

JEWELRY

Nearly \$1.3B worth of counterfeit luxury watches seized at LAX

June 13, 2023



The discovery was made by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Consumer Products & Mass Merchandising Center of Excellence and Expertise import specialists. Image credit: CBP

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

A significant amount of knockoffs of the fine watch category have been rephended at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) between April 12, 2023, and May 22.

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The 41 watches, if genuine, would have been worth \$1,294, 500. The discovery was made by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents and Consumer Products & Mass Merchandising Center of Excellence and Expertise import specialists at the location's Air Centralized Examination Station.

"There are thousands of private sellers, collectors, and other non-legitimate sources offering luxury watches on e-commerce platforms making it extremely difficult for consumers to spot these fakes," said Carlos C. Martel, director of Los Angeles field operations at CBP, in a statement.

"Consumers should know that buying fake watches is never a good idea, don't waste your money."

Watches wreaking havoc

Over the last five weeks, the fakes have been coming into the United States from China via individual packaging sent by way of air cargo ships.

Each of the watches was mislabeled, declared as "Wall Clock," "Decoration," "Watch Box" and "Belt," among others. Following discovery, the Consumer Products & Mass Merchandising Center confirmed the mismatched claims, stating that the timepieces violated the registered trademarks of Rolex, Lumino Panerai, Patek Philippe, Audemars Piguet and Omega.



Aside from allergic reactions, the knock-offs put customers at risk for malware or ransomware, common traps on counterfeit websites, which expose financial information and personal data during the purchasing process. Image credit: CBP

Other than counterfeits of Swiss watchmaker Rolex, which totaled 37 in number, one was found for each brand.

All of the fakes are created with metals that do not align with the authentic watches of the companies copied, often including inexpensive materials that are known to cause skin irritations.

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In 2022, the CBP captured almost 21,000 shipments filled with 25 million violating goods, estimated to be worth \$3 billion in value if they had not been counterfeits of the seized items, watches and jewelry were the most frequent finds, accounting for 38.49 of the total lineup.

Other luxury categories are facing an uptick in fakes, including footwear ([see story](#)).

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