

# LG Flatron LCD 882LE

## Flat-panel display

The IT market is packed with great deals and, over the past 18 months, bargain hunters have been richly rewarded by the endless stream of top-quality CRTs and flat-panels emerging from LG's production line. The LCD 882LE is a prime example: a brilliantly priced addition to the thriving flat-panel market that is as pleasing to the eyes as it is to the wallet.

At first glance, £749 seems a high price to pay for a monitor. But, this is an 18.1in model that, in reality, offers a wider viewing area than a 19in CRT display. It's slim, lightweight and the dainty frame will consume hardly any desk space.

There's little sign of cost cutting in terms of the case design and, despite the slow uptake of digital devices, the DVI (digital video interface) connector, which features alongside a standard RGB port,

could prove a useful afterthought should the digital revolution move out of neutral.

The USB hub is also worthy of mention, and the image fine-tuning is gratifyingly easy. Hardware specifications, including a 160 degree viewing angle and 0.28mm dot pitch, are standard but more than capable. Although the maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024 seems a waste of such a large screen, you'll be hard pressed to find an 18.1in flat-panel that beats it.

Appraising the image quality of flat-panels is becoming increasingly difficult, since almost every model has an excellent calibre of colour palette. The LG is no exception, and its warm tones are excellent for moving images and ideal



when constructing precise and clearly defined documents.

**Verdict** The LG would be no more than an extremely palatable and competent 18.1in flat-panel were it not for its price tag, an astonishing £749 that must surely make this the latest must-buy screen. ■

Robin Morris

LG Flatron LCD 882LE

1 TOP 10

**Specifications:** 18.1in flat-panel display; max resolution 1,280x1,024 at 60Hz; 0.28mm pixel pitch; 434x235x443mm; 9kg; 3-year onsite warranty.

**LG:** 0870 607 5544

**Website:** [www.lge.co.uk](http://www.lge.co.uk)

**Price:** £749

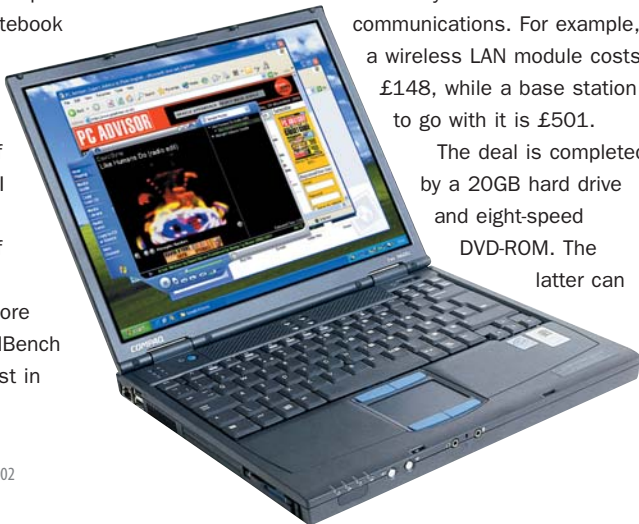
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality										8
Features										9
Value for money										9

# Compaq Evo N600c

## Power notebook

It is nothing short of a miracle to see Compaq doing so well in our tests. In the past the brand was synonymous with high price and low performance, but it is finally shaking off this image with the Evo N600c.

It's a beautiful, slimline notebook, with a specification that competes well with the best in our Power notebook chart (page 120). It has a 1.06GHz Mobile Pentium III processor, 128MB of RAM and a 16MB ATI Mobility Radeon graphics card – all of which adds up to a WorldBench 2000 score of 195 (103 in WorldBench 4), the second highest in our chart.



Thanks to the inclusion of the Mobility Radeon card, graphics quality is good, complementing the 14.1in XGA screen, which is capable of a maximum resolution of 1,024x768. There is an option on this notebook to go for a better display, but this will increase the cost.

The integrated Multiport allows you to add modules to improve functionality, such as security features or wireless communications. For example, a wireless LAN module costs £148, while a base station to go with it is £501.

The deal is completed by a 20GB hard drive and eight-speed DVD-ROM. The latter can

be swapped for a variety of other drives, or a second battery.

