

TOP 10 POWER AND BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

Power notebooks		Last month's position	First reviewed	World-Bench 4	Price	Warranty	Processor type/clock speed	RAM	Hard disk capacity	Modem	Network card	Dimensions (width x depth x height)	Weight	Screen size/type	Maximum resolution	Graphics card	Graphics memory	Dual-speed processor	DVD drive speed	Internal/external floppy disk drive	CD-RW read/write/rewrite rate	Battery type	Operating system & other extras
1	Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	NEW	Apr 02	118	£1,509	2-year return to base	Intel Pentium 4/1.8GHz	512MB	40GB	56K	Y	313x263x36mm	2.95kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Mobility M6	16MB	N/A	8x (combo drive)	external	24x/8x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Office XP SBE
2	Compaq Evo N600c 0845 270 4222 www.compaq.co.uk	1	Feb 02	103	£1,537	3-year parts and labour	Intel Mobile Pentium III/1.06GHz	128MB	20GB	56K	Y	305x249x30mm	2.7kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Radeon Mobility	16MB	Intel Speedstep	8x (combo drive)	N/A	N/A	lithium-ion	Windows 2000 Professional
3	Rock Agenda Si 0870 908 888 www.rockdirect.com	2	Mar 02	99	£1,599	3-year collect and return	Intel Mobile Pentium III/1.2GHz	384MB	30GB	56K	Y	310x265x40mm	3.4kg	15.1in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS 630S	variable	Intel Speedstep	N/A	internal	20x/4x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Professional
4	Sony Vaio PCG-GR215MP 0870 542 4424 www.vaio.sony-europe.com	3	Mar 02	96	£1,957	1-year return to base	Intel Mobile Pentium III/1GHz	256MB	30GB	56K	Y	325x270x37mm	3.15kg	15in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Radeon Mobility	16MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	optional	24x/8x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP, Sony Utilities, Adobe Premiere, PictureGear
5	Sony Vaio PCG-R600 0870 542 4424 www.vaio.sony-europe.com	4	Mar 02	76	£1,701	1-year return to base	Intel Mobile Pentium III/850MHz	128MB	20GB	56K	Y	280x239x23mm	1.7kg	12.1in/TFT	1,024x768	Intel 815EM	11MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	external	24x/8x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Pro, Sony Utilities, Adobe Premiere, PictureGear
Budget notebooks																							
1	Mesh Pegasus 14.1 Pro 020 8208 4702 www.meshcomputers.com	1	Mar 02	82	£999	2-year return to base	AMD Mobile Athlon 4/1.2GHz	384MB	20GB	56K	Y	308x254x38mm	3.0kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 Twister K	user-definable 8/16/32MB	AMD PowerNow	8x	internal	N/A	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2002
2	AJP 7321 020 8208 9700 www.ajp.co.uk	2	Mar 02	85	£1,099	1-year return to base	AMD Mobile Athlon 4/1.1GHz	384MB	20GB	56K	Y	310x265x40mm	3.2kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 Twister K	user-definable 8/16/32/64MB	AMD PowerNow	8x (combo drive)	internal	24x/4x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 6.0
3	AJP 8170 020 8208 9700 www.ajp.co.uk	NEW	Apr 02	99	£1,299	1-year return to base	Intel Pentium 4/1.7GHz	512MB	40GB	56K	Y	313x263x36mm	3.0kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Mobility M6	16MB	N/A	8x	external	N/A	lithium-ion	Windows 2000 Professional, Microsoft Works 6.0
4	Rock Sigma Si Combo 0870 908 888 www.rockdirect.com	3	Mar 02	84	£1,199	1-year collect an`d return	Intel Pentium III flip chip/1.2GHz	256MB	30GB	56K	Y	308x254x38mm	3.2kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS 630S onboard	user-definable 8/16/32/64MB	N/A	8x (combo drive)	internal	20x/4x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, McAfee AntiVirus
5	Pico Systems Scholar 7521 0870 729 6111 www.picosystems.co.uk	4	Mar 02	85	£1,289	1-year parts and labour	Intel Pentium III flip chip/1.2GHz	384MB	20GB	56K	Y	310x266x40mm	3.4kg	15.1in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS 630S onboard	user-definable 8/16/32MB	N/A	8x (combo drive)	internal	24x/4x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Professional

TOP 10 POWER NOTEBOOKS



NEW

1 Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I

Our new number one machine, the Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I, uses a 1.8GHz Pentium 4 processor to great effect. Twinned with 512MB of RAM and a 16MB DDR (double data rate)

