

Yaesu FRG-7

Impressions

-- take note, SWL fans!

Manufacturers' specifications look very tempting. They can seem to provide the optimum solution to your radio receiving problems. And, remarkably enough, usually the specifications are accurate.

Dry figures, however, don't tell the story as well as hands-on intimacy. Unfortunately, it's seldom that one gets to take a prospective purchase home for a familiarization period before plunking down a wad of that green stuff. And once that green stuff has changed hands, often it's difficult to whistle it back!

That brings us to the subject of this article, one man's experience with a receiver that's new to the American market. Perhaps these experiences will assist you in making a decision as to whether the FRG-7 is your cup of tea.

First impressions are strong, often lasting. The first impression presented by the FRG-7, as it is being unwrapped from its heavy plastic cocoon, is that of exquisite neatness. It's packaged complete with

every type of connector you could possibly need and even a hank of antenna for a random wire (called "long-wire" by those who don't know their nomenclature) antenna for reception of signals your dipole might not pick up too well. Look at the front, and you'll be impressed by the orderly array of controls. Nothing is "Mickey Mouse." Yaesu has been making high quality transceivers too long to half-mast its standards!

The instruction book, unlike that of many imports, is written by a person familiar with the English language. It's not quite as complete in detail as one might like, and is really a far cry from those put out by the E. F. Johnson Company before it deserted amateur radio for the dazzling dollars of CB. It's not too skimpy, though, and contains a pull-out diagram that can be read easily without the aid of a magnifying glass! From the list of recommended test equipment for servicing, one gets the impression that Yaesu would like for owners to keep their hands out of the receiver's innards. That's probably

founded on past experiences with other solid state products!

It takes only a few minutes to absorb the simple operating procedures. You set the controls for the frequency band desired . . . and snap on a thumb-sized toggle switch. And, as an aside, unlike most Japanese-manufactured radio receivers, that toggle switch is in the primary of the power transformer, not in the "B+" lead!

I hope you do your initial listening either on AM phone or on CW. It works quite acceptably on both of those. But if your first try is on SSB, you may conclude that you made a regrettable mistake in judgment when you bought a Yaesu FRG-7! Let's face it. The combination of 1000 kHz per band with a dial that has a backlash of 100 Hz makes getting a voice to sound intelligible, let alone natural, an exacting task! It can be done, as improbable as that may appear initially. On top of those two characteristics, the receiver has an uncanny affinity for AM carriers. Comparing it with a Drake TR-4C

on the 7150-7300 kHz segment discloses far greater interference from carriers (even during daytime reception) on the FRG-7. This test was made by switching the dipole from one receiver to the other with a coax switch.

The ceramic filter used in the final i-f of the FRG-7 really is not suited for SSB reception in crowded amateur bands.

Switching to a shortwave broadcast band quickly alters the unfortunate opinions that one may have formed while attempting to hear SSB signals. It performs quite creditably. The audio quality, of course, will not satisfy a "hi-fi" fan, but the limited frequency response stems from the comparatively-sharp i-f selectivity.

It's hard to fault the receiver's performance on CW. It tunes easily. It's rock-stable. It has a choice of three audio response curves. In short, it's a honey!

You'll notice I've omitted any listing of specifications, presuming you've looked over that information, scanning catalogues or dealers' handouts. I've just given you my impressions. For many years I've used only Drake or Collins receivers. The FRG-7 plainly is not in the same league as these. And, of course, at \$299.00, you really can't expect it to be. If one comes down out of the clouds and sheds any delusions of getting three thousand dollars worth of receiver for three hundred dollars, he just may find the FRG-7 a very satisfying bit of equipment. Don't look for perfection; you won't find it! But if you look for a full-coverage receiver that'll do an excellent job of receiving CW, a very good job of receiving AM voice, and an acceptable (after you've gotten used to it) job of receiving amateur SSB signals — one that doesn't cost an arm and a leg — you'll have to search far and wide before you find one that'll top the Yaesu FRG-7. ■