**Verdict** Compaq has cracked it with the Evo N600c – an affordable, high-performance notebook. It is slim and light enough to remain portable, but it is equally usable on the desktop. ■

Ursula Tolaini

Compaq Evo N600c

2 TOP 10

**Specifications:** 1.06GHz Mobile Pentium III; 128MB RAM; 20GB hard disk; 14.1in screen; 8x DVD-ROM drive; 2.7kg; 305x249x31mm; 3-year P&L warranty.

**Compaq:** 0845 270 4222

**Website:** [www.compaq.co.uk/products/notebooks/evo/n600/index.stm](http://www.compaq.co.uk/products/notebooks/evo/n600/index.stm)

**Price:** £1,537

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality										9
Features										8
Value for money										9

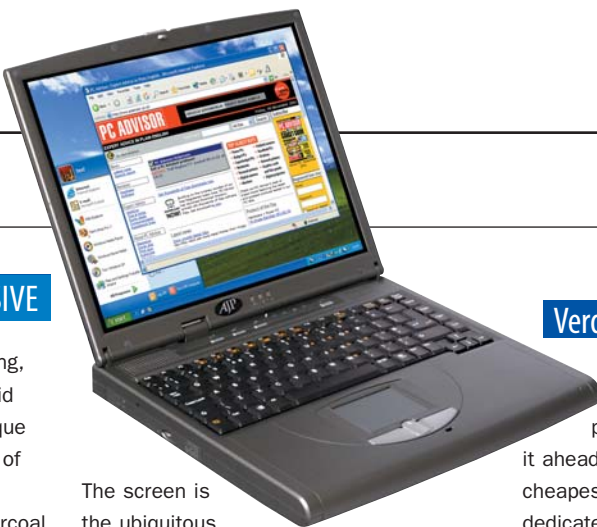
# AJP 4600

## Budget notebook

## EXCLUSIVE

AJP's latest budget offering, the 4600, combines solid performance with some unique and innovative features. It's also one of the more attractive budget notebooks we've seen, finished in a metallic charcoal with a translucent grey keyboard. However, it is bulky, as the body sticks out beyond the screen when it's closed.

But it's not what's on the outside that concerns us the most. Fortunately the components used to power this notebook more than back up its good looks. It has a 1.13MHz Mobile Pentium III processor, the fastest mobile processor in our Budget chart (page 120), 512MB of RAM and a 20GB hard drive, plus an ATI M6-P graphics chip with 32MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM. All this worked together to win it a WorldBench 4 score of 73 – fast enough to speed through everyday tasks.



The screen is the ubiquitous 14.1in TFT, with a maximum resolution of 1,024x768 – quality is good and images are bright and clear. AJP has opted for a combo DVD/CD-RW drive, which provides you with three-in-one facilities of DVD and CD-ROM playback, plus CD writing.

But perhaps the most interesting additions are the slots of Secure Digital and Memory Stick media. This means that if you own a device that uses Memory Stick or Secure Digital cards, you'll be able to slot them straight into your notebook. Another welcome addition is a FireWire port for fast connectivity.

**Verdict** The 4600 has everything needed to win our Recommended award, it's attractive, offers good performance and a few extras push it ahead of the crowd. It's not the cheapest notebook on offer, but its dedicated mobile processor should mean longer battery life. ■

Ursula Tolaini

AJP 4600

2 TOP 10

**Specifications:** 1.13GHz Mobile Pentium III; 512MB RAM; 20GB hard disk; combo drive; 14.1in TFT screen; 312x273x38mm; 3.5kg; 1-year RTB warranty.

**AJP:** 020 8208 9700

**Website:** [www.ajp.co.uk](http://www.ajp.co.uk)

**Price:** £1,399

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality										9
Features										9
Value for money										7

# Canon MV4

## Digital camcorder

If you're shopping for a digital camcorder, a lightweight model small enough to slip into a coat pocket might seem like a good choice. But manufacturers often sacrifice useful high-end features in their efforts to cut video cameras down to size.

Of the current batch of 'tinycams', Canon's MV4 ranks as one of the smallest, measuring just 48x86x106mm. This means a vertical shape that isn't very ergonomic, but is more sensibly designed than other examples we've seen.



For instance, when we reviewed Sony's DCR-PC9E for our website, our manual dexterity was tested reaching the zoom button on the side of the camera. Canon has compensated for the MV4's small size by positioning the zoom at the top of the camera, where it's far easier to reach.

