



RGM Introduces New Limited Edition Timepiece To Commemorate USS Constellation

International Wristwatch Article

By C. Bradley Jacobs~

What could a 19th century sailing vessel and a 21st century watchmaker possibly have in common? For starters, each represents technology considered obsolete to most but revered by many others. Secondly, each can claim a connection to Baltimore, MD which is the birthplace of Roland G. Murphy and is where the USS Constellation, the US Navy's last all-sail warship, has been moored for the last 48 years. Lastly, a new RGM timepiece will be helping celebrate the Constellation's 150th birthday in the coming months.



Next year marks 150 years since the launching of the venerable ship in 1854. Once being placed in commission by the US Navy (28 July 1855), this stately vessel served various roles, from squadron flagship to training vessel, for an entire century before being restored and installed in Baltimore as a monument to America's great naval heritage.

To celebrate the history of the Constellation, and to express his admiration for fine sailing vessels, RGM Watch Company of Lancaster, PA is preparing to issue the first in a series of limited-edition wristwatches, each bearing the likeness of a great ship. Featuring an original relief engraving of the Constellation on the silver dial, the first model (RGM ref. 170) will have an automatic movement in an elegant 18k rose gold case and will be offered as a limited edition of just 25 pieces.

Mr. Murphy and RGM's chief of design, Rich Baugh, both share a passion for fine timepieces and for things nautical. Mr. Baugh is a native of Delaware and grew up surrounded by reminders of that state's contributions to and reliance upon maritime commerce. As a result, his interest in sailing is strong and is a source of inspiration for projects such as designing the dial and caseback of the USS Constellation watch.



Not content simply to borrow the likeness of the ship for use on their watch Messrs. Murphy and Baugh recently completed a trip to the Inner Harbor in Baltimore to help give back to the ship that has inspired them. Their visit, a sort of pilgrimage really, was timed to coincide with an auction held aboard the Constellation on September 4, 2003. Various examples of nautical art were offered at the first (and expected to be annual) Constellation Art Auction & Reception held aboard the ship. Featured in the auction was an original pen-and-ink Drawing by Mr. Baugh, which was the first of a pair of drawings used to

determine the final design of the aforementioned wristwatch dial. The framed artwork depicts the ship, with her sails deployed, plying a calm evening sea. A similar image adorns the RGM watch, although the details of the side of the vessel are clearer on the dial than on paper, a fact attributable as much to the precision of the dial maker as to the more artistic nature of the framed drawing.