

This unique prototype Macintosh computer is a part of history. Before the retail Macintosh, there was this Macintosh. It went through many iterations of design changes both Internal and external. Including disk drives, RAM, ROM, processor, as well as external changes to the case to address thermal issues. This computer has unique internal boards and a case design that were never used on production machines. As well as a handmade leather case, commissioned by Apple, of which only a handful were made. This computer was hand assembled in 1983 and came into our possession in 1984.

Let me start with how we came to have it. I met Joanna Hoffman at MIT. We later worked together at Bravo Technologies. She attended our wedding and whenever I'm in California we catch up. Joanna, as I sure you know, was Steve Jobs head of Marketing for the Macintosh team. Referred to in the movie "Steve Jobs" as his "Work Wife", Joanna was part of the small senior leadership team including Bill Atkinson, Burrell Smith, Bud Tribble, Andy Hertzfeld, George Crow, Jerry Mannock and Jeff Raskin.

As the internal and external design were being worked on, a very few prototype machines were given out by the marketing team to developers in order to seed the software development. The failure of the Apple Lisa was partly due to a lack of third party software commitment for the system. Handing out early Macintosh systems would help spark a wave of exciting software available for the platform early on.

Further, Steve Jobs, wanting everything perfect as always. He had handmade leather cases designed to hold these early few machines. It is beautifully crafted with snap down front and sides so the machine can remain in the case, be plugged in, hooked up to external devices, the mouse and keyboard to provide an exciting and elegant demo of the Macintosh in action. The leather case is one of two known to still exist today.

Joanna was working with me as VP of marketing at my company Bravo Technologies. Joanna had left Apple by that time and was working with me at Bravo. She gave me the computer, as I am a software engineer. I would go on to develop MacCalc, an award winning spreadsheet software package, using this particular Macintosh. MacCalc won the MacUsers Magazine Editor Choice Award in 1986. MacGrafyX and SPAMM were also developed over the years on this prototype Machine.

This computer was built in 1983 as indicated by the dates and sequencing in handwritten notes on the EPROMS on the daughter board. Production Macintosh machines don't have this EPROM adapter board. The EPROMs (re-programmable chips) on this adapter board were designed to be changed and re-flashed (overwritten) with updated code as Apple's engineers invented and tested the ROM and the Macintosh system software. These EPROMS have handwritten labels on them.

For fans of Macintosh History, Mr. Macintosh is printed on the EPROM adapter board of this computer, watching over the computer! Mr. Macintosh was an idea of Steve Jobs. Per

Folklore.org – Jobs envisioned Mr. Macintosh as a mysterious little man who lives inside each Macintosh. Steve had the idea that Mr. Macintosh would unexpectedly and rarely pop up on the computer screen every once in a while, wink at you, then disappear. However, this lovely idea was not implemented due to tight memory requirements on the 128K machine. The only place to find a drawing of Mr. Macintosh on the boards of early prototype machines, such as this computer.

In the summer of 2022 we unearthed this system again. It gained a lot of interest when my wife (Beth) shared photos of it online. We were soon put in contact with Steven Matarazzo, a vintage Apple enthusiast and collector who repairs and presents systems on his YouTube channel, Mac84.

Beth brought the Macintosh to Steven to inspect it, help determine its age and learn if it was still functional. Steven performed a careful inspection of the system's insides and took plenty of photos and notes, these are featured in [his detailed assessment document here](#).

After some initial troubleshooting the system started up successfully and booted to the Macintosh operating system. Steven didn't find any major issues or failed components inside of the system.