

Valentine owners are the only ones making the claim that Craig Peterson is biased and this is just more crap from them. What they don't tell you is the fact that Craig Peterson has picked the Valentine before so how could he be biased. The only real test that is biased is the Car and Driver test as the person behind this test works for Mike Valentine. Valentine owners will try to tell you that Craig Peterson works for Escort but he does not. Craig Peterson is one of many experts that feels that the X50 is better than the Valentine One.

Lets face it Mike Valentine has not been able to come out with a detector that is better than the 8500,8500x50 or Bel RX65 and he still makes you pay \$400 for his detector and it still can't stand up to any of them.

Quote SML June 2004 [Carl Fors gave the "Top Dog" award for detectors in the over \$300.00 price dollar category to the Escort 8500 X50 for the following reasons:

It was the only detector to report constant on and instant on radar over the hill at the 2.5 cone. It consistently alerted to the MPH's Bee III RDD POP Mode. It was able to defeat the new Spectre III RDD and it tied in the Long Ranger test to alerting as an outstanding 11 miles from the radar guns. The X50 also lends itself to easily interface with our motorcycle defense systems.

Quote Motor Trend [we felt that the Passport 8500's \$100 lower price and the ability to add Passport's optional ZR3 laser shifting technology, give it a slight nod over the Valentine One's directional arrows and measurably superior X-band sensitivity. The Passport 8500 Remains the gold standard in radar/LIDAR dashtop detectors.

Quote Forbes [The Passport 8500 might be the best radar detector ever made. Last year we told you about a radar detector that talked, which was handy, since you didn't have to memorize a passel of tones to know what kind of danger you were in. Only one problem: That unit, like every other one we'd ever tested, had a nasty propensity to fire off false alarms. Every gas station with an electric door would cause an alert, sending us reaching for the off switch.

Now the \$299 Passport 8500 screens such "falses" out by measuring the exact "frequency signature" of the radar. (Others just measure the band, but the frequency difference between a cop's radar gun and that of, say, a security system, is quite large.) If the 8500 doesn't pick up an approved police radar signature, the beacon won't sound. And it really works. In our tests of regional "annoyance zones"--two strip malls; four gas stations; and three intersections where we don't know the cause of the false alarm, we only know all other units start blaring there--the 8500 didn't flinch.

And when we went by our local speed trap--the unimaginative police in our test zone set themselves up on the same stretch of highway every weekend--the 8500 also warned us more quickly than any other detector has.

So no more braking for no reason--or driving unprotected because you can't stand the constant false alarms.]

Quote Radar Roy [In our testing, and the testing of several major testing companies, the Escort 8500 is the leader of the pack! Combined with the superior range the Escort 8500 has on picking up radar signals, with its superior filtering capabilities, earns the Escort 8500 a five star rating. Flash upgradable by Escort.

Quote Radar Roy again [The big drawback to the Valentine One in our opinion is the price as it costs \$399.00 and does not detect POP3 radar guns at all! In our testing, the Escort 8500 outperformed the Valentine 1 in range and filtering.

Quote Radartest.com [The Valentine One is a familiar face, having been introduced in 1992. It was repackaged in its original housing not long ago, making it a bit thinner in profile, but its display is still about a third wider than the others in the test. True, its case is shorter than some in overall length, but for a windshield-mounted piece of mobile electronics, we're naturally more concerned about width since it has a greater impact on the driver's view of the road.

Other than now being housed in the old case and having received occasional subassembly replacements and some software tweaks, the latter most recently in 2002, it has remained largely unchanged since George Bush (not Dubya, we're talking the first George Bush here) spent his last year in the White House. With a detector's lifespan averaging 18 months these days, as the most expensive unit tested, the V1 would have to offer a dazzling array of virtues and world-class performance to make the cut against the far more modern contenders in this test.

The V1 is unique in having a metal case rather than the usual plastic. A trio of large red directional arrows, a feature dubbed the radar locator, dominates the center of its rectangular face. It's flanked on the left by a large alphanumeric LED display that depicts operating mode and the number of radar signals being received. On the far right is a rear radar antenna and opposite that is the single control knob and concentric lever that operate the unit. The lever controls volume when the unit is muted, the multi-function knob controls power, volume and mode selection, a lot of

tasks for one switch and the reason why V1 basic mode changes take more than twice as long as they do on both competing models.

Signal strength is depicted by beep frequency and a row of eight red LEDs. Band ID is handled by four more red LEDs stacked vertically. Identical in color and closely spaced, they can be difficult to identify at night, making the audio doubly important for band ID. Audio tones for X-band and laser are excellent but K- and Ka-band are a mite too similar for easy comprehension. Veteran users won't have any trouble but newcomers will need time to learn them.

