

NEW ELECTRONICS ROUNDUP: 2014

OUR EXPERTS CUT THROUGH THE STATIC AND TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THIS YEAR'S HOTTEST NEW MARINE ELECTRONICS

BY JEFF COTE, PACIFIC YACHT SYSTEMS



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN THE MARINE

electronics industry is greater than it has ever been. The gap between products now and products from 10 years ago is almost inconceivable. There is just no comparison, the screens are clearer, pinch and zoom touch screen technology is now available on some MFDs and processors are more powerful than ever before.

The biggest trend for 2014 is refinement. The major players have continued to enhance their software and fine-tune the options and connectivity available with their products. Most now offer "glass bridge solutions" and continue to tailor their products for specific markets. A good example is the new multifunction display from B&G that utilizes Navico technology specifically for sailors. As an added bonus for the consumer, prices are coming down and we are seeing a bigger bang for our buck.

You may be thinking to yourself, "the equipment on my boat is more than 10 years old, I would like to upgrade but I just don't know where to start?" The first step is to take a good look at how you boat. Do you travel to new places or stay close to home? Do you travel at night or in bad weather? Are you an avid fisher? Do you prefer buttons, a touch screen or both? You will pay more for the added options so make sure you will really use them.

Then you want to take a look at the space you have on your boat. There are a number of multifunction units available that can replace up to three older units such as your chartplotter, depth sounder and radar. Perhaps you prefer to have multiple screens? Or remote wireless access such as a tablet or iPad? Finally, you will have to look at the logistics of cabling and power as well as the possible transducers required for your new equipment. It's a great time to upgrade and with a little research, you can have a system tailored to your specific needs.

To start you thinking, we have chosen a few of our favourite new products for 2014.



RAYMARINE DRAGONFLY CHARTPLOTTER/ CHIRP FISHFINDER COMBO

Lowrance, Humminbird and Simrad have all introduced multifunction products with side scan sonar, this is the latest offering from Raymarine. The wait was worth it, the Raymarine Dragonfly is the first high-resolution imaging sonar to use CHIRP technology. This allows you to view photo-like imagery of bottom structure and target fish simultaneously. It has a user friendly interface that simplifies display choices and menu options. The dual beam CHIRP transducer has a built-in fast response temperature sensor. On the downside, it has a smaller 5.7-inch screen which makes the split screen quite small, and does not include radar or networking capabilities.



ICOM IC-M73

The new IC-M73 handheld VHF features a 60 second recording function so you can rewind a call if you miss important information. You can also record manually at any time. To provide more clarity there is built-in active noise cancelling, bass boost function for a richer sound and an amplifier delivering 700mW in audio output. The IC-M73 is also fully submersible for up to 30 minutes in 1.5 metres. These units are small enough to carry in your pocket and are an excellent solution for those of you cruising alone. The unit does not include a built-in GPS functionality.



B&G TRITON DISPLAYS

Last year we reviewed the Simrad and Marettron colour display units. This year, we are really impressed with the clarity of the Triton display units. These full colour units offer a large 4.1-inch display with zero condensation and a 170 degree viewing angle. As an added feature, they claim to draw 30 percent less power than many other units on the market.

RAYMARINE EVOLUTION EV-1/EV-2 AUTOPILOT

Raymarine's Evolution EV-1 and EV-2 eliminate the complicated set up and calibration of your autopilot system. You simply install the EV sensor core, either above or below deck, and run the dockside wizard. This sensor provides precision monitoring of heading, pitch, roll and yaw allowing the autopilot to evolve instantly as sea conditions change. It uses SeaTalk connectivity and provides fast and reliable heading data on Raymarine multifunction displays. Location of the EV sensor is still critical and you should avoid placing it near magnetic disturbances.





FURUNO GP-1870

Furuno is typically known to have a longer learning curve for first time users and usually falls in the higher price range. This new GP-1870 colour LCD GPS/WAAS Chart Plotter is here to break that stereotype. This is, by far, one of the best values of the year. It includes the same sounder as some of the higher end Furuno units along with an internal GPS antenna for simple and easy installation. The GP-1870 allows you to customize pages on the fly, uses the standard C-Map 4D charts and Vector charts as an add-on capability and includes auto-routing. There is no radar but it has AIS target display capability with the purchase of an AIS transponder/receiver. The seven-inch colour LCD screen gives excellent readability in direct sunlight and can be used with polarized sunglasses.

B&G ZEUS TOUCH T12

B&G is well known for developing the first and only multifunction display system specifically for sailors. While their products have typically fallen in the higher price range, the Zeus Touch T12 is comparable to similar Simrad offerings. Zeus provides GRIB weather-file display, WindPlot histogram for analyzing breezes, and TimePlot, to provide a time-based log display including depth and boat speed for trend tracking. Zeus' tactical chart indicates best and worst layline positions, allowing sailors to make better navigation decisions consistent with weather. In addition, Zeus offers full integration with GPS, award-winning Broadband Radar, AIS, weather, and entertainment along with seamless compatibility with B&G's H3000 instruments. B&G also utilizes GoFree Wireless for connectivity between Zeus multifunction displays, tablets and smartphones. ▶



SIMRAD NSO EVO2

The NSO evo2 is the first multifunction display to offer dual video output with full HD resolution. This allows you to view information on side-by-side monitors or on a single monitor along with a GoFree-enabled tablet. The system supports the widest selection of commonly used charts (Vector and Rastor) and even allows you to use two different types of charts simultaneously. The plug-and-play connectivity allows you to add on displays and technologies from countless display manufacturers. Simrad believes that they are setting a "new standard in the glass bridge navigation experience."