The 1.4in progressive scan single CCD (charge-coupled device) image processor is capable of producing bright, colourful pictures. But images lack the detail achieved by other single-chip models such as the DCR-PC9E.

We were also disappointed to find that the FireWire connection is mono-directional. This means that you will be able to transfer your footage to a PC for editing, but you

won't be able to record your final cut back to a cassette.

**Verdict** Although image quality is perfectly reasonable, the MV4 lacks all but the most basic features. With no DV- (digital video) in, connection, software or multimedia card for stills, this is strictly for style conscious beginners only. ■

Paul Rincon

Canon MV4

**Specifications:** progressive scan 1.4in CCD; 10x optical/40x digital zoom; 420,000 pixels still mode; 2.5in colour LCD; electrical image stabiliser; 48x106x86mm; 390g.

**Canon:** 0500 246 246

**Website:** [www.canon.co.uk](http://www.canon.co.uk)

**Price:** £742

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality										7
Features										4
Value for money										7

# HP DeskJet 995c

## Personal inkjet printer

The HP DeskJet 995c's Bluetooth option allows the printer to communicate wirelessly with similarly equipped devices. However, this does mean that your PC will need to have a Bluetooth card and run either Windows 2000 or XP, so anyone with an older system is left out.

When we tested the printer's Bluetooth connection, we found the setup to be very easy, thanks to onscreen prompts, for every step of the process. However, if you want to use the printer without Bluetooth (and we'd have to ask why you'd want to pay more for a feature you don't intend to use), it does have a USB connection.

Its sleek, brushed metal effect finish, makes it look very stylish, but it backs this up with substance too. A standard resolution of 600x600dpi (dots per inch)

can be bumped up to 1,200x2,400dpi for photo printing and though the 995c doesn't live up to the quoted print speeds it's nippy on high resolution jobs. USB is marginally faster than Bluetooth, but we managed a fast 9ppm (pages per minute) in draft mode for black text printing and an average 3ppm for mixed text and colour graphics. These are quite fast for an inkjet, though they're still way off the manufacturer's claimed speeds.

The results on draft mode printing (300x600dpi) were better than some models at 600x600dpi, which means you don't have to sacrifice quality to keep the running costs down. While the cartridges are high yield, the cost per page is expensive, so getting good quality on draft mode is important.



**Verdict** This is a fast printer that produces high quality prints. It's a fairly niche model, but we're sure those who want what it has to offer won't be let down. It's expensive, but the 995c is not about value for money. ■

Spencer Dalziel

HP DeskJet 995c

TOP 10

**Specifications:** optical resolution 2,400x1,200dpi; USB or Bluetooth connection; quoted print speeds: 17ppm mono, 12ppm colour; mono cartridge, £27.49, 830pp; colour cartridge, £30.90, 450pp; 440x375x196mm; 5.85kg.

**HP:** 0870 547 4747  
**Website:** www.hp.com  
**Price:** £271

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality							8			
Features							8			
Value for money							5			

# Epson Stylus Color C80

## Colour inkjet printer

Epson's Stylus Color 680 has maintained a prominent place in our Top 10 Colour inkjet printers chart for over a year, mainly because it combines bright, crisp image quality with a low price. Epson's latest offering occupies the opposite end of its colour printer range, as the C80 is an altogether more expensive and higher-specified model.

While the specs are impressive, the C80 has a weakness – its speed. Epson claims the C80 can fire out pages at 20ppm (pages per minute) in mono and 10.5ppm in colour. The real figures are nowhere near this and in our



tests it could only manage 5ppm in mono and 1.5ppm in colour.

However, Epson's inkjets have always been geared more towards producing top notch images than high speed printing and for quality the C80 doesn't disappoint. On photocopy paper, colours are faithfully reproduced and shading is smoothly graduated. When it comes to text, output isn't a match for a laser printer's, but it's as sharp as any inkjet's you'll see.

However, when we printed the same test image on glossy photo paper – admittedly not Epson's own brand – the results were drastically different. Shades of light blue became purple and the image emerged with severe banding. But this could have been a problem with our test unit.

**Verdict** The C80's relatively high price tag of £148 is balanced by low running costs, making this excellent value for money. Except for its performance on photo paper, we were highly impressed with the print quality. ■

Paul Rincon

Epson Stylus Color C80

TOP 10

**Specifications:** 2,880x720dpi max resolution; black ink £21, colour £9; 1,240 pages, black print life, 420 pages, colour; 452x320x201mm; 6kg; 150 pages input tray; 1-year warranty; USB and parallel interfaces; A4 maximum paper size.