Three operating modes are available. All Bogeys mode functions like a Highway mode, delivering maximum sensitivity on all three radar bands. In Logic mode, alerts to weak X-band signals are issued at muted volume. Advanced Logic mode lets the microprocessor decide which X-band signals pose a threat and reports strong signals at full audio volume.

The V1 windshield mount is the best we've seen, a snap to adjust or remove and it holds the unit rock steady. We also liked the telephone-style connector on the power cord, a fail-safe method that has since been adopted by some competitors. And it has an audio jack for an external speaker or earphone, a plus for motorcyclists or drivers of noisy vehicles. If the detector is mounted out of reach, a remote audio module (\$49) with two output jacks and a control knob/lever is available.

After spending time with the BEL and Escort models, the lack of features to be found in the V1, the most expensive corded model on the market, belies its age. Although standard today on \$69 models, there's no auto mute, for example, requiring the driver to reach over to hit the mute button to silence an alert. No problem if you're cruising down Santa Monica Boulevard, but definitely an issue if you're moving at warp speed on a two-lane mountain road at night.

And since V1 owners love to hide the V1 and its laser-bright status and alert lights in a bid to keep them away from prying eyes, reaching the unit sometimes isn't an option. For that you'll need to shell out \$39 for a remote display and hard-wiring kit and string the wires around the cockpit. Including the optional \$29 carrying case, when equipped similarly to the BEL and Escort, the Valentine's all-up price is \$467.

Also absent is a text display or voice alerts; there's no tutorial mode to speed up the process of learning the alert systems, no programmable options like alternate audio tones or different visual displays to help tailor the detector to a user's tastes. Nor is there selectable band defeat, the ability to shut off one or more radar bands.

But having been lambasted by V1 zealots in the past for failing to mention that the Valentine can be user-programmed, sort of--although there's no mention of it in the owner manual--we spent some time investigating this phenomenon. But rather than bore you with details of this involved process, we included that in our Shootout! BEL vs Escort vs Valentine: Part II: The Extended Version along with other observations about the V1.

Valentine trades heavily on this detector's rear radar antenna and we found it gave anywhere from two to three times the detection range of the other units. It also enabled the Spectre radar detector to get 311 percent more range on a V1 going away than when approaching the RDD, making it a mixed blessing.

In urban areas the directional arrows were often hyperactive, alerting to every door opener in the neighborhood with the bogey counter (able to display up to nine simultaneous signals and indicate which is the strongest) frequently warning of three or more simultaneous threats coming from different quadrants of the compass. Many of these were X- and K-band door openers and local oscillators from passing radar detectors.

We tried mounting the V1 atop the dash, our preferred location since it keeps the detector in our line of sight and within easy reach. So positioned, Ka-band radar range to the rear was less than the BEL PRO RX65 and X50 Escort's, each of them dash-mounted in exactly the same spot. Still, a mile of range is more than enough in light of the negligible threat posed by radar coming from behind.

With the V1 removed from its mid-windshield position we also saw the directional arrows become confused, frequently hunting around in response to weak signals.

Valentine traditionally has dismissed any criticism of its detector's abbreviated list of features, shrugging it off as inconsequential in comparison to the hot performance. And for many years they had a point--the V1 always walked off with best-in-class X-band and laser sensitivity and often K-band as well. But X-band sensitivity doesn't matter today; two of the three biggest radar manufacturers stopped making X-band guns except by special order some years back--they list X-band in the catalog only for competitive bidding purposes--and only one state police department, New Jersey, continues to use it in any quantity. The Ohio Highway Patrol is fast disposing of their ancient X-band K-55s in lieu of modern K- and Ka-band hardware and even Jersey is migrating to K band, that state's only other approved

frequency.

We also tested it against the MPH BEE III radar in POP mode and found that the Valentine One was unable to spot the brief bursts of Ka band. The BEL PRO RX65 and Escort 8500 X50 detected POP 90 percent and 75 percent of the time, respectively, maybe not perfect but plenty good enough, particularly for those who live in areas where the lethal BEE can be found.

The Valentine One is a highly sensitive radar detector--good enough that we declared it the winner of our 2000 Automobile Magazine shootout--but it's no longer top dog. The world has changed since it was designed in 1991. The Apple IIsi also was hot stuff that year but Apple knew better than to continue peddling the same box. They replaced it with smaller, faster, user-friendlier models packed with advanced features. But the V1, with growing gaps evident in its performance envelope--not to mention a minimalist feature set, quirky ergonomics and stiff price tag--seems locked in a time warp and the competition has clearly passed it by.]