**KVH M1 SATELLITE TV SYSTEM**

The TracVision M1 is the smallest and lightest satellite TV system available for boats. Its compact 12.5-inch antenna allows you to enjoy hundreds of channels from Bell while at the dock or cruising. The M1 uses KVH's new Ring-Fire technology to increase coverage area and quality of reception. This new antenna technology will also track while on the move in most sea conditions. With a simple audio/video jack, the M1 can be viewed on a TV or compatible chartplotter. The coverage for this smaller unit is good for the Gulf Islands and Sunshine Coast (or similar latitudes) but you should consider another model if you are heading north to Desolation Sound or beyond.

**FLIR MD SERIES**

The FLIR MD Series is designed with small boaters in mind, it offers an affordable fixed-mount thermal night vision system to help you see clearly in low visibility. The MD-Series' display can be mounted separately or the ethernet-enabled feed can be integrated into your existing display. The camera has a high-resolution 640 X 480 thermal imager and a 25mm lens that allows for 2X and 4X digital zoom with a 30 Hz refresh for smooth, clear images. You can even download the iOS App to any iProduct to allow quick browsing, video recording and snapshot capturing. If you travel in low light, this camera will help you see obstacles, other vessels and even locate people in the water. ▶



GARMIN WIND WIRELESS

This wireless wind transducer eliminates the need to run wires down the mast and incorporates a solar panel on the transducer arm with internal-charged batteries that last three years. The unit includes a WSI connection box that receives dedicated radio signals from the transducer allowing shared communication of NMEA 2000 data between the Nexus Network and Garmin compatible chartplotters. It has a three-bladed propeller for more accurate True Wind Speed (TWS) in lighter air, a twin-fin design for more stable true wind angle (TWA) and an optic reading technique that makes the transducer superior at low wind speeds and provides excellent linearity.



DELORME INREACH SE

Last year we wrote about the Delorme inReach Two-Way Satellite Communicator with GPS. We are including it again this year because they have released a new product that includes a colour screen and virtual keyboard. The inReach uses the Iridium satellite network with 100 percent global coverage so if you are off the grid and out of cell range, you can still send a text message or an SOS and receive a delivery confirmation that your message was sent. It has a long lasting internal rechargeable lithium battery for up to 100 hours of battery life in 10-minute tracking mode. This new version is designed for maximum durability in harsh environments and is waterproof, dustproof and impact-resistant. ▶

MARETRON SMS100

The Maretron SMS100 is a mobile or cellular modem that automatically sends text message alerts from your boat to your phone, anywhere that you have cell phone coverage. Notifications can range from low battery, loss of AC power, high bilge water, opened hatch and more. With the correct sensors installed you can also retrieve your vessel's status information by texting the system. The SMS100 works with Maretron's DSM150/DSM250 or N2KView software by detecting alerts from sensors interconnected on an NMEA 2000 network.





We

- Do It Once
- Do It Right
- Do It On Time
- Do it On Budget
- Do It All

Haulouts
Canvas
Mechanical
Electrical
Paint
Composite
Wood
Metal Fabrication

We guarantee it

CANADIAN SERVICE AND WARRANTY
PROVIDERS FOR NORDHAVN AND SELENE

TOLL FREE 1-877-656-1157
PHONE 250-656-1157 FAX 250-656-1155
www.philbrooks.com
yachts@philbrooks.com
Sidney B.C.



GARMIN QUATIX WATCH

This marine GPS watch allows you to load routes, mark waypoints and navigate to your destination. You can even plan or review your trip on your iProducts using the BlueChart Mobile App or HomePort software. The Quatix Watch also features built-in remote capabilities allowing you to control your Garmin autopilot from anywhere on your boat. When coupled with a GNT 10 NMEA transceiver, it can stream and view NMEA 2000 data such as wind speed, direction and depth. It also includes an automatic wireless MOB activation which will send an alert directly to the chartplotter. Battery life is limited and like other smart watches it needs to be charged regularly.



AFTERGUARD HEADS UP DISPLAY GLASSES

We are very excited about this brand new technology from Vancouver-based, marine technology company, AfterGuard Marine Inc. These glasses will put precise, real-time information in the eyes of the skipper, tactician, trimmer or any crewmember to help him/her sail faster and smarter. The AfterGuard consists of a custom transmitter that collects onboard instrument data and sends it to the heads up display glasses. The start sequence screen is simple to use and provides effective and valuable information about line bias, time and boat speed. At a glance you will have the start time, distance to the line, time to kill (burntime) and boat speed to make sure you consistently hit the line first and at full speed. The TackRight screen will allow you to glance at a fellow racer to determine if you are ahead of them and if you can clear them on port tack. You will be able to look at a mark and find your layline in a split second. These features coupled with VMG and targets will give you the data to make the best tactical choices on the water.

The heads up display comes standard with polarized lenses, weighing only 60 grams and boasts up to six hours of battery life. Afterguard will be launching pre-sales in March for delivery in late summer. ☺