

Tecsun Ultralight Radios

There is currently heightened interest in Tecsun-made radios, which also appear under the Kaito, Eton and Grundig brands. Perhaps the most famous is the Eton e100, which started out as the Tecsun PL-200. More recently, the Kaito WRX-911 (Tecsun R-911) was discovered to have remarkable DXing capabilities. A quick check on the Web reveals that Tecsun, which has been making radios since approximately 1995, has a myriad of Ultralight-size models to choose from. Tecsun is based in China, where it goes by the name Desheng. Information on most models can be found at Tecsun's somewhat up-to-date English web site (www.tecsun.com.cn/english/index.htm) and at a Chinese hobbyist web site (www.wg168.cn/desheng.htm).

To assist you in surveying what is available, below is a pictorial summary of the Tecsun-made offerings. Note that these all appear to be Ultralights; as they are obtained and tested, their Ultralight status under the Definitions will be confirmed.

Analog “Landscape” Series

With its “landscape” form factor, it is able to accommodate the 4” ferrite antenna of the PL-200 (Eton e100) for good sensitivity across the band. The R-911 (and possible all of them) has decent selectivity and absolutely unparalleled nulling ability. As you can see below, this “landscape” form factor has undergone various permutations since 1995, eventually losing the TV band and FM stereo capability. The Tecsun models generally only tune to 1610 khz, while the Kaito versions cover the entire X Band to 1710 khz.



R-202T
1990's
AM/FM

R-909 series
1990's
AM/FM/SW
R-909A – FM stereo
R-909T – TV band

R-1012
1990's
AM/FM/SW/TV
Better tuner?

R-1212A
1990's
AM/FM/SW/TV
Best tuner?
FM stereo



R-1210
1998(?)
AM/FM/SW/TV
Best tuner?

R-911
2002
AM/FM/SW
aka Kaito WRX-911

R-912
2002
AM/FM/SW
Better FM tuner
FM stereo

R-9012
2005
AM/FM/SW

The R-911 is still in production according to a recent Tecsun catalog excerpt found at http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4c78586c0100cn43.html, although virtually all of these models are widely available through eBay and other outlets.

An exhaustive review (in Chinese) of the R-911 and R-912 can be found at <http://hkradioer.googlepages.com/31>. He concludes that the R-912 has a much better FM section, as well as a somewhat better AM section. Interestingly, the R-912's FM sensitivity is quoted as 10 uV, while that of the R-911 is 5 uV. Normally, a smaller number would be better, but Tecsun apparently may have a different measurement system! Using this as a guide, some *provisional* rankings of tuner quality (better and best) are listed above, but these must be confirmed with actual testing. I note that the AM specifications for the 911 and 912 are the same, so the reviewer above may have had a misaligned R-911.

AM/FM Shirt-pocket Receivers

Not much is known about these, but assuming the ferrite antenna runs across the top, sensitivity may be lacking.



R-213T



R-212T



R-218
No TV band

AM/FM/SW Shirt-pocket Receivers

These have been re-branded and sold in North America, but none have proven to be a good AM DX machine.



R-808/ Grundig Mini 100



R-818



R-828



R-829B



R-908/ Grundig Mini 200



R-919/ Grundig Mini 300 PE

Mini AM/FM Receivers

No one has yet determined if any of these have potential, although given their size, expectations are minimal.



R-101



R-102



R-201



M-10

PLL Single Conversion Receivers

These may be real sleepers. Per <http://www.leowood.net/tesun149.htm>, the sensitivity and selectivity of the DR-910 is better than the R-911 and R-912. The DR-910 was imported as the Grundig 1000A, and has analog tuning with digital readout and a 1 kHz tuning resolution. The DR-910 was replaced by the DR-920 (Grundig G1100) which kept the analog/digital tuning system. Per <http://www.hard-core-dx.com/archive/irca/msg11524.html>, this model is not unknown to DXers and appears to be a capable performer.



DR-910
Grundig 1000A



DR-920
Grundig 1100

Dual Conversion Receivers

The analog R-9701 and R-9710 likely have similar circuitry, while the PLL R-9702 may be quite different. Based on advertising literature, it appears that dual conversion is only on shortwave bands. Per <http://hkradioer.googlepages.com/14>, the R-9710, which has the same cabinet as the R-911, is a capable performer.



R-9701
1995



R-9702
1998(?)



R-9710
2002

Deluxe PLL Dual Conversion Receivers

Tecsun's flagship Ultralight, the PL-200 (Eton e100), has been exhaustively reviewed and is a known capable performer. As with the previous category, the dual conversion is apparently only effective on shortwave. The successor, the PL-310, is apparently starting to become available in China, and with its DSP filtering, may be the next big thing in Ultralighting!



PL-200
Eton e100



PL-310
Brand New!

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