

Focus on businesses

Ogivar offers superior compatible computer



Ogivar's Panama XT, was judged the "superior" IBM compatible microcomputer.

In only two years Ogivar Inc., a small company in Saint Laurent on Montreal Island in Quebec, has produced a microcomputer fully compatible with an IBM PC and PC/XT, that a recent government report rated "superior" to those offered by other computer companies.

The report issued by the federal government rated Ogivar's IBM-compatible Panama XT first among more than 15 such units available in the Canadian marketplace. Of the six microcomputers fully evaluated in the study by the Department of Supply and Services, the Panama XT won number one ranking over the Philips, Zenith, Sperry, Eagle PC2 and Best.

The evaluation was based on the concept, design and quality of materials, IBM compatibility, expansion capability, price, Canadian content, user-comfort and serviceability. The government report rated the Panama XT "superior" for over-all quality and design, user-comfort and special features. Compatibility, expansion capability and Canadian content were rated "excellent".

Rapid growth

Founded by telecommunications specialist Patrick Gauthier, computer scientist Jamie Benchimol and electronic designer Erick Antoine, Ogivar has grown from employing one person in August 1983 to 16 today. The company currently has offices in Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa with another scheduled to open in Vancouver later in 1985.

The firm has produced about 500 Panamas since December 1983, generating sales of about \$1.2 million. It expects sales

of at least \$4 million this year.

In addition to rapidly growing sales in Canada there have been significant sales to the United States. Negotiations are also underway with the international banking community for overseas projects.

Modular design

The Panama XT, which contains 72 per cent Canadian content is unique from other compatibles in that it contains no "mother" board, thereby enabling even an inexperienced worker to return it to working order in a matter of minutes. Instead of a single mother board, the system features four core modules that plug directly into a "bus" making it easily serviceable. Rather than having to remove the entire system, defective boards can be diagnosed and replaced on-site by field engineers, greatly reducing downtime. New technology can also be incorporated by simply modifying or replacing a card.

The system, which is 40 per cent faster than the comparable IBM model, also offers up to eight expansion slots for additional off-the-shelf enhancement boards.

An optional French keyboard is available. As the French characters are in the system's BIOS, additional software is not required. The BIOS and keyboard may be adapted to other languages as well as English and French.

Other features include: diagnostics software that ensures the heart of the system is uncopyable and allows users to perform their own debugging; and the integration of a possible multi-user system.

Bottled water from first spa

A new company based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mineral Water Company of Canada Limited, has announced it will begin marketing mineral water from an historic spring next summer. The company, a joint venture between Nova Scotian and West German investors, is currently building the bottling plant at Spa Springs in the Annapolis County, Nova Scotia.

Peter Claman, president of the company, said that Spa Springs was the location of North America's first health spa and that it was visited by many important people in the nineteenth century including members of the Royal family.

At peak production, some 42 million litres of carbonated and natural spring water will be bottled annually at the plant. Mr. Claman said the main market for the water will be the United States, where sales of mineral water increased 100 per cent from 1979 to 1982.

Colourful coats: a winner



Some Canadian women wanting to wear the latest in high fashion this winter will be donning coats in brilliant colours and dramatic styling by Montreal designer Claire Belzil. The coats are available in a number of bright colours including jade, peach and plum and feature big shoulders, deep cuffs, authoritative labels and a touch of detail, like a tiny back belt placed at mid-thigh level of an ankle-grazing coat. Ms. Belzil won the Clairol Fashion Award this spring over finalists from across Canada as the country's most promising fashion designer.