



Meridian M-2015 Aluminum Mid-Tower

Date: Sunday, October 13 @ 19:24:14 EDT

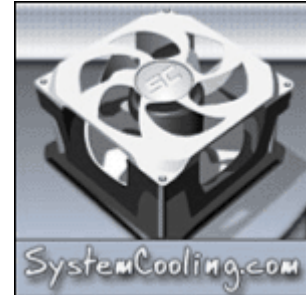
Topic: Computer Enclosures

Subject: [Computer Enclosures](#)

Date: 13 October 2002

Author: [Bob Dyl](#) (PowerHungry)

Supplier: [PC Supply Source](#)



Introduction and External Features

Back in July of this year, we published an article entitled "Sneak Peak" and in it we showed you a new aluminum case that's design intrigued us. We've finally gotten our hands on one of these beauties and today, we'll show you the Meridian M-2015 in all its aluminum glory, in this, its maiden review!



Billed as an economically priced aluminum case that pays strict attention to durability, style and cooling friendliness the Meridian M-2015 seems to have met its designer's goals!

It is by far the heaviest mid-tower aluminum case we've ever had the pleasure to examine; weighting in at 7.3 kg or about 16 lbs. The case is constructed using 1.6mm thick aluminum, which easily explains its weight.

The front bezel, as shown here, consists of an inner aluminum bezel covered by the ever popular clear acrylic face plate that is about a quarter inch thick.

What drew my interest to this case was first, the round opening in the front of the case; I have seen many mods, where users have cut a like hole in their case and then finished it off with a cut-down fan duct.

The purpose for this is obvious, and that is to allow a greater flow of intake air into the case than would have been possible without it.

A closer look shows the implementation of a wire mesh filter inside the opening to assure as clean a running environment as possible.

Also shown is the front access panel that accommodates two USB port, audio jacks with volume control, a joystick port and a Firewire port giving you almost total access to



those located on the ATX panel in the back of your case.

Here is a clearer photo of the front access panel, but before looking at it, please note the high-polished plated screws on either side of the bezel, six of these are used to attach the front bezel to the frame of the case.



Earlier, we mentioned the care taken to insure that the Meridian M-2015 Aluminum Mid-Tower was cooling friendly. This was achieved by designing into the case five well placed fans, the first of which lurks behind the round opening in the front of the case.



The second is located in the top of the case and is used to help exhaust the rising hot air that can accumulate in the upper reaches of the case; its strategic location also helps in exhausting hot air emanating from your CPU cooler!!

The third fan can be found in the left side panel and should be used as for air intake; this fan coupled with the slotted vents seen in this photo insures you of ample air

intake.

Gold plated wire grills cover both the top and side fans and this is a place where I think the designers overdid it a little.

Instead of using the standard type of self-taping fan screws they used a finished bolt that goes completely through the fan with about a half inch to spare, and then complete the attachment with a standard nut. The first thing I did was change these to the standard self-taping screws.

The overall finish of the Silver M-2015 is of the highest quality, so much so, that it is equal too or better than even some of the high-end aluminum cases. The vents shown on the left side panel above are also found on the right side panel and help in exhausting air from behind the motherboard.



The side panel holds one more special feature, please notice the two (one top - one bottom) finished screws at the extreme left corners of our photo. They are of the same type as those found on the front of the bezel.



These two screws plus those in the back hold attach the side panel to the case with no tabs or slots being employed, the only other cases I've seen, that has used this method is the expensive Enermax Aluminum cases. Of course, this means that every panel of the outer shell must be perfectly cut and fitted. No fear, the Meridian M-2015 aluminum case has been assembled with the precision you would expect in much more costly cases!

We've accounted for three of the five fan placements; the final two can be seen here on the back of the M-2015.

There are no surprises here, other than the two 80mm fan placements; the standard color coded ATX shield and the standard seven expansion slots found on most cases.

Now, you know I don't like stamped grill work, but the design of the two shown here are such, that they can easily be cut out to improve air exhaust. I'm disappointed in that, they use slotted and Philips-head screws throughout, a classier act would have been to use thumbscrews.

