

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/475/magellan-roadmate-700-gps-map>

Magellan RoadMate 700

by Dan Leonard published on 18 June 2004

This is the first 'plug'n drive' all in one in car GPS from Thales Navigation. The RoadMate 700 uses a 32K-colour touch screen to display pre-loaded maps for 17 European countries, including 75,000 stored locations. Routes are chosen from an on-screen menu using QuickSpell, an alphabetical entry lookup system. Alternatively a personal notebook holds up to 100 preferred locations like the in-law's house (something to obviously be avoided at all costs). To get everything up and running commands are entered via the friendly touch screen interface and the accompanying buttons. Turn by turn 'as you see it' visuals, voice commands provide safe, clear instructions, keeping drivers handsfree. With 17 countries covered and 6 languages spoken, the European version is really only an update of the popular US version, released earlier this year. However the main addition to the European model apart from the inclusion of the European maps, is the introduction of an infrared connection allowing data communication between PDAs and smartphones if so desired. Unlike Magellan's handheld Sportrak Color the full maps are already pre-programmed into the unit, eliminating the need to upload road maps to it. Annoyingly there is no Bluetooth connection (you have to rely on the infrared remember), but for in-car transfer infrared worked fine. The menu system is intuitive and feeds back the expected stats, with the option to plan routes via shortest time, avoiding/using routes, motorways and point of interest from the database. With the wealth of data pre-stored, the need to upload new information is heavily decreased. What Magellan have opted for here is an all in one unit rather than a PDA hosted partner unit, and we think this is the sensible answer to both the connection loss problems associated with PDA driven GPS, and users who have no need of a handheld. The ease of use means the RoadMate is suitable, and accessible, to a wide range of users- from truckers to holidaymakers and everyone in between. Unfortunately, a high price tag means



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they may be pricing themselves out of the market when compared back to the PDA-styled units. Fitting the unit is easy- a range of mounting brackets are included and the emphasis is on simplicity and quick installation. The bendy stalk is ideal for eager co-pilots who need to get a better view. While the SporTrak Color may have been less than forward thinking- no USB, no memory card input- the RoadMate is anything but. Magellan stress the RM700 will fully support RDS and TMC (Radio Data System and Traffic Message Channel) when available. Plus the unique cradle features expansion ports for forthcoming downloadable extension modules.

VERDICT

Accurate to an astonishing degree, the WAAS/EGNOS driven device will literally see you from door to door, but then this is GPS and that's the standard you expect. Connection to satellite is stable and this all-in-one unit provides a far better signal than my previous foray into the world of in-car GPS via a PDA-based TomTom Bluetooth unit. The Magellan external aerial makes all the difference- a simple magnet and cable that attaches to the roof and needs no hard installation. The main competition here is going to be is from TomTom's Go, another all in one launched early summer at around £560. Both TomTom and Magellan look like improvements on existing stand alone models currently available from Navman (see the ICN360) and Garmin. The price naturally goes up for an all-in-one (I'd expect to pay an extra £250), but at a whopping £999 for the RoadMate 700, the price may be a little too high for domestic users. The Magellan's a good piece of kit if your wallet can handle it. However if you have a PDA, you might want to cut the expense and try your luck with a PDA-driven device.

At a glance

What is it?

Dedicated GPS road map unit

Good

All in one unit, without the connection problems of a PDA assisted device, Excellent pre-loaded map content, Suitable for a wide range of users and easily transferable between vehicles

Bad

It is an expensive piece of kit. If you already have, or wish to buy a PDA, cheaper alternatives out there may sway you from an all in one.

Verdict

A good piece of kit, if price allows, but if you have a PDA, you might want to cut the expense and try your luck with a PDA driven device.

Price £999

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10