**Product:** Mercury "On-The-Go" external/portable FireWire hard drive from Other World Computing/Mac Sales
**MSRP**: $359.97   Street price: same
**Review date:** 16 December 2003
Review by Daniel M. East, President, The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs)
info@mamugs.com • http://www.mamugs.org

**DESCRIPTION** (what's it do?): Storage solution external hard drive for cross platform use (should you need both) with a complete software suite and blazing performance in a small package. Bus or transformer powered.

MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: Macintosh with FireWire Interface and OS 8.6 and above or PC with FireWire interface and Windows 98 or other OS with FireWire Support.

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS:** Modern, clean design in a small package. A complete package with everything you might need for backup, storage and mobility. OWC also includes a pre-loaded software folder on the drive.

**WHAT I FOUND**: This drive is FAST. Faster, in fact, than the internal *IBM/Hitachi GNX* hard drive on my TiBook. In addition to the impressive speed and ease of this drive, OWC has cleverly included all of the Apple TV advertisements in QuickTime movie form from 1984 through last year's campaign. A nice touch and, clearly, OWC knows their audience. This cool combination of casing and drive was a pleasant surprise compared to several other drives I have tested. For backup, the time saved with the speed of this drive is really impressive when you backup and/or store files over 100Mb in size. The 8Mb buffer (almost standard these days) makes a big difference as well. Access times were far faster on this drive over others when opening the identical QT movies, larger Photoshop files (40Mb plus), reloading backed up data, etc.. IBM/Hitachi's "instant-on" access is apparent in the performance of this speedy package.

**LIKES? :** I really like the look and feel of this drive. Like other OWC products, the drive is seated in a solid casing that seems to be resistant to modest shock - although I don't recommend tossing any drive around. The OWC MOTG is also nearly silent for such an impressively fast drive. A very well thought out package that includes a modest travel case and cabling; this drive is perfect for everything from audio/video, daily backup, partitioning and just about anything you might need for storage. 60Gb is just about the right amount of external storage for nearly anyone and you can even mirror many internal hard drives with various "cloning" utilities. I prefer *Carbon Copy Cloner*, myself. OWC includes *Dantz's Retrospect Express* and *Intech's HD Speed Tools* so you are ready to easily backup your data -- something that everyone really should do more often than I seem to hear from most Mac users. A far smaller price to pay than the bill from the wonderful people at *DriveSavers* (whom are great should you need them, by the way). I partition my externals into three parts: a bootable maintenance partition for repairs to my internal, a mirror of my internal drive and a storage-only partition for disk images and file storage. The results were truly impressive and I saw no errors after many hours of use and testing.

**DISLIKES?** : This drive enclosure is a little larger overall than some other brands, however, it is well worth it. While I really like the lapis LED, a second indicator of activity on the drive would be helpful. Maybe it is just the unneeded "flashing light" factor, but I find it helpful. I would like a slightly longer FireWire cable to be provided; the one included is just barely long enough to reach around my TiBook but simply not enough for a desktop model - especially if you keep your Mac on the floor below your work surface. While I love the "idea" of all of the software pre-loaded on the drive, much of it is already outdated versions of some good titles.

**HOW DOES THIS PRODUCT COMPARE?** : I use three external drives and the OWC is now, clearly (pun intended), my favorite. Without question, the OWC's IBM/Hitachi 7200 RPM 60Gb drive is the fastest performer. It is, again, a larger overall size than the *FireLite drives by SmartDisk* and *Wiebe's MicroGB+* but I prefer the look of the OWC. SmartDisk's magnesium housing and rubberized grips are great if you are looking for the most compact design vs. speed. While Wiebe's drives are daisy-chain ready, the casings don't feel as sturdy nor as secure. Also, Wiebe doesn't include the power supply should you want to daisy-chain the drives. If you need cross platform support, SmartDisk is the one of the three that doesn't have both USB 2.0 AND FireWire in the same drive. In terms of pricing, the 7200/60Gb FW ext. drives stack up this way: Wiebe 379.00; SmartDisk 349.00 and OWC's Mercury "On-The-Go" 359.97.

**RECOMMEND TO A FRIEND?**: This is the perfect combination of form AND function for almost any need. Great for novice, advanced amateurs and professionals providing a very reliable storage solution with all of the software included.

**TEST SYSTEM:** Apple Titanium PowerBook G4 500 - 1Gb RAM - 10.3.1

**FINAL THOUGHTS**: Once again, Other World Computing has impressed me with how well thought out their products continue to be for the Mac user. These enclosures and drives are just a matter of pairing the right box with the right internal drive and this one is just right. Reliability, speed, quiet operation and everything you need for outstanding portable storage. The pre-loaded items are high on the "coolness-factor;" however, I could live without the feeling that the drive isn't completely clean when I open the box.

**OVERALL RATING:** 5 out of 5 stars EXCELLENT
For more information, visit:
<http://eshop.macsales.com/Catalog_Item.cfm?ID=5878&Item=OWCMOFW60GB72>