**Epson:** 0870 241 6900  
**Website:** www.epson.co.uk  
**Price:** £148

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality							7			
Features							7			
Value for money							8			

# La Cie DVD-RW/R and DVD-RAM/R drives

## External FireWire rewritable DVD drives

CD-R and CD-RW may be ubiquitous, but ever-expanding photo and MP3 collections, not to mention backups, demand more than 700MB of storage. Enter rewritable DVD with a whopping 4.7GB of capacity, or 9.4GB if you're able to use both sides of the disc. Storage specialists La Cie sent us two external recorders, each using different rewritable DVD formats.

There are in fact no fewer than three rewritable DVD formats currently slugging it out. The recent DVD+RW and DVD-RW formats join the original DVD-RAM format, which uniquely houses its discs in a protective caddy, like a large floppy disk. All three formats may employ the same 'phase-change' technology but are incompatible. To add further complication there's also a write-once DVD-R format.

## Multitasking

Fortunately, the latest rewritable DVD drives used by La Cie support multiple formats. Pioneer's DVR-103 DVD-RW and Matsushita's LF-D310 DVD-RAM drive are also this versatile, but they are both internal devices.

La Cie has enclosed its drives in its trademark smart grey and blue external boxes and fitted FireWire connectors. Most Macs have FireWire, but PCs will need a FireWire card – we used Adaptec's FireConnect 4300 which costs £55.

The DVD-RW model essentially acts like a larger capacity CD-RW drive. DVD-RAM drives, on the other hand, are treated by your PC as both optical and removable drives – you even get both types of icons in My Computer.

## Driving around

As with CD-R/RW you have to use software to write to DVD-RW, +RW and R discs however, it's possible to just drag files on and off DVD-RAM as if it were a big Zip disk.

This is a massive plus point, but the downside is that DVD-RAM discs should be kept in their caddies for protection and therefore can't be slotted into normal

→ With such a high capacity for storage, La Cie's drives look tempting, but we'd recommend waiting a few months until prices have fallen



drives. With compatibility in mind, though, both La Cie drives can also use write-once DVD-R discs which can be read in any DVD-ROM drive, or indeed domestic DVD player. La Cie supplies PrimoDVD Starter edition for writing data DVDs and CDs, but video DVDs will require additional authoring software.

Media prices are comparable, with 4.7GB DVD-RW and DVD-RAM discs costing around £17 each, and write-once DVD-Rs £11; double-sided 9.4GB DVD-RAM discs cost around £26. La Cie charges £499 for each drive, which represents a £50 premium for the benefit of not having to install an internal IDE unit.

## On the record

We tested each drive by writing a folder containing 1,270MB of data in multiple sub-folders. Using their own rewritable media, the DVD-RAM and DVD-RW drives took 23.5 and 19 minutes respectively. Using write-once DVD-R media, the DVD-RAM and DVD-RW drives took just over 28 and nine minutes respectively. In terms of compatibility, both DVD-Rs and the DVD-RW disc could be read in all the DVD-ROM drives we tried.

So which should you buy? DVD-RW is quicker, handles CD-R/RW, and its supporters claim greater backwards compatibility than DVD-RAM, but that remains to be proven. DVD-RAM uniquely acts like a removable disk and supports double-sided media today, which gives it an edge in the PC market. Since it also

writes DVD-R, La Cie's new DVD-RAM drive is a better overall choice than its DVD-RW, even though it's slower and doesn't support CD-R/RW.

Unless you're desperate for a single large-capacity disc, though, we'd recommend waiting a few months until the market and prices settle down. Remember, a 4.7GB DVD-R disc may store almost seven times more than a CD-R, but currently it is 30 times more expensive.

