

Re: Which GPS to buy?

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Debbie Lee Moulton wrote...

> *Hi all,*

>

> *Thank you all for your responses. I've been agonizing over this non-stop
> for the past 2 days. I was really impressed with the small size of the
> eTrex Vista and Legend models.*

My advice, for what it is worth, is don't on any account buy one of these until you have had chance to play with one and made sure that it will do what you want. I know that a lot of folks seem to swear by them but my experience of the Vista is that it is a terrible piece of kit that is singularly bad at everything that it is supposed to do. For the last two years I have had a basic yellow etrex that has been part toy and part serious navigational aid. I recently "upgraded" to a Vista and basically now have a much better toy – for serious use I still use the cheap and very cheerful basic model. All the fancy bells and whistles that come with the Vista are nice in theory but half of them just plain don't work and the mapping gets in the way as often as it helps. The processor is nowhere near fast enough to keep up in real time (can be about 7 seconds between updates when displaying the map) so if, like me, you would like to be able to follow a route or track on the "map" display, whilst walking, then you will find the basic etrex model much better at it.

Even for navigating whilst driving I find the basic unit preferable. On the Vista screen the track/route data is incredibly difficult to see when it is obscured by all the map detail and I find that the navigation display is terribly unreliable with missed turns and turns frequently indicated in totally the wrong direction (when computed via-points aren't where they should be due to normal GPS errors). I generate a track of the route and upload it to the basic etrex. I then set the unit to the mapping display oriented ahead and simply keep the track straight-ahead on the display. Simple and very effective for a fraction of the price.

All trials that I have made (carrying both my two year old etrex and the Vista together) indicate that the Vista is a greatly inferior GPS receiver and initial experience with a friend's brand new basic model has suggested that the new ones are much better still (Garmin have made some unspecified hardware improvements since my unit was manufactured).

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Probably heretical comments but buy in haste and you may live to regret it.

David