Quote Radarsource.com [Let me be blunt: the Escort Passport 8500 X50 is the BEST radar/laser detector ever created. If you think I'm exaggerating, take a look at the reviews by every major auto magazine and radar testing organization out there. They all agree that Escort's years of experience, cutting edge technology, and attention to detail produced the most effective radar/laser detection device available today. A significant leap forward from the extremely popular Passport 7500, the 8500 X50 performs exceptionally well even in the toughest condition. This detector can alert you to laser and radar threats up to 3 miles ahead, while drastically reducing the number of false alarms you get. In independent tests, the Escort 8500 scored the highest marks of any unit in the instant-on category which is one of the toughest radar situations to recognize. And the 8500 X50 has an advanced digital signal processor that can be reprogrammed; as radar threats change, your X50 will be able to adapt.]

Oh ya everyone knows that No matter what detector you are using when you get hit with laser its almost always too late..

Quote SML [AKA speedzones.com] [Laser is not radar! Laser's one milliradian, monochromatic beam can target one vehicle in a group. Radar can't! Laser's beam is extremely narrow compared to radar and must be reflected back to the laser gun by a reflective surface on the vehicle...first aiming point the license plate and then the headlights. At 500 feet, laser's light beam is a mere 18" wide compared to an X band radar beam of 157 feet. Laser does not "scatter" like radar's bouncing off other vehicles, billboards, or buildings giving you advanced warning. Simply put, there is no advanced warning to laser's use like there is with radar. If you receive a laser warning it usually means you just got a ticket! To prove this point we placed a target vehicle at 1,000 feet and a car behind it containing a radar/laser detector. We first hit the 1,000 foot vehicle with Ka band radar and both detectors alerted. We then fired a Stalker laser gun at the 1,000 foot vehicle's license plate. The front vehicle's detector alerted to laser, the following vehicle's detector was silent! We did this ten times with three different laser guns. The results were identical. The rear vehicle's detector provided no advanced warning to laser. For the test we had all test vehicles locate at the 1,000 ft. cone.and we used Stalker's LZ-1laser gun.]

I don't make it a practice to make personal attacks on those with whom I disagree, although the anonymity and safety of Internet-launched attacks has certainly elevated this into an art form. Fortunately, my stature in the industry is such that I've never received hate mail from owners of detectors sold by BEL, Cobra, Escort, Uniden or Whistler. This in spite of the fact that while my tests over the past decade in Automobile and a dozen other magazines both here and abroad have declared as winners a model or two from every one of these outfits, so have we declared others in their model lineups as losers.

On the other hand, we constantly get hate mail from fans of the Valentine One. And we almost daily run across excerpts--sometimes the entire pages-long diatribe--from Mike Valentine's personal attack on me, prominently carried for years on his company Website. This kind of personal attack is rather rare in the corporate world (when is the last time you've witnessed something similar?) and we've ignored these rantings since they began in 1993--Mr. Valentine is nothing if not relentless--but frankly we are weary of responding to e-mails mentioning them.

So just this once, we'll examine some of the more contentious charges on Mike's Website--
<http://www.valentine1.com/lab/V1Hater.asp>. Then you'll have a balanced look at the facts. Here are some of the high points of the Valentine attack.

Valentine:

" 'Craig Peterson's December [1995] radar detector comparison test generated more angry letters--and on-line discussion--than anything since the Davis Ferrari/raccoon incident.' -- Automobile, March, 1996"

My response: There's been some editing done to this quote. Actually, it read: "...generated more angry letters--most of them from Valentine owners-- than anything..." Nobody else has complained about any of my tests during the

entire decade I ran them for the magazine and in the years since for Radartest.com, Mr. Valentine excepted, but when I fail to pay homage to the V1, many of those who purchase this heavily-hyped, and hyper-expensive detector instantly go into attack mode.

We get exactly the same reaction from purchasers of Rocky Mountain Radar's bogus radar/laser jammers. They've just spent megabucks for what's reputed to be a world-beating product and here we have the temerity to question the supremacy of the product.

Valentine:

"He gets measurements wrong

But instead of debating philosophy, let's look at his record on simple facts. Peterson opens his website review of V1 by saying it is "by far the largest and heaviest unit tested..."

On our scale, Passport is heaviest at 8.9 ounces followed by V1 at 8.6 and the BEL at 8.0. Only V1 has a metal case (magnesium), the others are plastic.

Passport is also the longest by a huge margin at 5.29 inches, followed by the BEL at 4.72 inches. V1 is shortest at 4.46 inches, more than a quarter inch shorter than the BEL and nearly an inch shorter than Passport. In thickness, all are within 0.1 of an inch (V1 is thickest). Only in width is V1 significantly larger than the others, but the difference between them is less than the difference in length."

My response: We weigh the unit complete with power cord and the V1 with its substantial plug did tip the scales a bit more than the Escort and BEL at the time of that 2001 test. And face it: width in a detector is of far greater significance than length. A wide detector blocks more of the driver's view of the road ahead, an item of some importance to most of us. Length, on the other hand, is of little consequence.