**Verdict** While DVD-RW and DVD+RW look set to dominate the DVD video recording market, DVD-RAM with its removable drive properties is currently the best bet for PCs. Even though both drives here also support highly compatible DVD-Rs, the media is still much more expensive than CD-R. Unless you need a single 4.7GB disc now, we'd recommend waiting until prices fall. ■

Gordon Laing

La Cie DVD-RW/R and DVD-RAM/R drives

**Specifications:** DVD-RAM/DVD-R drive – 24x CD-ROM; 6x DVD-ROM; 1x DVD-R; 2x DVD-RAM

DVD-RW/DVD-R/CD-R/RW drive – 24x CD-ROM; 6x DVD-ROM; 8x CD-R; 4x CD-RW; 2x DVD-R; 1x DVD-RW

**La Cie:** 0207 872 8000  
**Website:** www.lacie.co.uk  
**Price:** £499

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality							8			
Features							7			
Value for money							7			



# Minds@Work Digital Wallet

## Portable storage device for digital cameras

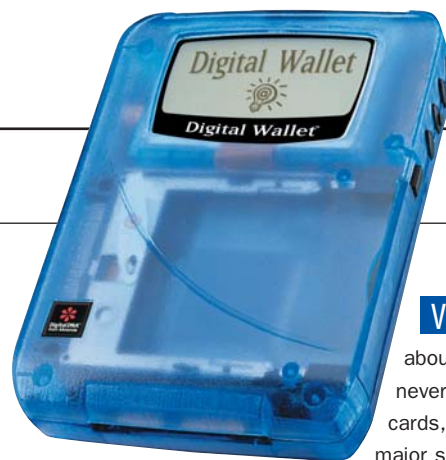
The resolution offered by many of today's digital cameras means that digital photography has, at long last, come of age. The downside of this improved resolution and quality, though, is rising file size. And when we bear in mind the price of memory cards, it's clear that storing more than a handful of photographs can be an expensive business. The Digital Wallet from Minds@Work is one solution, offering cheap portable storage.

The storage medium is a hard disk, but the Digital Wallet doesn't plug into a digital camera as, for example, the IBM Microdrive does. Instead, ordinary memory cards are used in the camera and, when they're full, the data is uploaded to the palm-sized Digital Wallet. The memory card can then be erased and re-used. This means you can

manage with a single memory card, so the cost of storage falls significantly.

As it stands, the Digital Wallet is designed to accept the large ATA memory cards used in professional cameras although an adapter for CompactFlash cards is provided as standard. If your camera uses SmartMedia cards or Memory Stick, though, you'd have to buy a separate adapter, which will cost around £40.

Needless to say, when you return to your home or office you'll need to upload the images from the Digital Wallet to your PC. This is achieved using the unit's USB interface and driver software that makes the Digital Wallet appear to the operating system as a removable disk drive.



**Verdict** If you're serious about digital photography and never have enough memory cards, the Digital Wallet will bring major savings. Operation is intuitive and trouble-free. The unit is, perhaps, a touch on the flimsy side but otherwise we have no complaints. ■

David Bedford

# Minds@Work Digital Wallet

**Specifications:** 3GB (10GB and 20GB options);  
USB; 8-12MBps data transfer; NiMH  
batteries; Windows 98SE/Me/2000/  
MacOS 9+/Linux.

**Introphoto Limited:** 01628 799 901

**Website:** [www.introphoto.co.uk](http://www.introphoto.co.uk)

**Price:** 3GB, £340; 10GB, £425; 20GB, £510

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality						5					
Features								7			
Value for money								7			

# Philips Expanium exp401

## MP3 player

When choosing an MP3 player, portability is of paramount importance. That's why bulky MP3 CD players are at a disadvantage when compared with devices like Sony's Music Clip MC-S50 (reviewed September 01), which is the size of a Cuban cigar and slips easily inside a shirt pocket.

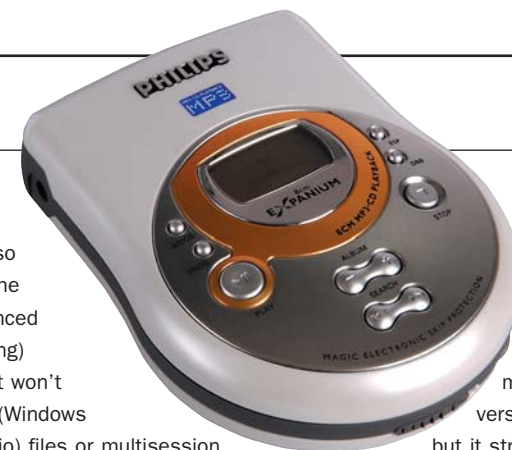
Despite this, CDs remain irresistible to manufacturers due to their cheap cost and large storage capacity. Philips' latest addition to the rapidly expanding MP3 player market also plays CDs, but uses the 3in format.

