

Clarion Celebrates 75th With HDMI, Marine Units

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LAS VEGAS – Clarion is sailing into Las Vegas for its 75th anniversary with an expanded assortment of marine-audio products, new smartphone apps for its Cloud-connected Smart Access head units, and its first two multimedia head units with HDMI to mirror the displays of smartphones and game players.

The company is also adding Siri Eyes Free to its line for the first time in two models, maintaining its selection of MirrorLink-equipped heads at two, and expanding its assortment of heads that stream the aptX codec over Bluetooth.

In expanding its marine lineup, the company is adding two new DMRs and three more amps. All are additions to the line.

Clarion plans celebrations and special events throughout the year to celebrate its 1940 founding as a manufacturer of battery-powered household radios in Tokyo.

Here's what's on the way 75 years later:

Smart Access: One new Smart Access head unit, the \$1,099-suggested NX605, ships at the end of the quarter to join the carryover \$599-suggested FX503 multimedia head unit. Two heads were also in the 2014 lineup.

Smart Access heads use touchscreens to control, and display the content of, select compatible third-party and Clarion-provided apps that run on HDMI-connected iPhones and Android phones. All apps are optimized for in-vehicle use, and most apps access Cloud-based

services. Those apps include navigation apps, Twitter, Facebook, weather, news, Pandora, iHeartRadio, and others. The Smart Access heads also control and display a phone's music library, contacts and calendar.

The company will talk up plans to add about five more apps to the selection.

Touchscreen control of the apps on Android phones is accomplished through Bluetooth HID. For Apple phones, control comes via Apple's IAP protocol over USB.

The NX605 is the company's new flagship double-DIN navigation/multimedia receiver with built-in HD Radio, live traffic information, and Clarion's Intelligent Voice powered by Google. Via HDMI-connected Android phone, Intelligent Voice delivers voice control of Gmail and Google Calendar, information search, and entering a navigation destination. Email is read aloud.

To search, users can say "I'm hungry" or "Are there any good sushi bars in town?" The answers will be spoken.

HDMI mirroring: Two other new double-DIN head units are the \$899 double-DIN NX405 navigation/multimedia head and the \$499 multimedia VX405, both with HDMI input to mirror the displays of HDMI-connected Android and Apple phones. They're the company's first heads with Siri Eyes Free. They ship, respectively, in the first and second quarters.

They also feature MirrorLink, an industry-standard technology that enables touchscreen-equipped OEM and aftermarket heads to control functions and stream



The double-DIN NX-405 navigation/multimedia head unit has an HDMI input to mirror the displays of a connected Android or Apple phone.

content from MirrorLink-compatible smartphones that run a MirrorLink app. Samsung and Sony offer MirrorLink-compatible phones.

Both head units feature built-in stereo Bluetooth, dual-zone entertainment, control of an outboard SiriusXM tuner, and control of Pandora on a USB-connected iPhone and Bluetooth-connected Android phone. Both heads also add new SiriusXM features, including replay, smart favorite, TuneStart, TuneScan and TuneMix.

In-dash CD: Five new models include three single-DIN models and two double-DIN models.

Hello sailor: For the marine market, the company is adding three new marine-grade XC amps, also suitable for vehicles, and two DMRs.

The \$349-suggested M505 and \$179 M205 DMRs feature global tuners, weather band, iPod/iPhone USB, and Pandora control. They ship in January. The step-up M505 adds Bluetooth with aptX, two-zone audio output, 6-channel 4-volt RCA outputs, optional wired remote, and SiriusXM tuner control.

In marine amps, the XC series of class D marine amps adds the two-channel \$249-suggested XC2110, four-channel \$149 XC2410, and five-channel \$349 XC2510. All are compact models with such features as adjustable crossovers, conformal coated components, and bridgeable output. They ship in the first quarter.

All of the company's new car and marine head units feature Pandora control via iPod/iPhone USB, and the Bluetooth models feature Bluetooth AVRCP to deliver basic control over a phone's music library and display the library's metadata.

