

The Yaesu VX-3R

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A midget marvel with amazing facilities

The VX-3R follows on from the earlier VX-1 and VX-2. I have had a VX-1 in my collection for some years, so it was interesting to compare the two. I have never used a VX-2 so I cannot comment on the performance of this compared to the other two. I have always considered the VX-1 to be something of a toy with its very low power output. However it is handy to slip into a pocket and use as a receiver and even get into a repeater from a good location when out and about. The VX-3R output, 1.5 watts on two metres and one watt on 70cm, is three times that of the VX-1. This means putting a reasonable signal into a repeater that is just not accessible with the lower power from the old model.

One of the excellent features of both of

these transceivers is the much better than average antenna. Perhaps these short whips all look the same, but in operation there are big differences. I have a couple of Chinese hand-helds where the whip antennas are down at least 10 dB compared to the VX transceivers, even though they are about the same size and even look similar. Audio quality on both transmit and receive is excellent. Reports on transmit indicated the response to be well balanced, with no audible distortion and no background noise. Receive audio, considering the size of the speaker, was also very well balanced and intelligible but audio power output as expected was fairly low with only 50 mW available.

In many ways the VX-3R is similar to the VX-6 reviewed in the December

2006 issue of AR. However the overall size is about 2/3rds of its earlier brother. The overall size is just 47 x 81 x 23 mm and it weighs in at 130 g, barely a hand full. Lets look at the amazing receive facilities of this midget marvel. Starting at the low frequency end, AM broadcast band reception has been 'improved' with the inclusion of a ferrite bar antenna. Unfortunately it does not seem to work very well. Even on the stronger local stations there is quite a bit of background hiss. It is certainly inferior to the old VX-1 and that is not all that good. Going higher, and taking a jump to the FM broadcast band, it is a different story. The sensitivity is good and using a pair of high quality headphones the stereo audio quality is very good and I was able to pick many low power stations with very good, listenable signals.

Short wave coverage is from 1.8 to 30 MHz. and this is for AM reception only. First thing, you will need a longer antenna than the small supplied whip. I tried a quarter wave two metre whip and the difference was quite startling. I was even able to hear a few of the stronger 160 metre AM net stations. Listening around the preset shortwave broadcast frequencies in the early evening, dozens of stations were heard at good listening levels. Of course you might hear much with a longer antenna but there is a trade off with the increased possibility of front end overload.

On the aircraft band, sensitivity with the supplied antenna was about equal to a small air-band scanner that I have; again a longer antenna would be helpful. However I am sure you will be very happy with results if you are not too far from your local airport.

The six metre band is included but again there is only AM or FM available so it might be difficult to check for DX openings on SSB, but I guess better than nothing.

There is full coverage of both the VHF

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The Yaesu VX-3R is a micro size dual band VHF/UHF transceiver with a wide band receiver which covers from 500 kHz through to 999 MHz.

The transmit side covers both the two metre and seventy centimetre amateur bands with a power output of 1.5 watts on two and one watt on seventy.

Power is supplied from a Lithium-ion battery which is rated at 3.7 volts with a capacity of 1000 mAh.

Transmit is narrow FM (+/- 5 kHz) but receive modes can be selected from AM, narrow FM or wide FM with stereo reception on the FM broadcast band through optional headphones.



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and UHF TV channels. No, you cannot watch the vision on the screen but the sound comes in loud and clear so at least you can keep up with what is happening to your favourite soapy.

Of course you can put all your favourite frequencies into memory, and there are plenty of them. Would 1286 be enough? These come in 24 banks so it's possible to have a bank for every segment of the very wide frequency coverage.

Some of these memories are taken up with pre programmed frequencies for VHF marine and short wave broadcast stations, but I am sure you will find plenty left over. However, the main reason for buying a VX-3R is to use it as a dual band transceiver. Compared with my old VX-1, it is no longer a 'toy.

It has become a very usable piece of equipment.

The VX-3R retails for around \$330. There is a full range of options available, some of which look very interesting. One of these is known as 'WIRES'. This appears to be a system similar to IRLP or EchoLink. I hope to have more information on this for you in the near future.

I would like to thank the gang at Vertex Standard for the loan of the VX-3R. If you are in the market for a miniature dual band hand held, I can recommend the VX-3R. It certainly continues the high reputation that Yaesu has with this type of equipment.

WIA News

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This second edition has been intentionally delayed, waiting regulatory changes to the Amateur Radio Licence Conditions Determination, (the LCD), so that the regulations and assessment syllabus included in the Manual will be up-to-date.

The Manual also now contains; a description of single sideband by introducing the concepts of time domain and frequency domain; a guide to which frequency bands to use at different times of the day and in different seasons; an explanation of antenna radiation patterns and which type of antenna is best for local or DX contacts; how to wind balun transformers; emergency communications and how to prepare for the unexpected; and several more antennas to build.

The WIA will notify members and trainers as soon as it is available.

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