Despite his denial, it's worth noting that recently Valentine abandoned the fat housing we mentioned in the Automobile test and returned to the original 1991 case that's slightly slimmer and lighter although just as wide.

Valentine:

"His range tests raise questions about his methods

In the Automobile straightaway/hill test, notice how his results mostly fall into four narrow clusters at 23, 27, 31, and 40. In fact, only three bars are not in those clusters. Look closely. Four of five detectors have the same K-band range. Seven different X-band tests have the same distance of 31; two detectors get exactly the same results for both City and Highway modes (why have both modes if they perform the same?)."

My response: As we mention in the story, those "narrow clusters" correspond to slight hillcrests which naturally tend to group together detectors with similar sensitivity. As they reach a crest, they come more directly into the radar beam and bingo, they alert.

That phenomenon didn't occur until, after years of complaining by Mike, we lengthened this nearly-flat 4.1-mile straightaway test site because we were accused of truncating the site to unfairly limit the true maximum range potential of the V1. Once it became evident that several other models had equal or better maximum range, particularly on Ka band, our selection of test sites came under attack.

And apparently Mike doesn't often look at other detectors or he'd know that some manufacturers don't alter sensitivity in X-band City mode, they merely raise the threshold at which an alert is sounded. So naturally their detection range in both modes is nearly identical.

In our tests we rigidly group the contestants according to price, mindful that higher price usually means better performance. So it's not unusual for these comparably priced units to exhibit similar performance, at least on X and K band. Ka-band performance costs money and most of the manufacturers have slacked off in this area and usually only one or two show stellar performance on Ka.

In contrast, Mike's tireless champions at Car & Driver routinely test the \$400 V1 against models street-priced as low as \$99, the ethical equivalent to asking a 911 Turbo to square off against a 1.8T VW Golf. The test results are hardly a surprise--but they do make for great quotes in magazine ads.

Valentine:

"The man behind the byline

Rather than trying to explain Peterson's mysterious results, let me just remind you that his credibility has long been in question. In response to his December, 1995, test, Automobile admitted a flood of "angry letters" which "criticized our selection of the BEL 745Sti Plus as our first-place winner over the Valentine One, which tied for third place. Amidst all the allegations of invalid test methodology and unfairness were suggestions that Peterson showed undue favoritism to the BEL unit because he has consulted for the company."

In the March, 1996, issue, Peterson replied, "Having consulted to every major detector manufacturer, suggestions that BEL received preferential treatment are nonsense."

He's wrong on that point too. He's never been a consultant to Valentine Research, although he's approached us more than once. We declined his advances each time."

My response: I volunteered the information that I'd consulted to the industry since I felt it only fair to my readers to know. But nobody had asked and frankly, no manufacturer but Valentine has ever expressed a concern over my consulting, either before or since that 1996 statement. The test results were repeatable and when Automobile sent editor Kevin Clemens along to monitor future tests, nothing much changed.

In fact, such is my stature in the industry that in the early Nineties I consulted to all three of the biggest manufacturers simultaneously. Their faith in my integrity was so complete that even with intimate knowledge of their plans and future products--information potentially worth millions to another company--none showed the slightest hesitation in retaining my services, even knowing that I was providing similar expertise to their fiercest competitors.

It's also worth noting that at the time of the 1995 Automobile flap, unbeknownst to me, the CEOs of all three of these companies wrote personal letters in defense of me to Automobile publisher David E. Davis, suggesting that he do a bit more than simply repeat the rantings of the Valentine lobby.

Here's what really triggered Mike's outrage about the consulting bit: my statement in Automobile read: " Having consulted to every major detector manufacturer..." And I'd never met or spoken to Mike Valentine, much less asked him for a consulting gig. (Nor have I met, written to or spoken to him since.)

Frankly it never occurred to me. Valentine Research, little more than a storefront boutique outfit, is so tiny that the industry trade association doesn't even bother to track its sales. Best estimates are that Valentine accounts for 0.9 percent of total industry sales. My thought back then was: Why bother? I'm already maxed-out with existing clients. And with Valentine's well-known abrasive personality, why seek work with an ego-centric jerk? That's one of the luxuries of being self-employed.

Those who know Mike--and in the two decades I've been associated with the industry I've met plenty of folks who do--are unanimous in their opinion that he has, shall we say, some unresolved personal issues. "Mike's ego walks into the room 20 minutes before he gets there," a detector company CEO who'd previously worked with Valentine for years once remarked. And that's why he was forced out of Escort long before most of their landmark products were developed; nobody could get along with the guy. If I ever were to meet him, I suspect I'd fall into that group as well.

One last item: Mike neglects to mention a rather noteworthy point about that hated 2000 Automobile magazine test he's so upset about. He won. I declared the Valentine One the winner of that test.