

# Alacarte Menus For DOS Users

**T**his software package is a locally-written DOS menu system aimed at the local DOS market. It should interest anyone who wants to place all those frequently executed DOS commands or applications into a simple menu system. PC users who aren't interested in the wasteland facing them at the DOS Prompt can set up menu titles and the commands that execute them with ease. Alternatively, the setup can be restricted to ensure that commands are not changed accidentally.



There is a pull-down menu style with several pop-up menus for setup and help. A status line at the bottom of the screen tells you what is happening. When quitting, a central pop up alerts you with an obscure 'Are you sure?' message at the bottom of the screen. This is a minor complaint, users will soon become accustomed to it. All menus are easy to navigate around with full arrow and hot-key functionality. The style is consistent throughout so you won't have to remember where you are to know what to press. Context-sensitive on-line help is available as well as a full manual in text format. One error in the manual - 300kb are required to install the package NOT 200kb. This shouldn't bother anyone except the most space-desperate DOS users.

Alacarte's real power lies in its setup

program. By pressing F2 at any time a setup menu is displayed where you decide what should appear in each menu. Both the top horizontal menu and each of the corresponding pull-down menus are configurable in this setup program. Titles, hot-keys and commands can be typed in

and saved using F10. We changed the default to run all sorts of different applications and DOS commands and by the end had a totally different looking menu. Most commands were well behaved except those with redirection for example. mem/c | more. The mem/c command worked fine by itself but as soon as we added redirection to 'more' the application hung and required the three finger salute of Ctrl-Alt-Del. This is not earth-shaking but could be irritating if a command produces output that scrolls off the screen and needs to be paused or redirected to a file.

The setup includes full colour manipulation and it was easy to change from Borland-style editing colours to the everything-clashes plus pink-ribbons look. Alacarte allows you to disable this setup on distribution. Mouse users don't have to exercise their typing fingers too much as full mouse support is built in to the package.

One inherent problem with DOS menus is that they gobble precious memory. Most large applications today display rude messages when they can't get the 639k required for executing, and a menu system should encroach on this as little as possible. Alacarte does well here - we expected about 100k to go but instead a quick memory check showed only a 2k copy of COMMAND sitting there. This sneaky method, in the same way that Windows executes a DOS prompt, means that you sacrifice almost nothing for the menu system. I had no problems running system-exhausting games and even running Windows from inside Alacarte worked fine.

Alacarte also works when running Windows and then executing inside a DOS box from within Windows! This convinces me of its stability. Prosoft's Alacarte provides you with the convenience of the alacarte tray at the restaurant - pick what you want without too much effort. Apart from the minor hassles mentioned it could well be the DOS menu system that protects you from the intimidations of the command line.

- Paul Furber ☐

## Vital Statistics

### Prosoft Alacarte

**In Brief :** Locally written DOS menu system for those who wish to place frequently executed DOS commands or applications into a simple menu system.

**Source :** Prosoft Alacarte cc

**Tel :** (011) 609-8435

**Price :** R89.00

## VU-TEK Vision Care Filter

**T**he VU-TEK Vision Care filter is a polarised filter that blocks reflective glare from a computer screen. Most filters available consist of a fine netting that is used to filter reflected sunlight. The VU-TEK is made from an opaque plastic-based substance that actually improves the look of the screen once it is fitted. The anti-reflective coating claims to absorb up to 99 percent of the glass glare, improve contrast, reduce screen flicker, and enhance resolution.

The unit mounts easily using an extension on the filter that fits onto the top of a computer screen (no extra adhesive necessary). This is an item that should be considered by all computer users for most of their working day, especially if the computer is near a window and exposed to direct sunlight. - Russell Smith ☐

**Source :** LanVision

**Tel :** (011) 886-2123

**Price :** R299.00