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Casio PRG50 Titane Pro Trek Watch,

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- Gear reviews and tests -



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Description :

An excellent outdoors watch review.

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My Suunto X6 being in the mail for a few months [1], I decided for a replacement.

I choosed the Casio PRG50 Titanium.

Here it it on my wrist



This Casio model was pretty attractive, 240 Euros on the net, to have it delivered the next day, transport included.

The watch band is titanium, the glass is a lens-effect mineral glass, the top casing of the watch is metal, as well as the bottom plate. The light button and sensor protection are painted plastic (metal paint over grey plastic).

The "double lock" metal band lock



Casio PRG50 Titane Pro Trek Watch,

This watch runs on a rechargeable battery, it is recharged by solar panels placed in circle just around the LCD display. Amazingly, it is a very small surface. I tried a charge, and it effectively takes 1 hour to go from half charge to full charge in summer, the watch has since not shown to be low on battery.

The watch got 6 buttons: set-up, mode, light, alti, baro, compass.

A better view, the dark band between the display and the metal case, is the solar panel



Features

This is a rather classic casio triple sensor module for the rest, and the functions/features are as follows:

- Time and Date. A good thing is that the date is displayed in YY MM-DD format, which avoid me to be trapped by the MM-DD YY english convention [\[2\]](#) used in older similar Casio modules. I love being able to read the date without incertitude!
- One daily alarm.
- Compass. Compass data is shown on the two level LCD display. One level shows the bearing in numeric, the highest semi-transparent level is used to display a compass rose.
- Barometer, does not show sea-level pressure but actual pressure. A graph is filled with the last 24 hours data.
- Altimeter, also filling a graph as it takes measures.

Casio PRG50 Titane Pro Trek Watch,

- Solar powered, with a rechargeable battery.
- Power saving: when the watch is not in use, and in darkness, the watch turns to sleep-mode, blanking the display. Using the light, or increasing the amount of light received by the solar panels wakes it up. Can be turned down.
- Auto light: when the light received by the solar panels is low, turning the wrist from flat to 45 degrees towards you turns the electro-luminescent panel on for 2 seconds. Very clever, and very useful. Can be turned down.
- Waterproof 100 meters, or 10 bars.
- There is some chronometric function, but the precision is to the second.

Precisions

Compass mode and the double layered LCD



- Compass: accuracy 10 degrees. The actual precision seems to be better than that, and I got some 2-3 degrees accuracy most of the time. There are two calibrating procedures: one on fixed bearing, where you need a compass to do it, and one in free bearing mode, where you basically need to take one measure in any direction, then turn the watch, and calibrate the opposite direction. Easy enough to be done everywhere. The precision is still not that of a Suunto Vector. It seems to be reasonably sensible to inclinations. More work seems needed into checking this function.

Altimeter mode



- Altimeter: 5 meters precision, magnitude -10000 to 10000. The X6 had a one meter "clumsy" precision, I prefer the 5 meter increments. The experiments I have done so far were effectively 5 meters close to the real altitude, even when climbing 500 meters, or a kilometer, so I rate this as an excellent precision. There is a data recording altimeter mode, for 41 records spaced of 15 or 5 minutes. The altimetric graph is a good visual aid. Recorded values are max, min, relative altitude, total ascent, etc... There is an altitude alarm, and it can be calibrated.

Barometer and thermometer mode



- Barometer: Displays the actual barometric pressure in 1 hpa (or mb) increments, and not the corrected sea pressure. There is actually no way to get the sea level pressure without external computation. This is not a problem to me as what I am interested in is the graph, which shows the evolution, and can be interpreted easily in terms of weather. It can be calibrated.
- Thermometer, displays the watch temperature, but can be calibrated.

The measurement units, originally metric, can be changed: hours in the anglo-saxon 12 hours am/pm system, temperatures in degrees F, or heights in ft, pressures in inHg.

Usage

The titanium band is a pleasure to wear, even in hot weather. It seems a much better asset than a plastic band.

The watch is big, rather like a Suunto Vector. A bit more heavy.

The functions are easilly accessed, though some advanced processing is difficult to remember.

The automatic light is a pleasure to have in dark conditions, as it lights on a simple move of the wrist. The dedicated light button is quite useful too.

The altimeter seems pretty accurate, and the compass totally funtional.

The watch goes on sleep mode and out of it, totally unnoticed, as it wakes up at the least sollicitation, or in day/reading light.

Time display



The solar charging of the battery is something I look forward to talk after some more time with the watch, as I know from experience that these watches get pretty less water resistant when opened to change the battery. This is not needed here, so I expect a good life expectancy (some 10 years from the manufacturer's words). Nothing worst than having an expensive watch showing battery low signs when you know you will not be able to change it for sometime, because you are in the field [\[3\]](#).

This is very different from a Suunto Vector, or even X6, some functions, I will regret, like multiple alarms,

count-downs, or even precise chronograph, but on the other side I can easily do without [4].

Conclusion

The Casio PRG50T seems to be a good watch. I like the zero maintenance idea, we shall see how long it really lasts.

There are some very good ideas, which turns out to be very convenient, to the expense of some more classical functions.

Overall, It is much better than previous similar Casios I have owned 5 or 6 years ago [5], and coming very close to the Suuntos.

Update 18-Aug-2003

I have now been wearing this watch for a month, and the more I use it, the more I like it. It is sturdy enough, and the features of the auto-light is brilliant. Water resistance seems up to the task, and the sensors have kept precision, even after diving to low depths almost every day since I got it. The altimetric (& barometric) accuracy is actually excellent, much better than what I was getting with the (normally more precise) Suunto X6.

One little reproach about the compass is the lack of inclinometer to make sure the watch is flat when taking the measure. A good way to get a precise measure is to align the north of the watch with the north shown (then the compass is less sensible to wrist rotation), find flatness with the angle of the arm, and then find the bearing. If water is at hand, dropping water on the glass and trying to make the best repartition can help finding flatness. Also a sight could have been a good move. Another little reproach is that the glass catches reflects a lot, and often can only be read when perpendicular to the eyes. Yo can see this on my pictures already.

The solar charging seems to work well, and the battery indicator has never left the fully charged state.

Update 6-Sept-2005

Watch still running fine, battery fine. I have been wearing it every day since last update, one of the first watch that survives such a long time to my treatment. All is good.

Post-scriptum :I will update this review as time passes.

[1] See [Suunto X6 watch](#).

[2] Very confusing compared to the DD MM YY that I generally use.

[3] Yes it happened to me.

[4] I did not really use them in fact when I had them.

[5] [Suunto X6 watch](#). to see these.