defined) limit on the number of worksheets that can be opened simultaneously show this clearly. Character-based developers will argue that the linking abilities found in *Excel* and *Wingz* are not up to the standards of the true three-dimensional modeling abilities of such programs as *1-2-3 v3.0*, *Supercalc5*, and *VP-Planner 3D*, and that the processor resources demanded by *Windows* degrades the performance of programs running under it. To that we respond: most users will be perfectly content with and well served by the linking features in *Excel* and *Wingz*, and both products operate quickly enough in interactive use that users won't even notice the difference. True, extremely complex recalculations take a bit longer in these programs then in their character-based brethren, but remember that under *Windows*, you needn't wait around anyway; just get on with some other work.

As to the question of which of these two products is better, you'll have to examine your needs for an answer. *Wingz* is a breakthrough in its feature set, and the publishing and graphing functions it contains are good enough that many users will be able to get by without programs tailored specifically to those tasks. However, for sheer ease of spreadsheet-specific operations, little inconsistencies in the interface of *Wingz* such as menus that are sometimes sticky (holding their place after you release the mouse button), but not always, force the nod to *Excel*.

Simple Win
Matesys Corporation

In pre-*Windows 3.0* times, *Simple Win* would have been a great idea; actually, it still is, but too many other products are out there that do most of what *Simple Win* does, better. Now, except for an arguable claim to the speed crown, *Simple Win* is just another *Windows* enhancer - and one with a very limited function set, at that.

Interestingly, our first impression (and one that remains) was that we **like** *Simple Win*. It's easy to operate, brightens up your screen, and it's competent. Unfortunately, that just isn't enough anymore. With other products such as *WindowsTools* and *Windows Express* out there (both reviewed in this issue), *Simple Win* just doesn't go far enough in terms of functionality or value for your dollar.

Distributed on a single high-density diskette, the five programs that make up *Simple Win* occupy just 350 kilobytes of disk space, and are totally independent of each other, so if you chose not to use some, they could be deleted from your disk. *Simple Win* also comes with over sixty *Windows* bitmap images that can be cut and pasted between applications using the Clipboard, and are meant specifically to be used as icons for the folders and files *Simple Win* uses. They're very good; if you need some color clip-art, check them out. Portentously, they can't be used as program icons outside *Simple Win*. Altogether they take up about 200K more space. Documentation for *Simple Win* is a single, fifty page booklet with lots of illustrations, so you needn't worry about the learning curve.

The five programs that make up the product are really variations on three. Applications Loader is a use-but-don't-modify subset of Applications Manager, and Mini-Album enjoys a similar relationship with Album. File Manager is intended as just that: a replacement for *Windows*' own program of the same name.

We'll start with Album. Simply put, it's a program for storing images for transferring between applications through the Clipboard. It's useful if you find yourself doing such things frequently, and includes a screen capture feature. End of story.

File Manager is, arguably, a considerable improvement on *Windows*'s own tool of that name. Using a very attractive iconic/graphical representation, it shows a directory tree and file listings on screen in movable windows, and provides for file and directory management therein. Although much easier to work with (and nicer to look at) then *Windows*' File Manager, it's feature set is almost identical. Only one directory tree can be displayed at a time, directories can be created and deleted but not renamed or moved, and calls to such external DOS programs as FORMAT, BACKUP, and RESTORE are integrated. You can search for missing files by name only on your current drive, print or view the contents of most files using a built-in conversion tool that replaces unprintable characters with innocuous boxes, and switch among drives almost instantly, owing to *Simple Win* maintaining file-based representations of your system's directory structures. Wonder why *Windows* doesn't use a "trash can" icon a la MacIntosh? *Simple Win* has one, and it stores "trashed" files in a hidden directory it creates, where they stay until you "empty the trash".

Then there's Application Manager. It provides a colorful icon driven interface where you click on the symbol that enters folders and sub-folders that contain more icons representing programs (and optionally, file associations). *Simple Win* enables you to assign passwords, attach help messages, or automatically call up all files that match a particular name specification when you start the programs represented by icons, but those advantages aren't what they appear. Named files are limited to those in a single directory, the customized help messages are accessed manually through *Simple Win*'s menu structure (this can be changed by switching to a list mode of displaying file contents, but we think that takes away from the attractiveness and functionality of *Simple Win*), and passwords are totally unsecured, appearing immediately before the name attached to their associated folder in the configuration file that enables *Simple Win* to do its work. Further, each folder is limited to just twelve subprocesses, be they more folders or files.

In a case of not enough content, innovation, or true practicality, *Simple Win* falls short. Matesys must try a lot harder if they want to compete in the *Windows 3.0* utilities derby.