This makes a huge difference to the device's portability. The exp401 is compact and light. The 3in format holds 150MB less data and is relatively scarce, but can still store an impressive two-and-a-half hours of 128Kbps (kilobits per second) quality MP3 music.

The exp401 also supports the AAC (advanced audio coding) format, but won't play WMA (Windows media audio) files or multisession discs. MP3 encoding software is also absent.

Another unwelcome quirk is that different headphones make tracks jump and stick. We think this is due to a compatibility problem with remote controls made by other manufacturers, because simple line-in headphones work fine.

You organise tracklists on your PC, but the lack of a text display makes navigation difficult. However, there is a healthy array of controls, including buttons for forward and backward search, bass enhancement and one for programming tracks.



**Verdict** The exp401 is a compact player and at £123, it's good value for money. It's not the most versatile player we've seen, but it strikes an ideal balance between storage and portability. ■

Paul Rincon

Philips Expanium exp401

**Specifications:** plays 3in audio CD/CD-R/CD-RW; MP3 and AAC support; 1xAA battery; 220g; 92x29x119mm; electronic skip protection; 1-year warranty.

**Philips:** 020 8665 6350

**Website:** [www.expanium.philips.com](http://www.expanium.philips.com)

**Price:** £123

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality								7			
Features									8		
Value for money								7			

# Imation FlashGO and Sitecom Multi-Memory Reader/Writer

## All-format Flash memory reader/writers

One of the problems with using devices that store information in flash memory is that there are so many formats, it's often awkward to transfer data to different devices. That means you have to transfer information via the host device.

Flash memory reader/writers, such as Imation's FlashGO and Sitecom's Multi-Memory Reader/Writer, are designed to solve this problem by reading all formats.

Imation's unit uses plug-in converters, a little like a travel adapter plug, to fit all four current formats into one socket.

Sitecom's device is larger and has slots on the front for the five formats – Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, SmartMedia, CompactFlash and Sony's Memory Stick.



We tested the units with an IBM 1GB Microdrive and a standard 16MB CompactFlash card – both saw the drives and we encountered no problems. Speed of transfer is excellent.

**Verdict** At around £80 the Sitecom is a little pricey, but the Imation isn't cheap either. Nonetheless, both are very useful. ■

Rupert Collins-White

# Imation FlashGO

**Specifications:** supports CompactFlash (I and II), SmartMedia, MultiMedia Card, Secure Digital, Memory Stick, IBM's Microdrive.

**Imation:** 01344 402 000

**Website:** [www.imation.com](http://www.imation.com)

**Price:** £50

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Build quality</b>								7			
<b>Features</b>									8		
<b>Value for money</b>								7			

# Sitecom Multi-Memory Reader/Writer

**Specifications:** supports CompactFlash (I and II), SmartMedia, MultiMedia Card, Secure Digital, Memory Stick, IBM's Microdrive.

**Sitecom:** 01323 846 914

**Website:** [www.sitecom.com](http://www.sitecom.com)

**Price:** £83

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality									8		
Features										9	
Value for money							6				

# Pretec DC530 4 in 1

## Multifunction camera

At under £120 inc VAT, the DC530 from Pretec could be considered a reasonably priced digital camera. The specification isn't brilliant, but would be sufficient for small prints and web-based photography. However, with some clever design and a lot of ingenuity Pretec has managed to build in an MP3 player and a voice recorder, and you can even use it as a webcam.

As a camera it produces a 24bit output at 640x480 resolution. It comes with a couple of megabytes of built-in flash

memory that can store up to 30 normal resolution images using Jpeg compression. A CompactFlash slot is provided at the side, so if you need to store images then you can buy a card to add extra capacity. If you plan to make use of the built-in MP3 playback or voice recording, then adding more storage becomes a necessity.

Two resolution modes are available; the higher uses less compression but takes twice the amount of storage. A TV output enables you to view your images on TV and there are settings for PAL and NTSC playback, so you can use your camera wherever you are.

Alternatively a USB cable connects the Pretec to a PC. The USB cable is also required to load MP3 audio files or save

voice recordings to your PC. If you want to put a good selection of MP3 files into the camera, then you will need to buy a large CompactFlash card to store them on.

