

SI-TEX EC SERIES CHARTPLOTTER/FISHFINDER

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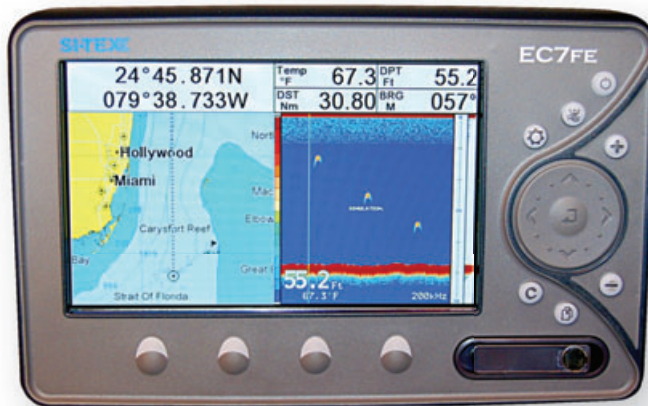
Introduced just a few months ago, Si-Tex's new series of EC combo chartplotter/fishfinders are feature-rich and easy to use right out of the box, all at a price that you can afford.

THREE OF A KIND

Besides making the big move from southwest Florida to Riverhead, Long Island for 2010, Si-Tex has also introduced a trio of new multi-function combo GPS chartplotter/fishfinders for 2010 in the form of their EC series MFDs. The EC5 is the smallest of the new triplets and offers a 5-inch 240 x 320 pixel resolution. The memory will allow the user to store 5,000 marks, track plots or waypoints, 25 reversible routes with up to 50 waypoints per route, with an internal GPS antenna, with the ability to hook up to an external unit if needed. The next up size-wise is the EC7, featuring a 7-inch diagonal 800 x 480 pixel color LCD with a memory that can store 10,000 waypoints/marks/tracks, 50 reversible routes, plus one video input. Like its little sister, it comes equipped with an internal GPS antenna, but the user can also hook up an external antenna for max visibility of orbiting satellites. The big sister of the bunch is the EC11, which is based on a large 10.4-inch LCD color display with 800 x 6000 pixel resolution, the ability to store 10,000 waypoints and 50 reversible routes in its internal memory, plus it also offers a pair of video inputs jacks and one video output. The EC11 uses an external GPS antenna as standard equipment. All three MFDs in the new EC family are waterproof to IP67 standards.

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

The Si-Tex folks were kind enough to contribute an EC7 chartplotter to this past season's 49th Annual Bay Shore Mako Tournament's captains' meeting as a special door prize to be raffled off to some lucky participant. Since I was on the door prize committee, I was tasked to get possession of this unit a few weeks before the event and give it a detailed once over. I was impressed with the size, weight, keyboard layout and overall quality level of this mid-sized machine. A few weeks later, a buddy of mine actually purchased an EC7FE version of this 7-inch color chartplotter, which included an onboard 600-watt RMS sounder. To make it work as a multi-function machine, you simply plug in an AirMar transducer into the dedicated female plug on the backside of the unit and that's it, you are in business. My buddy chose the P66 transom mount



transducer, which was easy to install on his 24 Grady and if done correctly, it gives solid bottom readings even when underway due to its unique trouble-free design.

The color screen on all EC series displays is easy to view in practically all daylight and low light level conditions and offers different levels of screen backlighting to compensate for dusk, dawn and nighttime travel. The water-resistant key-

board includes dedicated function buttons for power/backlight; man overboard; clear entry; menu; zoom-in/zoom-out; and page. The large four-way screen nav button also includes an enter function. It's really simple to use this machine with the menu and page functions and there are also four additional soft keys along the bottom of the display for additional utility.

Yet another cool feature of these EC family chartplotter or combo chartplotter/sounders is the user's choice of GPS antenna. If you are mounting this on an open center console, choose the EC5/7/11 "I" model, which offers a built-in antenna and a very simple installation. Prefer a dedicated GPS antenna mounted on top of your T-Top or hardtop for max reception? No problem, the EC5/7/11 "E" version allows users to install the external antenna wherever they want with a 10-meter cable, which wires easily into the power cord. You can tell what my buddy Zach got when he ordered his EC7FE unit, specifically a 7-inch display with a combo "F" chartplotter/sounder with an "E" external antenna. The quick-disconnect feature of the yoke mount with its built-in power supply enables easy and effortless removal for added security in between trips.

The price points on all three of these new multi-function EC units are all very reasonable. The EC5 chartplotter basic unit has an MSRP of only \$599 and you can add on a built-in fishfinder unit for only \$200 additional, which raises the bottom line to \$799. The EC7 basic GPS navigator has an MSRP of \$1,069 and when you add the internal echo sounder, the MSRP jumps modestly to only \$1,299. Even the largest unit in the EC series is affordable, with the EC11 having an MSRP of only \$2,099 with its external antenna. But you need to add a 500W 50/200 kHz black box fishfinder module to it for around \$500 additional (equipped with a transom or in-hull transducer) to have it perform double duty as an all-in-one machine. My fave for the best bang for the buck is the EC7FE.

All three of these EC series chartplotters use C-Map Max cartography and also feature quick-disconnect brackets with a built-in power supply. For more information, call Si-Tex at 631-996-2690 or visit www.si-tex.com.