

# NEXT YEAR... Record Your Vacation

"Your vacation sounded absolutely great!" said an envious friend when listening to the recordings we brought back last summer.

It sounded great because we all had such a good time, and the only way to really convey the atmosphere and the spirit of that memorable couple of weeks was through the most modern communication medium of all -- recorded sound.

Few would dream of going on vacation without taking a camera. Yet how many seriously consider slinging one of the small but efficient tape cassette machines on the shoulder before leaving home?

Easy to use and light in weight, the cassette recorder offers the means to take an endless succession of "sound snapshots" of the family, the friends one meets, the local inhabitants, the band on the beach or the singer in a bar, the voice of a guide, the cries of vendors in the street market, aircraft taking off, continental trolleys clanging their way down cobble streets, the party on the last night... The list could go on and on.

However good a photograph might be it is dead and lifeless compared to the re-creation of living sound through the miracle of the tape recorder. Not only does it give you the chance to live your holiday all over again but it gives your friends at home a sense of participation. All the excitement and adventure will be shared with them as sound follows sound; you will imagine yourself to be back enjoying those carefree vacation pleasures.

There is no need to be afraid of taking a cassette recorder abroad in Europe, although it might be a wise precaution to carry some proof that the machine was purchased in the United States. Without this, the Customs might question you on your return.

Another precaution when traveling out of the country is to insure that you have a plentiful supply of quality blank cassettes and extra batteries with you. Both these items can be surprisingly expensive in some overseas countries.

**IF YOU LEAVE HOME** with a new set of batteries in the recorder, a spare set should be sufficient to meet all normal requirements. Remember that continually playing back takes as much power as recording. So, if you are not sufficiently strong-minded to resist hearing what you had just recorded, it might be as well to carry a second spare set.

The blank cassettes contain tapes of various lengths giving different recording times and this is indicated by their code numbers. A C60 cassette has a total playing time of sixty

minutes, thirty on each side; a C90 has forty-five minutes a side giving an hour and a half in all and a C120 gives a full hour's program time on each side.

If you choose extended range cassettes -- a "low-noise" tape -- you should have noise-free results without that annoying hiss that sometimes mars an otherwise excellent recording.

**HOW MANY CASSETTES** to take? That depends on how much recording you are likely to do. Make sure that there is a blank cassette in the machine ready for use when you leave, and try to have at least three spares in the luggage.

It is better to take more than necessary rather than find that you have run out of tape just as the most interesting sounds present themselves to you.

**TAKE SPECIAL CARE OF THE MICROPHONE.** It should be protected from dust, so slip it into a small polyethylene bag. If a separate container or wallet is provided for carrying it, make quite sure it cannot become detached and lost. There is nothing more useless than a recorder without a microphone.

Some form of simple table stand is necessary. These are usually supplied with the equipment and they enable the microphone to be supported on a table or other surface leaving your hands free. If lost or forgotten, a make-shift stand from a piece of bent wire or stout cardboard will do.

**WHEN RECORDING** remember to keep the microphone well away from the recorder itself. If they are too close together you will pick up the mechanical noises of the machine as well as the sounds you really want.

Some recorders have a facility called an "automatic gain control." When this is present you do not have to worry about the intensity of the sound as the recorder looks after itself; on other machines the "recording level" has to be adjusted by hand so as to avoid distorting the recorded sounds when they are very loud.

This is an adjustment that can easily be forgotten in the excitement of the moment. But you will soon find out why many people feel that sound recording is much less trouble than taking photographs, and much more interesting.

**WHEN PLANNING** next year's vacation try putting "cassette recorder" high on the list of things to take. You will then be able to bring back living sound that will conjure up that vacation again and again in the years to come.

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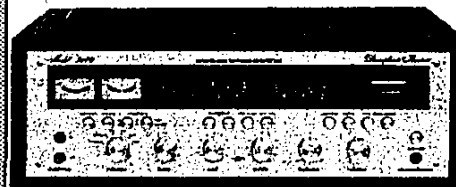


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