

2009 Swiss Replica Buyer's Guide

If you are buying a Swiss-made replica, avoid the latest 'bait & switch' scams on the Internet

The 2009 Swiss-made Rolex replica industry

Over the years, the **Swiss replica industry** has **changed a lot**. In the early 2000s, it was **extremely exclusive** to have these Swiss-made Rolex replicas with Swiss movements. **Back then**, they were difficult to get, and **much more rare**.

In time, **new dealers** found it **difficult and unprofitable** to get into the **saturated market** for cheap, Asian-made replicas... they had **no access** to the low-production Swiss-made Rolex replicas... they **did not** want to **commit fraud** and just take people's money and run... **BUT** found it is **most profitable** to **sell cheap replicas at a high cost**. Legal authorities never attempt to prosecute such cases, as long as the replicas are sold as replicas, and not as genuine Rolex watches.

And since the **beginning of 2008**, there have been **more complaints than ever** from customers who find it difficult to get a genuine Swiss-made Rolex replica without taking risks. There has been a **flood of daring and creative** dealers (usually of **Asian descent**) who have taken this scam to the next level. Some are so bold that they **even ship directly from Hong Kong!**

But is it **necessary** for buyers like you to **take risks**? Or do customers simply **dig their own grave** by looking for an **impossible deal**, such as purchasing a Ferrari for the price of a Honda?

My Own Tale

I purchased a 2004 BMW M3. Although not an extravagant car, it was the nicest one I have ever owned. And because there are thousands of M3 vehicles on the road, it is a good idea to **customize**. The easiest customization is to **purchase** a nice set of **alloy wheels** for this 333 horsepower beast.

So enter **EBay**. The greatest company on Earth. **Find anything you want, at a discount**. Right? Sure.

I searched for M3 wheels, and there were tons of results. But what struck me was the **difference in pricing**. I can purchase BBS rims for **\$1500** from one seller, \$1300 from another, \$1000 from yet another, and **as cheap as \$700!** I checked out all the auctions, and they were

identical. Nothing different. They all were **OEM quality wheels.**
EXCEPT one difference: the \$700 sellers had a much cheaper price because they were **'factory direct'** and **'skipped the middlemen'**.

They **did not** have an **established website**, **did not** have someone **available by phone**, and **did not** have proof that their **business had been around for a while.** But hey... **the price is right! Against my better judgment,** I ordered with a credit card from the cheapest price available, **thinking I can just get a chargeback** if anything went south.

The wheels I purchased **looked just like the original...** except for one thing. Sadly, they turned out to be **Asian-made knockoffs.** Less than 4 months later, 2 of the wheels had **bent** during hours of speeding up and down the freeway, and my **struts were damaged.** My warranty would not cover it.

When I **disputed the charge**, **Visa was even less helpful than BMW.** They said they are a **payment processor** and they **cannot reverse charges at will.** An investigation must be done and I must provide documentation to prove what I had purchased only looked the same, but was different quality. I was informed that **my chances of winning a dispute were slim.** **Apparently, Visa reverses charges in cases of fraud or non-delivery of a product. Anything else is between you and the merchant.**

Wonderful.

Why do the dealers do this?

Dealers are now finding it is **much more profitable** to **misrepresent Japan-made replicas** as Swiss-made replicas. The **profit margins** are **much higher.** In addition, they **don't** have to **deal with customer service** because they simply **disappear** after a few months or even a year. Basically, there's **nothing to lose** and **everything to gain.** It **isn't fraud** because they are delivering a product, **but winning a legal case against these dealers is a long shot.**

How does the scam work?

You see a **Swiss-made replica** sold on an established, credible site (such as bluefakes.com, eurofakes.com, or idealwatches.com) for \$800. It has all the engravings, you can reach someone by phone, they take COD, and the websites have been around for a long time.

But another website promises you the 'exact same replica' (or 'even better') for **only \$500**. You place an order with the **cheaper website**, and you **receive a Japan-made replica** that you could have **purchased for \$250**.

How are they doing it?

- The dealer **purchase Japan-made replicas** for **\$100 or less**, instead of the **\$500-\$600** it would have cost them to purchase the **Swiss-made replica** at wholesale prices. But they are able to **sell a lot more watches** to **unsuspecting buyers**, and **don't deal** with the **warranty issues** because they **disappear after a short while**.
- They set up **many dummy websites** and keep **shutting down old ones** as **customers discover the scam**. They also set up **numerous companies** and as customers **discover each is a scam**, they **move on to the next**.
- To accept payment, they usually get **offshore merchant accounts** in **weird names**, or **accept checks mailed to offshore locations**. Some have friends in the US whom they have the money sent to.
- Because of **language problems** and their **numerous companies and websites**, they **can't answer their phones**. Otherwise, they hire help from other Asians who **answer the phones for them** with a **strong Asian accent**.

How to Protect Yourself and FIGHT BACK

- Never mail a check or wire transfer outside the USA. Chances are, you'll likely never see it again.
- **Pay by COD (Cash on Delivery)**. COD still the **safest and voted #1 best method to purchase**. You don't pay until you receive your replica, you know the name of the company you will be writing a money order to, and you can be certain it is shipped from within the USA.
- If you insist on **paying by credit card**, make sure you **recognize the company** that charged your credit card. If not, could be a **'phishing' expedition** where scam artists take your credit card information to commit other fraud. Also, **make sure the company is not located in another country**.
- If you have **any suspicions** about the quality of the replica, **file a dispute and chargeback on your credit card immediately**. There's a good chance you **won't get your money back**, but at least you will hurt that company by **filing a dispute and prevent other people (just like you) from being ripped off again**.
- **Never write a money order to an individual**. Only write money orders to company names.
- Make sure there is a **phone number to call!** Do not order unless you have **spoken to someone on the phone** and make sure **they don't have an Asian accent!** If you can't contact them now, how can you expect to get help later if you have any problems?
- Make sure there is an **address clearly listed** on the website. Any credible business would have a street address where you mail checks and returns.
- **Make sure the website has been around for years**. Not 1 year, not 2 years, but several years. Here's how you do it:
 1. Go to <http://www.whois.net>. They are a registry that holds all the information on all domain names.
 2. Enter the website's domain name in the first row (WHOIS Lookup). Click the **Go!** button.

3. Scroll to the line near the bottom that says Creation date. That is the date the domain name was created.
If it's not several years old, do not buy!

Finally...

Remember the old adage... **if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!** The FBI found that Internet-based crime has jumped 33% already as a result of the recession (http://news.cnet.com/8301-1023_3-10208355-93.html). So, if you **really** want a genuine Swiss-made replica, then...

- **make sure** someone **answers the phone**, and **without an Asian accent!**
- **pay by COD** and **make sure** the money order is paid to a company, not an individual!
- check the website's WHOIS and **make sure** they have been around for at least **4-5 years!**