

FURUNO FCV295 DIGITAL FISHFINDER

By Capt. John N. Raguso



One thing is certain about Furuno fishfinders - they keep on winning industry awards every year and this year is no different, with the introduction of their model FCV295 digital color LCD echo sounder.

ONE OF A KIND

While I am the first one to usually recommend the use of multi-tasking combo marine electronics (as defined by linking your radar, fishfinder and GPS/chartplotter on one or two big-screen seamless multi-function color displays), there are exceptions to this rule. One of these alternate scenarios is to combine the "other" functions like GPS position, chartplotter and radar on one screen (if you're lucky enough to have room for more than one display at your helm) and to have one dedicated fishfinder doing its thing in brilliant, sunlight viewable living color.

Although Furuno is an industry leader with their relatively new integrated NavNet 3D systems, they are also savvy enough to know that "real, hardcore" fishermen typically prefer to have their fishfinders as a separate and dedicated unit. There is just no substitute for having a single purpose big-screen fishfinder, especially so when you are working the deepwater canyon drop-offs, searching for the thermocline when sharking, trying to spot some stripers in the rips, chunking for tuna at night on the edge and/or trying to position your boat over a fave wreck or reef. Furuno's FCV295 has an interesting array of dedicated one-touch knobs and keys for some of the most often used tasks, plus a superb and industry-leading digital filter to allow you to see exactly what is swimming between your hull's bottom and the seabed floor without any make believe. I have always been a proponent of Furuno echo sounders and have come to trust them and believe in what they show me. What you see is really what you get and if a Furuno digital sounder is showing a school of fish under your boat, you can truly believe that they are there, which is diametrically opposed to the experiences I have had with some other lesser fishfinders. Couple the Furuno FCV295 with a 1kW transducer from AirMar and you are officially in business and should see everything from the surface down to 2,000 feet of water and everything in between with total clarity.

ROCKET SCIENCE

Furuno's award winning FDF (Furuno Digital Filter) technology adapts to your fishing environment by automatically adjusting the gain, STC and output power, as well as suppressing main bang (the echoes or clutter just below the transducer). It also makes the picture clearer and easier to decipher between baitfish and larger target species. The FDF filter optimizes the gain to suit the search range. For

example, when searching in deep water, the pulse length is made wider and the reception band is made narrower, allowing for better and clearer detection at the deeper range. This is perfect for finding bottom fish because the digital filter separates the noise from the actual seabed structure, allowing you to see the target fish close to the seabed. Shallow water detection is also enhanced with the new FDF technology by suppressing surface clutter mainly caused by the boat's propeller. The units also feature a fast transmission rate of 3,000 times per minute when sounding at the water depth of 5 meters, which aids in shallow water detection and identifying bait pods and individual fish targets right under the boat. The increased transmission means that you can receive more detailed information about underwater conditions in the same sounding interval as conventional FishFinders.

Furuno's FCV295 also offers a Furuno Free Synthesizer (FFS) transceiver, a two-channel configuration that provides multi-frequency selection. Instead of having fixed frequencies, the transceiver can be slewed, meaning they can be adjusted on the fly with a slider control on the display. Let's say you are at 50kHz but there seems to be some local interference. You can slew the frequency to 40kHz for a minute, and then bring it back again, in effect tuning the transducer and the transceiver together for the best resolution. And to help you reach new depths, the FCV295 boasts a high-power (1, 2 or 3kW output, depending on your transducer) transceiver. You can choose any two frequencies between 28 and 200 kHz to fit your fishing needs. With the FFS Transceiver, you can select a different frequency and output power to suit nearly any special transducer configuration.

The FCV295 sports a 10.4-inch VGA color LCD sunlight viewable screen. The display can be configured in single, dual, three-way or a four-way split. Each unit can display echoes in 8, 16 or 64 colors as standard settings, with the color assignment dependent on the strength of the returned echo. In addition, the background color can be changed for optimum day or night viewing. There are nine basic operation modes on the FCV295 that allow you to choose the perfect method of display according to the specific situation. In addition to the Single frequency mode, there are also Dual, Zoom (Marker Zoom; Bottom Zoom; and Bottom Lock), Single + Zoom, two Custom Modes, Mix Mode, Nav Data and A-Scope. A new feature is the post processing gain control, which means when you adjust the gain, it will show the adjustment for the entire on-screen history, not just the new signals coming on the screen. This allows you to immediately see what affect changing the gain will have on the return echoes.

The MSRP is \$3,295 with a street price around \$2,500. For more info on the new Furuno FCV295, call Furuno U.S.A. at (360) 834-9300 or visit www.furunousa.com.