

To boldly go where no Mac has gone before...

by Bryan Beck, Humble Macintosh Users Group (HMUG)

On October 21, 1991 with the release of six new macintosh computers, Apple added two new words to the Macintosh dictionary...portability and power. The new macs are the Quadra 700, Quadra 900, PowerBook 100, PowerBook 140, PowerBook 170, and the Classic II. The combination of three notebooks, two '040 based macs, and an upgrade to the ever popular Macintosh Classic is impressive. You will want to save a spot on your Christmas wish list for one of these!

The first day the new macs were released, I eagerly hopped in the car and traveled to the closest dealer to check out the new macs. The first challenge was to locate a dealer that had the new computers in stock, not everybody had them. Reports from Apple indicate that the PowerBooks will be in short supply for the first month or so but the Quadoras and the Classic II will be plentiful. Here is what I found:

The PowerBook notebook series are what gets your attention first. They're small enough to fit in a briefcase, powerful, and not overly expensive (by Apple standards that is). Three PowerBook 100's weigh less than the Mac Portable. They all have the same basic design outside but inside is where you find the big differences.

The PowerBook 100 includes a 16MHz 68000 processor, two megs of RAM, a 20MB hard drive, a monochrome LCD screen and weighs in at just 5 pounds. Sony teamed up with Apple to design and build the floppy drive-less PowerBook 100 which helps keep the price low (Is this the first WalkMac?). You can buy an external floppy drive for \$200. The PowerBook 140 includes a 16MHz 68030 processor like the IICx, two megs of RAM, a 40MB hard drive, a 1.4 floppy, microphone, and an LCD screen. The PowerBook 170 includes a 25MHz 68030 processor like the IICi, a FAX modem, an active matrix LCD display and all the other features of the PowerBook 140. The battery life on all the PowerBooks is around 3 hours.

Communication is the key word for the PowerBooks. You can tap into your existing network or log on to online services with ease when you are at home and on the road. New software, AppleTalk Remote Access, is included with all the PowerBooks. It allows you to dial up your network to access or print files just like you were back at the office. With the addition of a Global Village data/fax modem you can send and receive faxes and even voice mail if your away from your Mac! Street prices start at \$2,000 for the PowerBooks.

If speed and power is what you crave, then the Quadra 700 and 900 are the Macs for you. How fast is fast? Both 68040 based machines deliver twice the performance of the Mac IIfx, previously the fastest Mac. The Quadra comes in two packages...the desktop and floorstanding tower.

The desktop Quadra 700 is shaped like the IICi and IICx which means you can upgrade either to a Quadra easily. It include two NuBus slots, a 1.4 Superdrive, and either an 80MB, 160MB or no hard drive. The upgrade will be available in January and will go for around \$3,500. If you if own a IICx or IICi, ask Santa if he takes Apple credit.

If you really power-hungry and need expandability, then the Quadra 900 tower is the answer to your dreams. Along with 5 NuBus slots, it has 4 half-height bays available to add internal storage devices such as massive hard drives, CD-ROM, removable data storage media, and a small car. The Quadra 900 is perfect for high-end graphics, design, publishing, 3-D modeling, and is great for showing off to your friends. The thing that struck me most about the Quadra 900 is that it is huge! How many VW's could you fix in a Quadra 900? Two, maybe three.

Last but not least is the Classic II. It improves on the original Classic with greater performance by using the 16MHz 68030. My only complaint with the Classic II is the three year old SE/030. If it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and walks like a duck, is it a duck? The Classic II in most respects is the SE/030 in new clothes, minus the expansion slot and half as fast. You can pick up a new SE/030 for under \$2,000 and the Classic II starts at \$1,900 list. I recommend buying the SE/030 if your just starting out and the Classic II upgrade if you already own a Classic. You can upgrade from a Classic for \$899, which is not a bad deal.

I'm making a list and checking it twice. If you can't tell already, I have my wish list made out. A PowerBook 170 for when I go to the store or away from home. A Quadra 700 for the office and a Quadra 900 for the garage. If you see Santa, tell him I've been good all year....

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