



Space-time continuing

Forty-six years after it helped guide the first humans to the moon, Omega revisits its enduring classic



Words: Eleanor Pryor

Affectionately referred to as the Moonwatch, Omega's legendary timepiece is so called because of its role in cosmic history. In 1969, when the world stood captivated as two astronauts stepped out onto the moon for the very first time, it was the trusted Speedmasters on their wrists that had successfully guided them to this incredible feat.

The NASA-approved watch has played a part in all the lunar landings, right up to accompanying the last man to set foot on the moon. When Capt Gene Cernan, *above*, left its surface in 1972, little did he know he'd be the last for decades to come.

'When I climbed up into the spacecraft for the last time, I knew I wouldn't be coming back. Someone in the future would, but it wouldn't be me,' remembers Cernan. 'I looked down at my

..... 88

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..... 99

final footprints and wondered how long they'd be there. How long my daughter's initials would stay written in the sand, how long the flag would stand. I'd like to think that it would be forever – however long forever actually is.'

Omega continues to pay tribute to its lunar legacy with a new generation of Speedmasters that are as dedicated to innovation and precision as those that came before. The multifaceted collection sees the Swiss watchmaker revisit its well-received Dark Side of the Moon timepieces, which saw the chronograph clad in black ceramic. It has been updated with additional aesthetic options for 2015, including the Black Black, which, as the name suggests, has a black dial, case, strap and even black luminova on the indexes, taking the concept of darkness to a whole new level. The next logical step forward in the series is played out with the White Side of the Moon – an all-white take on the design, equipped to the same specification and featuring Omega's impressive co-axial movement.

Meanwhile, the brand further reinforces its intrinsic ties with NASA and commemorates the 45th anniversary of the ill-fated Apollo 13 mission with the rather charming Speedmaster Apollo 13 Silver Snoopy Award. The Peanuts character was adopted by NASA as a safety mascot, with the accolade handed out to those who contributed to the success of a mission – it was awarded to Omega in 1970. The timepiece cleverly and subtly incorporates the cartoon element, with the Snoopy motif appearing at 9 o'clock and on the back of the case, and includes a small inscription on the dial, between 0 and 14 seconds, that asks, 'What could you do in 14 seconds?' – a reference to the time it took the astronauts on Apollo 13 to perform a mid-course correction before it re-entered the earth's atmosphere.

Just one question remains: where is space travel – and the Speedmaster – heading next? 'We've made the first step,' says Cernan, 'and some day, in perhaps another 50 years, the time between when I left the moon and the next person steps on it or goes to Mars is going to seem very short. None of us can know today what the future of human space travel will be, but I still believe in the indomitable will and courage, the passion, and the inspiration in the hearts and minds of dreamers.' ●

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