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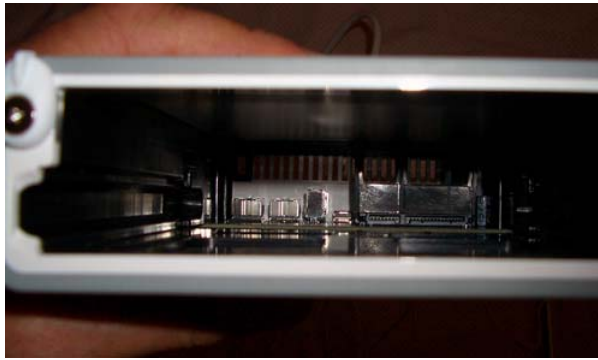
DataTale TQ-M12H – Review

On October 14, 2009, in Features, by John Nemerovski

DataTale TQ-M12H
Company: Oyen Digital
Price: $90
http://oyendigital.com/hard-drives/store/TQM12H.html

Get a handle on this unusual drive dock! I mean, you affix a brushed aluminum handle to an internal SATA full size 3.5 inch hard drive. This handle is a guide as you insert your drive into a custom powered bay that connects to your Macintosh via FireWire 800/400/USB/eSATA. All necessary cables are provided, colored white.

If you have no interest in working with external drives, stop reading now, and go back to your Facebook page. But if exposed drives make you feel really alive, skip the jive and take a dive.

Previous MyMac reviews have praised the RTX-Q from WiebeTech and the quad-interface Voyager from MacSales.com (the latter is one of our sponsors). Both enclosures are designed so a loose internal drive goes into the dock simply by holding and inserting the drive itself. Oyen Digital's DataTale adds the aforementioned handle to the operation, and MyMac approves of users not constantly touching the delicate circuitry.

The written instructions are not perfect, but they are adequate. You'll see how to screw the handle onto the internal drive via four special small knurled knobs and a slotted screwdriver that is not included. Why not, Oyen? Your customers will really appreciate that addition.

You also provide your own SATA drive (unless you purchased a pre-installed drive from Oyen), and I had one handy to evaluate the TQ-M12H. Insertion and locking it into place are straightforward, and the drive's icon appears on your Mac display's Desktop almost immediately when using the included FireWire 800 cable, which is Apple's new standard high-speed interface. Older computers can use a FireWire 400 or USB cable, with somewhat slower data transfer rates. The eSATA interface is less common, but is very fast, when it is available.

Note: An icon appears only if the drive is already formatted. A new drive will need to be formatted using Disk Utility. If you don't know how to do this, ask your local techie, Apple online or retail support, or friends at MyMac.

Case and handle design and construction are first rate: rugged and stylish. The power cable and plug aren't built as solidly as are the case and FireWire/USB cables. The on/off power button is on the rear port panel. This button doesn't give a firm or immediate physical response when pressed, and the company is aware of this minor suggested improvement. There are no serious cons and mostly all pros to Oyen's DataTale TQ-M12H in actual usage for backing up, archiving, external operating system booting, and external placement of an iPhoto or iTunes Library. Transfer speed is equal to the competition, and occasionally a little faster, being a newer unit with upgraded circuitry and Oxford 934 chipset.

The company has available a $14 custom storage and travel sleeve to encase a SATA drive that has Oyen's aluminum handle attached. It is a nice, semi-rigid storage sleeve that fits all 3.5 inch internal drives. Your eligible drives can be ready for action while in storage, with handles mounted. Additional handles are available in $13 packs of four.

Steve Oyen tells MyMac that the TQ-M12H is "is part of the DataTale series, which includes a 2-Bay and 4-Bay RAID system. The RAID systems use the same drive docking method as the TQ-M12H, which allows for easy drive interchange between the TQ-M12H and the RAIDs. The user can easily remove the drive from the TQ-M12H and slide it into a RAID system, which is capable of creating an automatic duplicate copy using RAID Mirroring."

MyMac recommends this affordable modular system of working with internal drives. Our score for DataTale TQ-M12H from Oyen Digital is a strong MyMac Review Rating: 8 out of 10.

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