



CARNAVI PRO BT

GPS NAVIGATION DEVICE

By John Nieves

GPS navigation devices aren't exactly new; in fact they have enjoyed a presence in the local market by way of gray and parallel imports. Of course, these devices were far from reliable—not because of their design, but because of the data available to them. More specifically, the maps weren't that accurate, as there was no official support from the respective manufacturers. It's a different story nowadays, as there are now GPS navigation gadgets that have extremely accurate maps and local support and you'd be hard pressed to get lost with these things in your car. carNAVi is the latest manufacturer to jump into the domestic GPS navigation scene, and if their top of the line Pro BT is any indication, they're set to give their competitors a run for their money.

The Pro BT is what you'd expect from a navigation device—it's not the thinnest or most elegant device out there, but it's not the flimsiest either. It has a 4.3-inch touch TFT LCD screen that's easy enough to use. There's a 3.5mm jack on the right side, along with a mini-USB port that serves as both data and charging port. All data,

maps and media are stored in the SD card that goes in the unit, whose slot is located at the right side.

Powering the Pro BT is an SIR Atlas III GPS processor running at 400 MHz, with 64MB of memory. The operating system is a modified Windows CE. The GUI is pleasant enough and you're able to jump into the different menus and features with a simple touch of the screen.

Like other solutions in the market, you'll be able to set your destination in different ways, mainly through points of interests (POI), address search and city search. You will have to tell the unit in what city the location you're looking for though, potentially slowing down searches when you're in a hurry. One thing that pleasantly surprised me is the large number of POIs in the system. Of course, a product like the Pro BT is only as good as the quality of its maps, and I'm happy to say that it didn't disappoint. The maps are pretty accurate and up to date, and carNAVi assures me that they have maps of the whole country in some way or the other.

The Pro BT uses an internal GPS antenna and acquires a signal in less than two minutes. It has voice prompts which tell you when to take a turn, how far you are to your destination, etc. One thing I liked about the display is that the environment is rendered in 3D, so you'll be able to see if you'll be passing under a tunnel or going over it. The display also dims automatically depending on the time of the day and when you go into a tunnel.

The only minor nitpick I have with the Pro BT is that street names disappear on the screen momentarily when you turn which, while disconcerting, isn't really something to be worried about.

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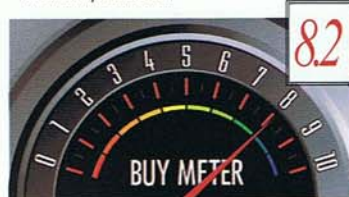


WHAT'S HOT

- ▶ Picks up signal in less than 2 minutes
- ▶ Easy to use and understand GUI
- ▶ Updated maps of the country, plenty of POIs
- ▶ 3D rendered maps

WHAT'S NOT

- ▶ Street names momentarily disappear on the screen when you take a turn



BOTTOMLINE

The carNAVi Pro BT is an excellent GPS navigation device, and is a godsend for navigationally challenged people who always seem to get lost.