RAM ATI Mobility M6 graphics chip, it pulled in a WorldBench 4 score of 118. That

beats the Compaq Evo N600c by 15 points and, at just £9 over our starting cost of £1,500, it makes the Ultinote a worthy winner. As with all notebooks using a desktop processor, battery life is not this model's strength – the Hi-Grade claims a life of just



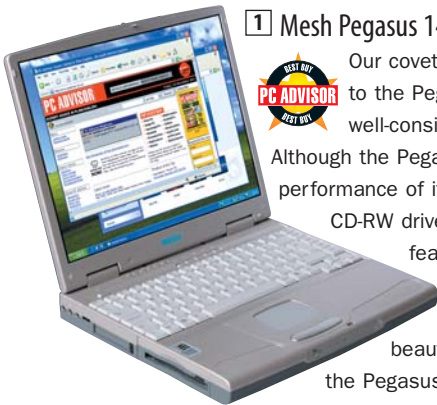
2 Compaq Evo N600c

Despite a 1.06GHz Intel Mobile Pentium III processor lying beneath its slim exterior, the Compaq Evo's WorldBench 4 score of 103 managed to beat the 1.2GHz Rock Agenda Si.

The N600c weighs a meagre 2.7kg – only
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1.5 hours. However, if you are happy to use the Ultinote as a desktop replacement PC, this won't be a problem. It comes with a 40GB hard drive and a combo DVD/CD-RW drive, offering eight-speed DVD and 24-/eight-/quad-speed (read/write/rewrite) CD-RW facilities. It also features a 14.1in screen capable of a maximum resolution of 1,024x768. But software is pretty limited – Office XP SBE is as much as you get.

TOP 10 BUDGET NOTEBOOKS



1 Mesh Pegasus 14.1 Pro

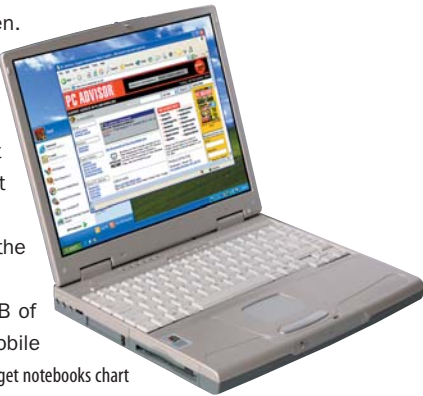
Our coveted Best Buy once again goes to the Pegasus 14.1 Pro, which is a well-considered package at a great price. Although the Pegasus couldn't match the performance of its competitors and lacks a CD-RW drive, it has many redeeming features. The plain metallic design isn't a head-turner, but it's a sturdy model with plenty of beauty on the inside. At the heart of the Pegasus is AMD's Mobile Athlon 4 chip, running at a speed of 1.2GHz, which is twinned with 384MB of SDRAM. As the WorldBench 4 score of 82 demonstrates, there's little difference in performance between Intel's and AMD's notebook processors. A 20GB hard drive is

standard and the Pegasus comes with enough ports to make it a decent desktop replacement, although we'd like to see the inclusion of a FireWire port. The rest of the specification is par for the course, with a DVD drive, user-definable graphics memory and a 14.1in screen.

2 AJP 7321

The 7321 is similar in looks and setup to our Best Buy but misses the top spot because it can't match the warranty, software bundle or price. That said, the AJP is good value for money and a powerful performer. An ample 384MB of SDRAM is combined with an AMD Mobile

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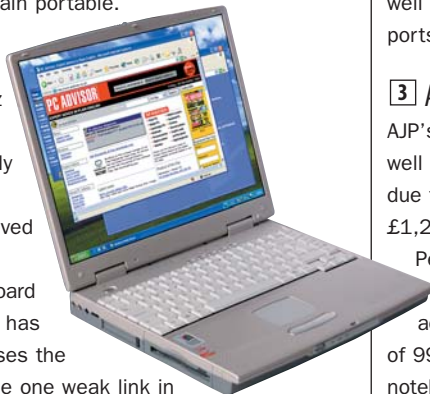


TOP 10 POWER NOTEBOOKS

the Sony Vaio PCG-R600 is lighter. In terms of graphics, the Radeon Mobility card will maximise frame rates, making this one notebook that won't falter on 3D graphics. The 14.1in screen isn't huge, but its colour scheme and character definition are second to none. Storage and drives on the Evo aren't that generous: the hard drive is only 20GB and, although DVD playback is provided, CD-RW and floppy drives are absent. Overall, the Evo is an affordable, high-performance device that's slim and light enough to remain portable.

