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# Between The Vacuum of Space and the Deep Blue Sea: The Story Behind Vostok Watches

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Each Vostok watch has an incredible story behind it, making each one a wonderful collector's piece with a tale to tell, and now is your opportunity to own a piece of Russian or Soviet history.

To understand why technological development is so important to the Russian psyche, we need to understand that a great deal of the advancements made in second half of the Soviet period were to do with the drive for humans to push beyond the cradle of humanity into which it was born, and to transform itself by reaching for the stars. The idea of the universal worker, who strides forth to conquer not just the physical world on earth but also the planets and the stars beyond was something that captured the imagination of common man and government officials alike.

The development of rockets, space ships and space stations, and their impact on technology on a terrestrial level enabled mankind's body to soar above the atmosphere: but also its soul.

Below we will have a look at the story behind some of Vostok's amazing watch designs.

## Soviet Techno Design For Going To Extremes

In August 2003, a new watch brand Vostok-Europe was founded. The goal of the new company was the creation of a new watch series that would have both the modern design and quality of the benefits of the 21st Century, but with the classic style and quality of tried and tested technology. The watch names were devoted to the most significant achievements of Soviet science and technology and were united under the slogan "Soviet Techno Design".

Featuring distinctive designs, each with a rich history behind the name of each model, all of which honour and celebrate a Russian technological, architectural or cultural achievement.



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Vostok Europe is now a leader in producing high quality affordable timekeeping devices with designs of distinction and craftsmanship of the first order, Vostok Europe is sure to bring years of time-keeping pleasure. Every Vostok watch is a numbered limited edition, made with movements of the highest quality.

In 2011 the slogan of the firm becomes "Vostok: For Going to Extremes" to recognise Vostok's commitment to the pioneers of extreme human endurance. Vostok watches became the official supporter of the Free-Diving World Championship, the Greek Institute of Marine archaeology, the auto-rally competition in Romania, the Enduro Rally in Lithuania and the world Muay Thai Champion Vladimír Moravčík (Slovakia).

During the winter months of 2012 the Anchar watches are successfully field-tested in the Dakar Rally on the wrist of a Lithuanian racer Gintautas Igaris. The rally lasted for two weeks and the track was the impassable South American terrain. The Anchar watches came out on top. Later that year "V.E. Are The Champions!" becomes the new motto leading the MMA One Fighting Championship awards in Singapore.

Vostok continues to make high-quality watches to this day. Let's take a look at some of the incredible achievements that have inspired their brand:

### Robots Moonwalking: the Lunokhod lunar rover (1969-1977)

The famous dance-move "The Moonwalk" has been around for many decades under different names, but gained its current moniker after the space race. Exploring the moon is tricky, and requires sensitive equipment to operate 240,000 miles away from Earth (you would have to travel round the Earth's equator 10 times to travel the same distance as to reach the Moon). In order to operate at this distance, you need a serious bit of kit.



The Russian space programme wanted to develop a robot to move across the lunar surface and send back data, so they developed the Lunokhod (Moonwalker: "*Luna + khodit*," meaning meaning "moon"+"walk around").

To develop the module, the Soviets commandeered the secret village of Shkolnoye (meaning "School") to build a lunodrom (moondrome, a replica of the moon's surface) that contained 54 craters, 160 differently-sized rocks over 120 metres, and was used to test the module's navigation and agility.

The programme started with difficulty as the rocket containing the first *Lunokhod 201* disintegrated during take-off into a cloud of radioactive Polonium-210. This radioactive element was stored inside this and other moon-rovers as the heat given off kept it warm enough not to freeze during the exceptionally cold lunar nights (when temperatures go down to  $-153^{\circ}\text{C}/-243^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). The rest of the world would not find out about this mishap for many years while scientists rushed to create a replacement.

*Lunokhod 1*, 201's replacement, made it to the moon. Mounted with sensors, appendages and eight wheels, it contained antennae, cameras, telescopes and devices for measuring soil, light, x-rays and radiation. It moved very slowly at two speeds: 1km/h or 2km/h. It operated during the day, taking regular breaks to re-charge its batteries.

It returned thousands of pictures and frames of footage back to earth and 25 soil-analysis tests, allowing us to learn a lot about the composition of the moon.

The *Lunokhod* was returned to action during the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster, enabling operators to get to areas where humans couldn't.

This incredible technology is celebrated in the Lunokhod lines by Vostok Watches.

### Riding in the Lap of Luxury: GAZ-14 (1977-1988)

The GAZ-14 was a luxury limousine made in the Soviet Union by the GAZ (*Gorkovskiy Avtomobilny Zavod*: Gorky Automobile Plant). GAZ was started when the Soviet Union signed an agreement with the Ford Motor Company in 1929 to get Ford's assistance in licensing, creating and building cars for the USSR.



Also known as the Chaika ("Seagull"), it was considered the height of luxury at the time: with a push-button automatic transmission, 8-cylinder engine, 220hp and a top speed of 99mph.

They were owned by Soviet government officials only, and weren't even available to be purchased by willing and able average citizens.

However, renting one for weddings was allowed. They were given as gifts to Fidel Castro, the King of Laos and the Prime Minister of Cambodia.

The classic design and timeless engineering is captured in the GAZ-14 lines by Vostok Watches.

### In the Sky with Diamond: The Almaz programme (1973-1976)

A highly secretive Soviet military space station program begun in the 1960s, the Almaz ("Diamond") programme launched three Salyut ("Salute" or "Fireworks") space stations: The Salyut 2, Salyut 3 and Salyut 5, first failed but the latter two went on to support successful manned testing.



The purpose was to glean information about living in space and to conduct experiments to see how living creatures reacted to the micro-gravity of orbit.

**Salyut 3:** The crew of the Soyuz 14 spacecraft spend 15 days on board in 1974, and after leaving the station successfully fired an on-board cannon at an old satellite.

**Salyut 5:** was visited by two crews, one in 1976, the other in 1977.

The Almaz programme lead to 16 space-walks and over 30 expeditions, and is considered one of the defining moments of space travel. These achievements are celebrated in Vostok watches