

Boaters' shopping list



Onboard security system The SilverTip Marine ESP3000 is an onboard security system that can also track a stolen boat and catch vessel equipment problems early on. In addition, the ESP3000 lets you maintain remote contact with your boat through two-way communication. Because it's specifically designed for the marine environment, the ESP3000 can't be set off by wind or waves. It uses sensors to monitor entrances, pieces of equipment or whatever you choose. You can get status updates, change security settings, and activate and deactivate the system remotely via the Internet, SMS text messaging or touch-tone phone. The ESP3000 uses GPS to track a stolen boat, whose location you can determine online. To thwart break-ins, you can program the system to sound a siren and/or activate a strobe light or other lights. The system then alerts a predefined list of contacts through text messaging, e-mail or phone.

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Nonskid deck coating Rhino Hide offers boaters two customized nonskid-coating kits, Safe Tracks II and Tuff Hide II, both of which are suitable for concrete, wood, fiberglass, metal or polystyrene. Ideal for areas requiring a more aggressive finish, Safe Tracks II contains a large rubber crumb for abrasion and chemical resistance. Tuff Hide II, which is more suitable for bare feet and sitting areas, provides an even, nonslip coating. Both nonflammable coatings are available in 18 standard shades or numerous custom colors. Once you select a coating, Rhino Hide customizes a kit for your surface and square footage. Each basic kit includes coating, primer, special textured rollers and an application guide; the deluxe kit includes a primer roller, blue masking tape, a roller frame, foam brushes and drill mixing attachments. Both coatings can withstand light traffic 12 hours after application and dry to a hard finish after 24 hours.

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NEW PRODUCTS SCORECARD



A GPS for land and sea

My used boat came with all the electronics I needed: a GPS unit, chartplotter, depth sounder, fish finder and radar. True, they were seven or eight years old, but they all worked.

However, the chartplotter was painfully slow to update and covered a small area compared with today's plotters, so I decided to replace it.

In Massachusetts, we get to use our boats for six months out of the year at most, so I decided to purchase a chartplotter I could also use in the car.

I started pricing the GPSMAP 276C, a GPS receiver/chartplotter for land and sea use, and the accessories I'd need. I had seen Garmin's GPSMAP 176 at a GPS presentation held by Bare Cove (MA) Squadron at West Marine, and its capabilities and convenience had impressed me. The GPSMAP 276C has the same features as the 176 but also has a color display and other enhancements.

The 276C base unit comes with a marine mount, a rechargeable lithium battery pack, an AC adapter and a power/data cable for interfacing the 276C with other equipment, such as a digital selective calling-equipped marine radio. But I also needed automotive and marine mapping software, some form of memory for uploading the maps to the receiver, a car mount and a car power adapter. Conveniently, Garmin offers an optional automotive kit, which includes a 128-megabyte data card, car mount, adapter and a MapSource City Select automotive-route mapping CD-ROM.