



The Swan SW-240

Back in May 1961, when I met Herb Johnson at the Phoenix Convention and had my first chance to look over his then brand new Swan transceiver, I was surprised that he was able to turn out such a piece of equipment to sell at the low price of \$275. Herb was turning them out from a small plant in Benson, Arizona (where's that?) and hardly able to keep up with the word-of-mouth demand for the product.

The first ad for the Swan was placed by Elliott Electronics in Phoenix in the September 1961 issue of 73. This really put the skids under them to try and keep up with the enlarged demand. Sideband operators began running into Swan users on the air in growing numbers and the enthusiasm of these "salesmen" further bogged things down at Benson. A new and larger plant was badly needed. The new plant was put at Oceanside, California. This gave much better sources of supplies and labor.

When they finally got things running relatively smoothly at the new plant the first ads placed by Swan were run in July 1962. Right from the beginning they were unable to keep up with the demand. The combination of a good product, a low price and a pent up demand for sideband transceivers made things click.

While other manufacturers were aware of the growing demand for transceivers, it must be acknowledged that we wouldn't have over a dozen makes to choose from today if it had not been for the extraordinary success of the Swan.

Herb clearly saw the coming of the multi-band transceiver, so new Swan 240 tribander has now replaced the three single band models. It is hard to believe that the price of this tribander is only \$45 more than the mono-banders. The price of the 240 was kept low

by the rather ingenious method of building a sideband transceiver that is designed specifically for that: sideband transceiving. The unit covers all three currently usable SSB bands, has adequate power to be used barefoot, and does not push up the price tag by trying to be all things to all people.

If you do want to use the 240 for AM operation the instruction book explicitly tells you how to make the additions and small changes necessary for this. Isn't this better than putting it in for everyone and adding another \$25 or so to the tag? CW ops can easily install grid-block keying according to the instruction book modifications and even extend the range of the 20 and 80 meter bands to cover the CW segments. The 240 normally tunes and transmits lower sideband on 40 and 75, and upper sideband on 20 meters. Since almost all of the SSB operation on these bands observes this custom, the need for switching sidebands is rare. The chap who does want to be able to switch can order a simple kit to add to his 240 which will enable him to get on the wrong sideband and wonder why no one comes back to him.

One of the major problems that has bedeviled ham manufacturers is drift. Commercially built ham sideband gear was virtually impossible just a few years ago due to the warm-up and operating drift inherent in receivers and VFO's. Though these problems have been drastically reduced by modern components, circuits and mechanical designs, we still have not been able to produce a driftless rig. Swan's 240 has an interesting approach to this problem. They do everything possible to keep drift to an absolute minimum and then provide you with a trimmer so you can introduce positive or negative temperature compensation to correct for any variation in components or in aging changes. Perfectionists

should have a lot of fun with this little feature.

The 240 watt PEP of the Swan apparently caused some dismay in the sideband transceiver manufacturing field where everyone watches the other fellows power claims about as carefully as the car manufacturers watch the horsepower claims of competitors. As I understand it, Swan had to get a signed note from RCA saying that 240 watts PEP didn't exceed their ratings for the 6DQ5 before certain magazines would accept their advertising. Heh, heh! I wonder what you can really run to the 240 if you start using ham-type inputs to the rig instead of commercially approved inputs? So the tube blushes a little when you yell, remember what we used to do to 6L6's? On the other hand, 240 watts PEP is about the same effective juice as you put out with an AM kilowatt . . . and for many years this was considered pretty fancy.

There is another factor to be considered here too . . . that little old car battery. Even a heavy duty battery may get kinky if you try to run too much power while mobiling. Alternator systems will soon be popular and perhaps we can at that time give more consideration to the idea of running higher mobile power, with the higher cost of the power supply, etc. For the present the Swan would seem to be a good compromise, running as much power as possible without putting a killing strain on the car system.

Installation

The 240's mounting bracket (included with the transceiver) can be quickly bolted under the dash of almost all cars. The 5½" height doesn't force you to wear knee-pads. The loudspeaker of your car radio can be hooked in so a second separate speaker is not needed. The power unit can be bolted to the firewall behind the engine or on one side under the hood, with the power cable feeding through to the rig. The whole installation really shouldn't take more than two or three hours once you get the tools out and get at it. You'll probably spend more time putting in the antenna than the rig.

Well?

We tested the Swan 240 here at the 73 HQ hamshack for several days and were very pleased with it. The reports were more than satisfactory from the chaps we contacted and we could find no advertised specifications that were exaggerated. We all agreed that we really enjoyed using the Swan.

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