

## Russians BY CHESTER HOPKINS in America

obby Thompson smacked National League Pennant; the sian watchmakers. Today, under his motherland. He witnessed the United Nations unveiled its new the direction of his son Ilya, the collapse of communism and subseheadquarters, in New York; the company is producing some of the quent dismantling of Soviet watch Rosenbergs stood convicted of es- most striking, even over the top, giant Poljot, where he had toiled so

All this occurred in 1951, the put his name on a Russian watch. Watch Factory, he started a lifelong brand carrying his family name.

same year Vladimir Denissov first gan his work at the First Moscow in his son grow into a worldwide

In the fifty-five years since, journey in an industry that would his "shot heard 'round the Denissov name has secured in many ways mirror and encapsu-the world" to take the itself a place of honor among Rus- late the geopolitical evolution of pionage with the Soviet Union. Russian watches on the market. many years. And, he eventually saw When Vladimir Denissov be- the love of watches he had instilled

much," says Ilya, through a trans- water and land. lator, of the legacy he inherited. out among our competitors."

companies, the brand's lineup and politics (the Coalition collecrepresents three facets: air, wa-tion) or do take to the air with the ter and land. However, with so Aeronavigator. many strong Russian brands already dominating the aviation

"We are working to carry on watch market, the bulk of the what my father started and loved so Denissov line focuses instead on One element that sets Denissov

"Our goal today is to create highly have considerable nautical ele- lar feature of an exhibition casecollectible, limited-series watches ments and the Enigma sports back. that reflect our heritage and stand models highlight auto racing. The balance of the company's offeretched or sculpted case," says Ilya. Like many Russian watch ings focuses on Russian history

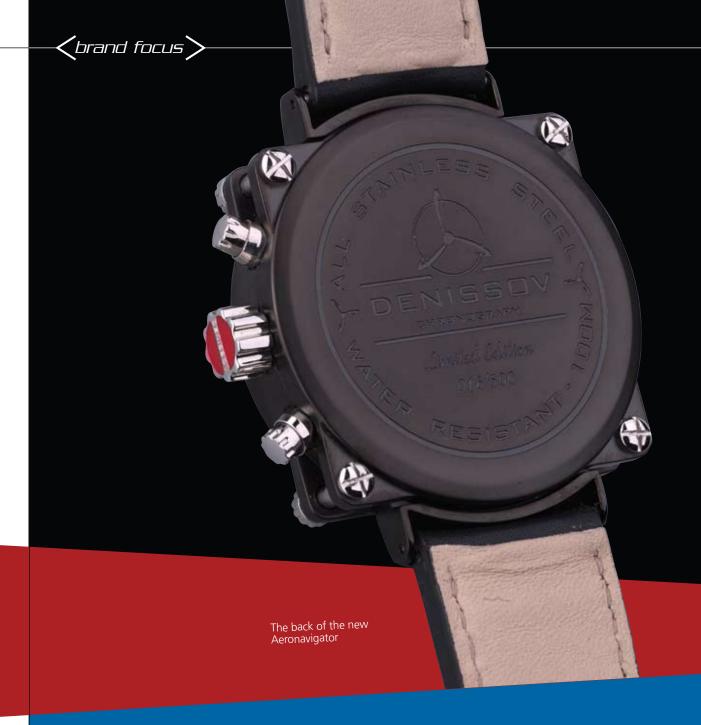
## Solid casebacks

apart from other watchmakers is The Vodolaz dive watches that they have shunned the popu-

> "We prefer the art of the "We want to be known for highly detailed and crafted cases that give the wearer a sense of history for the watch they are wearing."



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The "new" Denissov has been producing watches for just a few years. However, to demonstrate the uninterrupted family connection, it has created the "1951" logo. Today, the firm's catalogue is small, with only a few thousand watches produced a year. Their goal, according to Ilya, is quality and not quantity.

In fact, unlike many compa-

nies that release multiple new models in a given year, Denissov will only develop between two and four new models at a time. The company's best-selling model, the Barracuda, will see a major redesign in 2007, with additional plans for a carbon fiber dial. Russian watchmakers have not as yet, to any great extent, embraced carbon fiber, but Denissov

sees it as perfect fit for it's hulking 47mm Barracuda model.

The Barracuda is a stand-out watch among nautical-themed models. It's oversized, with a seafaring military look and feel bracketed with a true shark skin strap. The most dramatic element is an example of their desire to have highly detailed casebacks. The Barracuda is nearly a



bas-relief 3-D design reminiscent of a captain's wheel and sculpted waves, among other elements.

ever. Retail: \$969

Their latest model, the Aeronavigator, takes the Aviation chronograph and amps it up into a new stratosphere. The four polished screws covered with red enamel, which tie case ring and back cover, are the lynchpin of its unusual design. The screws are fixed on special overhanging eyes. This combination enables the watch to have 100-meter water resistance. Moreover, the polished stainless steel with red enamel against the black matte case background makes a bold statement.

In the heart of the watches, the firm used a mix of Russian and Swiss movements, though Ilya says he plans to lean more on the Russian movements in the future.

"The Russian movements are what set us apart," he says. "And as more and more technical developments are made, the need for Swiss movements will diminish and Russian ones will serve all of our, and our customers', needs."

Ilva refers to the fact that Russian movements still lack a quick-change date function—a drawback in the Western marketplace—and as of 2007 there was no automatic Russian chronograph. However, these are advancements currently in the works among the movement makers in Russia—largely Vostok in Chistopol and Maktime in Moscow—that should be available in the relatively near future.

Denissov watches now have representation in North America through the Détente Distribution Group (formerly Revolutions in Time) based in Connecticut. ①