparable followed it. The

Seamaster 120, from this point onwards, became a robust dress watch rather than a sports diver.



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Bagging a Recife won't make your fortune like some grail watches, but neither will it cost you one. For such a rarity, the bragging rights are based on finding one at all – in agreeable condition, that is. If you have the patience, they occasionally pop up at auction and can be grabbed for less than £1,000, whereas a dealer purchase with box and papers will be around £1,200. If quartz continues its rehabilitation, such a rare bird may be a wise purchase.

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