**Verdict** The DC530 is great fun. Although it doesn't have quite the build quality of similarly designed cameras, it is fantastic value for money. ■

Paul Warner



# Pretec DC530 4 in 1

**Specifications:** 4-in-1 digital still camera; max resolution 640x480; MP3 player; voice recorder; digital video PC camera; 2MB flash memory; 80x91x35mm; 136g.

**Evergreen:** 01793 856 300

**Website:** [www.evergreennow.co.uk](http://www.evergreennow.co.uk)

**Price:** £102

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Build quality</b>								7			
<b>Features</b>									9		
<b>Value for money</b>									9		

# Iiyama Vision Master Pro 413

## 17in monitor



The surge of interest in flat-panel technology has put CRT monitor prices into perspective, and prices of the latter may now be ridiculously cheap. For example, the high-calibre sub-£160 CTX EX710F has been comfortably topping our charts for over 18 months. However, CRT's bulky size



makes it a less attractive option than a modern flat-panel.

Iiyama's Vision Master Pro 413 looks unlikely to win people back to CRT, but it has one or two features that may sway the undecided. Most notable is Mitsubishi's Diamondtron M2 technology, a new tube type capable of producing enhanced levels of brightness at the touch of a switch. For most applications you'll want to retain the subdued tones, but many will relish the ability to boost levels of brightness during an important presentation or DVD movie.

This feature is easy to operate, and proved simpler than perfecting the image display. On our Windows XP test PC, switching resolutions required us to make significant changes using the fiddly setup options. The resolution support is good, although the screen didn't offer clear images at the top resolution of 1,600x1,200. In truth, you won't want to run a 17in screen at a resolution above 1,280x

1,024 and, within these restrictions, the Pro 413 is good. Colours are fresh and vibrant, even without the high brightness setting, and text definition is excellent.

### Verdict

The Pro 413's £185 price tag is not to be sniffed at. Along with the high brightness option, it is set to take up the mantle as the cream of the 17in CRTs. ■

Robin Morris

### Iiyama Vision Master Pro 413



**Specifications:** Diamondtron M2 tube; 0.25mm dot pitch; max resolution at 75Hz; 1,600x1,200; 408x430x420mm; 16.5kg; 3-year onsite warranty.

**Iiyama:** 01438 745 482

**Website:** www.iiyama.co.uk

**Price:** £185

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality									8		
Features									8		
Value for money									8		

# Epson Perfection 2450 Photo

## High-end scanner



While the Epson Perfection 2450 Photo offers functionality way beyond the needs of most home users, it's the ideal choice for small- to medium-sized businesses that require superior speed and quality. The price means it misses out on a place in our Top 10 Flatbed scanners chart, but as a high-end model it wins a Recommended award.

This is the first scanner we've seen that offers support for both USB 2.0 and FireWire. In theory these connections provide about 40-times the data transfer rate of the 12Mbps (megabits per second) offered by USB 1.1. In practice this rate is usually out of reach, but the 2450 is certainly faster than most.

The high-end specs make the increased data transfer an absolute necessity. A 48bit colour depth twinned with an optical

resolution of 2,400x4,800dpi (dots per inch) creates vast files, resulting, at the highest resolution, in files of 91.4GB. However, image quality is unsurpassed, with vibrant colours and pin-sharp detail.

Having a built-in transparency adapter increases the bulk and weight of the 2450 so it takes up plenty of desk space, but it does add to the functionality. It's also nice to see Adobe's versatile Photoshop Elements in the box.

Despite the high-end nature of this scanner, Epson has made installation and usability as easy as possible and the Smart Panel is a good substitute for one-touch scanning to web, print, email, fax, OCR and graphics applications.

### Verdict

Budget-conscious users should look elsewhere, though the 2450 is still generous for a high-end model when compared to the competition. It requires



a FireWire or USB 2.0 card for use, but the faster data transfer these standards offer is an added bonus. ■

Spencer Dalziel

### Epson Perfection 2450 Photo

**Specifications:** optical resolution 2,400x4,800dpi; 12,800dpi enhanced resolution; Windows 98/2000/Me; A4 scanning area; 48bit true colour depth; 304x476x122mm; 5.8kg.

**Epson:** 0800 220 546

**Website:** www.epson.co.uk

**Price:** £246

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Build quality									8		
Features									8		
Value for money									7		