

Get the Most from your Electronic Charts

Updated Features Like Aerial Imagery and Detailed Marina Charts Provide Useful Info, Enhance Navigation Close to Port

Most cruisers are aware of the many advantages GPS/chartplotters and electronic charts offer when it comes to navigating safely and efficiently. This is true whether they're sailing along the coast for the day or spending the winter cruising from one tropical Bahamian port to another.

Many navigators "miss the boat," however, when cruising close to port — especially when entering or leaving a new harbor, inlet or marina. Once their electronic navigation equipment has gotten them from Point A to Point B, these boaters often "tune out" to what their electronics have to tell them. Which is a shame, because they're missing out on some of the latest and most useful developments in electronic navigation.

Over the past several years, cartography developers have enhanced accurate

navigational charts with value-added features that are particularly useful for close-in navigation. Since Jeppesen Marine added aerial photography and its proprietary C-Marina™ charts to its popular C-MAP MAX database several years ago, it has been steadily beefing up its library for popular coastal cruising areas and major inland waterways. For example, the company's most recent Fall 2009 release of MAX charts for North America and the Caribbean includes 1,380 additional aerial photographs from the previous release.


When boaters see a camera icon on the chartplotter display, all they have to do is use the cursor to view a high-quality aerial image. This is an excellent way to verify your position and cross-reference what you see on the electronic chart with what you see out the pilothouse window. These images also provide aerial

overviews of harbors and marinas, to help you get the "lay of the land." This improved situational awareness can also boost the navigator's confidence level when entering a crowded harbor mouth or unfamiliar inlet.

Your Slip is Showing

Detailed marina charts and an updated database of facility information are other powerful tools underutilized by many cruisers. For example, C-MAP MAX cartography includes specialized C-Marina charts and detailed data for thousands of popular marinas across North America. These "Macro" charts provide geo-referenced locations of fuel docks, pump outs, harbormasters, laundry facilities and more at a scale not found on official government charts. When viewed at the proper scale, boaters can use these electronic charts to navigate right to individual dock and slip numbers.

The best way for boaters to optimize these capabilities is to update their C-MAP MAX electronic charts at least once per season. Jeppesen Marine issues updated charts twice per year (each Spring and Fall). In addition to thousands of important Notice to Mariner corrections, these updated titles often provide new photos, additional marinas and extended coverage areas. Like updating software for your computer, it's the best way to make sure you're getting the most out of your navigational equipment.

Joining Club Jeppesen Marine makes annual updates affordable and automatic, and provides a host of additional benefits and discounts (including special offers for Marinalife members). To learn more, visit www.jeppesen.com/lightmarine. 

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