

Rolex Deepsea Challenge

Back in 1960 Rolex strapped a prototype of their Rolex Deepsea dive watch to the outside of the US Navy's Trieste and sent it down nearly 11 000 metres into the deepest depression known to man - the Marianna Trench. We are talking about a trench deeper than Mount Everest is high – 7 miles straight down! The watch withstood the unbelievable pressure experienced at this depth (like having 4 metric tonnes sitting on your watch). It was a PR triumph that was always going to be hard to beat – a dramatic way to show the world how tough (and water resistant!) a Rolex Deepsea watch really is.

So when another expedition to reach the bottom of the Marianna Trench was launched in early 2012 it's not surprising that Rolex wanted to be onboard again – quite literally. This time it was the film-maker, James Cameron (of *Titanic* fame) who made the descent in a fluorescent green submersible called the *Deepsea Challenger*. And strapped to one of the submersible's mechanical arms was a Rolex – its name: the Rolex Deepsea Challenge. Once again the watch continued to work perfectly throughout the dive and once again Rolex had a watch that had boldly gone where no other make of watch had gone before!

Rolex claim that the Deepsea Challenge can actually withstand over 13 metric tonnes of pressure which meant the Marianna Trench was a walk in the park. How can a watch possibly be this strong? Basically the answer is that you take a Rolex Submariner Deepsea and you give it "armour-plating". In other words you use thicker steel and thicker sapphire glass. This is a tank of a watch – bulky and indestructible. It is 51.4mm wide and 28.5mm thick (11mm thicker than the Rolex Deepsea!) and the glass has been bulked up to 14.3mm sapphire crystal. That's a lot of watch!

Let's face it no diver is ever likely to wear a watch at 12 000m – the body would be reduced to a pulp long before you got down that far. But I guess it would still be pretty cool to have a watch that says "water resistant to 12 000m" on it! People would probably pay a lot to be able to say, "Yes, actually it is the most water resistant watch ever built!" Unfortunately for these people it looks like they will never have the opportunity to casually drop that into conversation. The reason is that the Rolex Deepsea Challenge is not actually commercially available – and Rolex is not saying whether it ever will be. At the moment they are just describing it as an "experimental watch".

If this is indeed the case then this whole mission of building a watch to send down to the bottom of the ocean with James Cameron is actually just one very expensive advertisement for Rolex. And, it has to be said, it's all a bit of tease! It's like Rolex has developed this amazing watch which will only ever be worn on a robotic arm! Even James Cameron (the self-proclaimed "King of the World") only gets to wear a regular Rolex Deepsea.

So, if a Rolex Deepsea Challenge, did come on the market, how much do you think it would cost? Some people estimate around \$16 000 but I have a feeling it would be a lot more than that. Let us know what you think.

For more (including a photo of the watch being modeled by a robotic arm!) check out:
<http://www.rolex.com/en#/world-of-rolex/sports-and-culture/exploration/james-caoeron-about-the-rolex-deepsea-challenge>