Dual Expands Its Multimedia Lineup

LAS VEGAS – Dual Electronics is expanding its selection of Dual-branded in-dash multimedia head units, launching nine new models that include its first model with two-way DualMirror technology.

Two-way DualMirror technology enables touchscreen control of all apps running on HDMI-connected Android phones.

As in the 2014 line, three multimedia head units feature one-way DualMirror technology, which mirrors the display of HDMI-connected Android phones and iPhones without enabling touchscreen control of phone apps.

The 2015 multimedia lineup includes two models with 9-inch touchscreens. Both are single-DIN models, and they join a 2014 model with detachable 10.1-inch screen. Seven of nine new models feature Bluetooth. The lineup is priced from a suggested \$199 to \$399.

Separately, Dual Electronics is launching its first outboard processor with built-in stereo Bluetooth. It connects between an OEM or aftermarket head unit and an aftermarket amp to add Bluetooth streaming to a sound system.

The Wireless Smart EQ Processor also enables Android and Apple smartphone control of select processor functions when the phones run a free app. The app controls the processor's volume, fader, balance, and seven-band EQ with custom presets. The app also provides independent volume control of the front, rear and subwoofer inputs.

The 7 inch by 4.1 inch by 1.2 inch processor will be available in late January under the Dual and Axxera brands. Pricing was unavailable.

Of the multimedia heads, the four HDMI-equipped

models offer digital-to-digital HDMI converting circuit, said to preserve the quality of the digital video signal coming from a smartphone to deliver the highest quality picture reproduction on the receiver's screen.

The four DualMirror models include the top-end \$349 double-DIN 6.2-inch DV695MMB with two-way DualMirror. The other three, which feature one-way DualMirror, are the \$399 single-DIN 9-inch DV925BH, \$249 single-DIN 7-inch DV725BH, and \$269 double-DIN 6.2-inch DV625BH.

When an Android phone with HDMI or MHL output is connected to one of the four receivers, the receiver's screen mirrors the smartphone's touchscreen. The top model adds Bluetooth HID to navigate and control an Android smartphone's apps. iPhones lack Bluetooth HID, so receivers only mirror an iPhone or iPad display without control from the head unit's touchscreen.

All new models feature built-in programmable steering-wheel interface, three-band parametric EQ, seven EQ presets, front-panel USB (5-volt/1-amp) for phone playback and charging, and front 3.5mm audio aux in. All but two feature built-in HFP, stereo, and AVRCP 1.5 Bluetooth with ID3 Tag, which displays the artist, album, track name, and genre of the track playing. AVRCP 1.5 enables music-library browsing of connected devices to search by artist, album, song title, and playlist as well as deliver basic controls.

One head supports up to 1080p video playback via USB, and four feature rear-panel 5-volt/2.1-amp USB for charging tablets. None features feature iPod/iPhone USB, Android AOA or MTP. – **Joseph Palenchar**



Dual's \$349-suggested 6.2-inch DV695MMB with two-way DualMirror.

Massive Readies Tiny Bluetooth Amps

LAS VEGAS – Massive Audio plans first-quarter shipment of its first three Bluetooth-equipped car-audio amplifiers, intended to add Bluetooth music streaming to a car audio system without replacing the factory or aftermarket head unit.

The \$399-suggested BLX1 subwoofer amp is rated at 800 watts RMS into 1 ohm. The \$299 BLX2 is rated at 2x120 watts RMS into 4 ohms, and the \$399 BLX4 is rated at 4x120 watts RMS into 4 ohms.

The amps will be 30 percent smaller than the company's small Nano Bit series of amps and will be more powerful and more efficient as well as easier to mount.

Key features include 12-volt turn-on terminal, RCA inputs with music-sensing turn-on, adjustable low/high-pass 12dB Linkwitz-Riley filters, built-in adjustable subsonic filter, and Mosfet power supplies. The BLX1 and 2 measure 1 by 4.25 by 7.5 inches. The BLX4 measures 1 by 4.25 by 9 inches.

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