3 Rock Agenda Si

The Si squeezes in a 1.2GHz Intel Mobile Pentium III chip and its 384MB of RAM is only bettered by the Best Buy Hi-Grade. But all this only achieved a WorldBench 4 score of 99, probably because of the onboard SIS graphics controller, which has no memory of its own and uses the main RAM instead. This is the one weak link in Rock's setup and is a shame because the 15.1in screen offers clear image reproduction.



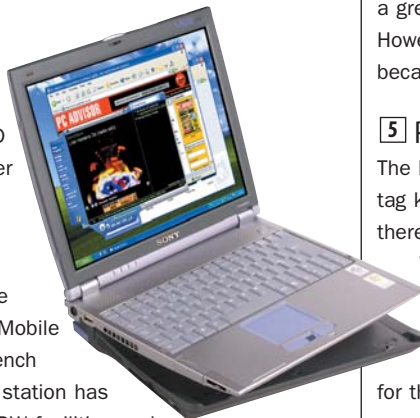
4 Sony Vaio PCG-GR215MP

With a WorldBench 4 score of 96, the PCG-GR215MP is the more powerful of the two Sony models. This Vaio retains the R600's refined curves, but boasts more power, pairing a 1GHz Intel Mobile Pentium III with 256MB of RAM. Graphics performance is impressive, with the ATI Radeon Mobility complementing the 15in screen. The CD-RW is another smooth operator, with eight-/four-speed CD-R/RW functionality. The Vaio's major flaw is its price – balanced specs and a stylish case may not be enough to justify the extra £400 you must pay for the privilege of owning a Sony.



5 Sony Vaio PCG-R600

The Sony Vaio's slim curves and 1.7kg frame (without the docking station, floppy and CD drives) still make it the number one choice for the well-heeled executive. This slender case means a compromise on specifications, though, and the 128MB of RAM and 850MHz Mobile Pentium III attained a WorldBench score of just 76. The docking station has been upgraded to include CD-RW facilities and the extras include iLink (Sony's FireWire equivalent), Memory Stick storage medium and a software utilities. And though it's not the cheapest choice, the price tag is no longer exorbitant.



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Athlon 4 processor and 20GB hard drive. The clock speed is 100MHz slower than most of the competition, but it still managed to rack up a respectable WorldBench 4 score of 85. One advantage the AJP 7321 has over our Mesh winner is the inclusion of a combination drive. The eight-speed DVD player also doubles up as a CD-RW drive, which is sensible as there's rarely room on a notebook for two drives unless one is external. It also means that the AJP offers decent backup capabilities. The AJP is well equipped for desktop replacement, covering most of the ports necessary for optimal connectivity except FireWire.

3 AJP 8170

AJP's new entry doesn't fare as well as the Recommended 7321 due to its excessive price tag of £1,299. The 8170 uses a 1.7GHz Pentium 4 processor, twinned with 512MB RAM, and achieved a WorldBench 4 score of 99, which easily makes it the fastest notebook in the Top 10 Budget notebook chart. With its 40GB hard drive, eight-speed DVD-ROM and 14.1in screen, the AJP is no slouch when it comes to specifications. However, with Windows 2000 Pro and Microsoft Works 6.0, software is pretty limited.



4 Rock Sigma Si Combo

Despite only having 256MB of SDRAM, Rock managed to squeeze a WorldBench 4 performance score of 84 out of the Sigma. Powering the Combo is a 1.2GHz Intel Pentium III flip chip, which offers plenty of power, but the battery life isn't as long and may be prone to overheating. Having said this, we didn't experience any problems. Rock's 30GB hard drive has been designed as a silent runner, so operating noise is reduced. The combination DVD/CD-RW drive is a great addition and a FireWire port has also been included. However, you'll need the USB connections for other devices because there's no serial port.



5 Pico Systems Scholar 7521

The Pico's slightly inflated price tag keeps it at number five, but there's still a lot to recommend. With a 1.2GHz Intel Pentium III flip chip, 384MB of SDRAM and 20GB hard drive, the Scholar 7521 tied with AJP for the second fastest WorldBench 4 score, 85. Though speedy, it suffers from the generic problems associated with the flip chip. The DVD/CD-RW drive is a good addition and an array of ports makes it a versatile desktop replacement.

