

Mini Computers



Computers may have become smaller and more portable with the advent of the PDA hand-held device, but high feature charter yachts now find that guests expect to find

laptops in their cabins. With shortage of space in many cabins it has become necessary to source products that offer guests sophisticated computing power in bite-size hardware. Two and a half years ago Yachting and Overground (YOG) started building and selling its first miniature-model personal computers. These were known as the Mariner MCD Series III and sold

over 900 units. A Pentium 4 mini machine has been launched, developed within a new CD-size case which would take a PCMCIA telephone. The machine is known

as the Mariner MCD4-50/70.

The chipset and BIOS are right at the top of the current Intel Roadmap, featuring the 3.06 Ghz processor. The MCD-70 has the same form of the CD case dimensions, but is thicker to allow for the entry and exit of the PCMCIA card, as well as having a bigger heat sink and larger fan. The hard disks, which are built to the same rugged format and analogue size as those inside laptops, are much more resilient than standard home PC drives, and YOG offers up to 120 GB of storage. The tri-band telephone unit works on GPRS and GSM, according to network capability, and is ideal for the coastal Mediterranean and Caribbean cruising where costly usage of satellite hardware could be deemed unnecessary.

The new range has been sold into a multitude of different environments, from a minimal Turkish gulet to large luxury charter yachts, as well

as acting as on-board internet crew terminals aboard commercial ships where the crew pay for what they use. These units are kept cooler than a laptop, and can be removed from their housing in around four seconds. It is clear that this unit is well designed for entertainment and personal use in cabins on all types of vessels. It can receive TV from any colour system in the world, and tune in to the FM band, play DVDs and CDs, yet remains smaller than some of the other bulkier and hotter-running units available on the market.

YOG maintain they can undertake port inhibition to prevent nefarious addition of equipment and functions when their units are installed for use on the bridge, an idea incorporated after considering the Express Samina ferry disaster – which demonstrated what happens when crew watch TV on the bridge.

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