



After NASA's Space Shuttle program closed down in 2011, the Russian-built Soyuz became the only way for crews to reach the International Space Station. Private firms like Boeing and SpaceX are close to eliminating American dependency on Russian spacecraft by developing their own solutions, but it's important to note that for almost a decade NASA astronauts have been utilizing a Soviet design from the 1960s for important crewed missions.

Circumstances have never forced American watch enthusiasts to consider Russian alternatives, but if those alternatives are good enough for NASA, it's worth paying attention to. And Raketa is right at the top of the horology offerings Russia's putting out. Currently there are three boutiques located between St. Petersburg, where the watches are made, and Moscow. There are none in the U.S.

The Russian Code watch is designed after the notion that in space, time passes differently than on earth. To most folks who have ever worn a watch, it looks backwards. And it is. The hands, including the second

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supposed to mimic the "natural" directionality of time in space. I had a very hard time telling the time, but maybe I've just spent too many years being programmed to read watches a certain way on earth, as I assume we all have. It seems to be an indulgence for the watchmaker and a burden for the wearer. But there's a certain pragmatism present in most Russian engineering, a utilitarian approach to solving problems that makes its way into the design of timekeeping-adjacent products and tools. Soviet author Genrikh Altshuller developed *teoriya resheniya izobretatelskikh zadatch*, or TRIZ, in the '40s. It's a problem-solving philosophy popularized during the rise of the Soviet Union. One of the pillars of this theory is that a process or product's operation must be absolutely consistent with the environment that it's used in, and in this sense, counter-clockwise hands make sense *in space*.

Check out Raketa, in English, by clicking [here](#).

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