

## **Some HF Transceivers to consider**

*Prices indicated are approximate, check [AES](#), [HRO](#), or [manufacturers website](#) for the latest prices*

Just like cars and cameras, all radios are a compromise when prices and features are compared. It's best to see them in person before buying. Check out the controls and the display to see how they are laid out and if they appeal to you.

Please go to [www.eham.net/reviews](http://www.eham.net/reviews) and click on the HF transceiver category and read what other Hams have to say about the particular rigs you are considering before spending the big bucks. Also check out reviews at the ARRL website. Check out the Sherwood Engineering website, [www.sherweng.com](http://www.sherweng.com), click on "Receiver Test Data" for a more comprehensive list of tested receivers and how they are rated. Some aftermarket filters and mods from W4RT or INRAD may be available, particularly for the less expensive or used rigs, that may significantly improve their performance. Please also consider a used rig. There are some really top performers from the not too distant past that are great rigs and can be had at really good prices.

Buying a rig is a personal thing, so don't feel bad if your favorite is not mentioned. Please remember - while a good radio helps, it is actually good band conditions, a good antenna, and some operational experience tempered with patience, (in that order), that are the real "big gorillas" when it comes to HF DX performance.

## **HF Rigs Less than \$1000**

Usually smaller mobile oriented rigs that use menus to make up for lack of panel real estate for buttons and knobs. These are nice starter or backup rigs that can perform quite well, especially with a good antenna, but do not expect them to perform like a \$2000 rig. They are capable of DX with a good antenna.

- ICOM 718 w/DSP option (HF bands only, easy to op. w/good reputation) \$550.
- Yaesu 857D HF-VHF-UHF multi-bander. \$650. For the price does a lot.
- Icom 706 MKIIG mobile multibander that's been out a while. \$949.
- Yaesu FT-450 HF + 6M - \$799. Recent intro from Yaesu – uses some new technology. Medium sized. (The Dec 2007 issue of *QST* magazine has a review of this radio)

## **HF Rigs \$1000 - \$2000**

Many of the rigs in this class have been used successfully for DX ops) Most rigs in this class are Medium sized.

- Icom 7000 \$1299.
- Elecraft K3 - New - released by Elecraft as major redesign/upgrade to the respected K2 (the previous K2 XCVR had its HF receiver highly rated by the ARRL lab and Sherwood Engineering). The K2 was highly praised by top DXers. The K3 is Firmware upgradeable. Available in modular solderless kit form or factory

assembled. Estimated price for factory assembled 100W model with some options is about \$1900. The new K3 has many features that DXers like – its first two production runs were sold out. (Nov. 2007 update – the K3 after an initial delay, started shipping and is getting superb reviews at *Eham.net* by highly respected DXers. This rig is a clear leader in this price class and holds its own with rigs that are \$4000 and up in price) Made in USA.

- Kenwood TS-480 \$1000. Comes in a 200W version which some like
- Icom 746 Pro \$1500. This second version, i.e. "Pro" is a good performer.
- Icom IC-7200, New, Oct. 2008, Est. \$1300. Not a replacement for the IC-746 PRO according to an ICOM rep. New rig has ruggedized features and new technology and is targeted for adventure/field day type activity.
- Ten-Tec JUPITER – Upgraded 2008, Est. \$1600. Competent 100W HF rig, software upgradeable, nice CW features, top notch support, made in USA.
- Kenwood TS-2000, Lists about \$2300 but AES had it for \$1614.. A DC to Daylight multi-bander that is considered a "Jack of all Trades". Hams that have it usually like it. It's been out quite awhile and is not firmware upgradeable.
- Yaesu FT-950 –around \$1500. Has features found in Yaesu's higher priced FT-2000 and FT9000 and will accept the same upgrade options, i.e.- DMU unit, Micro tuning pre-selector system at a price. Getting good reviews.
- Flex 3000 from Flex Radio about \$1500. "Lite" version of Flex 5000A and will work with a PC using the same software as the 5000A. Just introduced Oct. 2008 so performance is not yet known. Needs a PC to make it work since, like the 5000A, it does not have any knobs or buttons and is controlled via PC screen.

## **HF Rigs \$2000 - \$3000**

In this price class, many rigs, but not all, are considered DX performers on HF. Newer models are firmware upgradeable which means the rig can be improved over time as firmware upgrades are released by the manufacturer.

- Yaesu FT-2000, \$2669. New release by Yaesu that is getting good reviews (after second firmware release fixed some early anomalies) as DX rig. The FT-2000 replaces the highly DX respected but mature FT1000 Mark V. It is Firmware upgradeable. Additional pricey optional upgrades that add a DMU and front end VRF filters to make it almost like Yaesu's \$10,000 radio.
- Icom 756 Pro III, \$2699. A design that has gone through several upgrades over the years. A respected performer that has been used on DXpeditions. Has a nice real-time spectrum display. It is not firmware upgradeable.
- Icom IC-7600 Introduced at 2008 Tokyo Ham Convention but not yet available as of Oct 2008. Est. \$3000. Has larger higher res display w/new technology from IC-7800 and IC-7700 models. Same cabinet size as 756 Pro III.
- TenTec OMNI VII - \$2550. New release from TenTec that is getting very good DX reviews by DXers that have more expensive rigs in the over \$3000 class. It is

Firmware upgradeable and has a spectrum display. See high receiver rating listed at [www.sherweng.com](http://www.sherweng.com). Can be connected directly to the Internet without a computer and then operated (voice and controls) via a remote computer that's anywhere on the Internet. (or over wi-fi anywhere in your home). Easy to use, Ten-Tec support is legendary. Rig is Firmware upgradeable. Made in USA.

- Flex 5000A, software defined radio - \$2499 intro price. Redesign & upgrade for Flex 1000 from Flex Radio Systems. This is truly a software defined radio therefore you must have a good PC with a Firewire port to go with this radio to make it work. Strong user community that contributes to upgrades. Good specs and liked by a number of DXers. Firmware upgradeable. Made in USA.

## **HF Rigs \$3000 and up**

Ten-Tec Orion II, Yaesu 9000 models, Icom 7800, Icom 7700 - Large rigs to match their high price but all good DX choices.

### **Remember...**

Good band conditions, a good antenna, and some operational experience tempered with patience, will make any radio an outstanding performer.

73 and good DX, Roger, K6OU