Take a last look at the photo above. Don't they seem to be a lot of screws heads!

Specifications and Internal Features

We've already given you the weight of the M-2015, so let's give you its physical dimensions; the M-2015 is 210 (W) x 450 (H) x 478 (L) mm and has four external 5.25" and two 3.5" drive bays to go along with five internal 3.5" drive bays.



Internally the features of the M-2015 are about what you would expect. What you might not have expected from an economy aluminum case is an anodized interior surface which the Meridian M-2015 has. The bay racks are simple fair with the 3.5" bay racks being removable. The lower hard drive has been offset to take full advantage of the air being pushed into the case by the front intake fan.

The exterior panels i.e. the top, left side; right side and front bezel



are all removable to make working on and loading the M-2015 a pure pleasure. I found not sharp edges anywhere while working with this case.

One annoyance I found was that I had to remove the lower hard drive rack to install the cabling that must be attached to the circuit card in the front of the case, so you'll be able to use the ports available on the front access panel, it should have been installed at the factory.

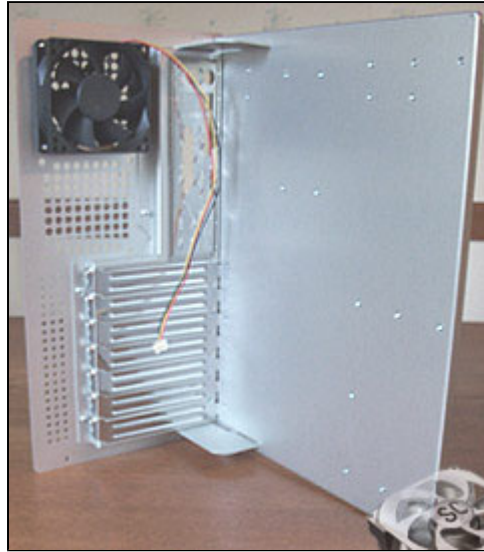
While speaking of the cables for the front access panel, the photo below shows both the internal cable and the external cable that connects to the ports on the back of the M-2015.



Also included with the cables are all the standoffs and screws with a few plastic ties for good measure that you'll need to mount your motherboard and all your other goodies!!

The Meridian M-2015 still contains one secret that we may have hinted at earlier and that took me by complete surprise. Nowhere in Meridian or PC Supply Source's web pages or literature is there any mention of a feature that many of us have grown to love and honestly would find it difficult to buy a case without it.

What is it?? Why, a slide-out removable motherboard tray, of course!! Remember earlier on, when I asked you to take another look at the back of the M-2015 and commented that there seemed to be a lot of screw heads?? Well here is the reason for the five extra screws!



Meridian's slide-out removable motherboard tray is one of the all time best that I've worked on, only Cooler Master's may be better and that's debatable. Like every other part of the M-2015 the motherboard tray perfectly aligns to the rest of the case and even when fully loaded, does not bend or warp.

As can be seen above, Meridian supplies four of the five generic sleeve bearing type fans with the case; while supplying you the fifth fan placement, its use is strictly up to the end user!!

Conclusion

The Meridian M-2015 contained many surprises for you and for me as well. I did not expect the extremely high-quality, the perfect alignment of the various parts and above all I didn't expect to find a slide-out removable motherboard tray, at least in this price range.

Oh, of course there are a few things I didn't care that much for (all mentioned earlier in the text) and I would have liked to see a cover over the front access panel, would have made for a cleaner look. No case is perfect, but the M-2015 beats the pants off of a lot of the aluminum cases on today's market.

I have reviewed some of the world's very best aluminum cases with some costing as much as \$ 400.00 USD without a power supply and none have surprised me more or offer you the reader the level of quality for the kind of money asked for the Meridian M-2015. When it comes to value for money spent or as Americans like to put it, bang for the buck, the M-2015 delivers!!

The Meridian M-2015 has a suggested retail selling price of \$ 149.95 with a 300W power supply or \$129.95 USD without a power supply.

Where can you find this great case?? The North American importer is www.pcsupplysource.com. Visit them to purchase the M-2015 or for additional information, resellers welcome!

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