

POWER AND BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

Power notebooks		Last month's position	First reviewed	World-Bench 4	Price (ex VAT)	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	1	Apr 02	118	£1,509	2-year return to base	Intel Pentium 4/1.8GHz	512MB	40GB	56K	Y	313x263x36mm	3kg	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 Hi-Grade Notino R5400-2000 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	NEW	Sep 02	91	£1,649	2-year including accidental damage	Intel Mobile Pentium 4/2.0GHz	384MB	40GB	56K	Y	313x257x30mm	2.4kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 ProSavage DDR	32MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	optional external	24x/8x/8x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, McAfee AntiVirus, Works Suite 2002
	3 Dell Inspiron 8200 0870 152 4699 www.dell.com	2	Jun 02	109	£1,999	1-year collect and return	Intel Mobile Pentium 4/1.7GHz	256MB	40GB	56K	Y	331x276x45mm	3.6kg	15in/TFT	1,600x1,200	nVidia GeForce4 440 Go	64MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	internal	24x/16x/10x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Office SBE, WinDVD
	4 Rock Quaddra 0870 990 9090 www.rockdirect.com	NEW	Sep 02	113	£1,449	3-year collect and return	Intel Pentium 4/2.4GHz	512MB	40GB	56K	Y	331x280x44mm	3.2kg	15in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS 650	32MB	N/A	8x	optional external	20x/4x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows 2000 Professional, McAfee Virus Scan 2.0
	5 Rock Xeno 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com	3	Jun 02	99	£1,299	3-year collect and return	Intel Pentium 4/2GHz	512MB	30GB	56K	Y	313x263x41mm	3kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Mobility M6-D	16MB	N/A	8x	N/A	20x/8x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Professional, McAfee Virus Scan 2.0
Budget notebooks																							
	1 Mesh Pegasus 14.1 Pro 020 8208 4702 www.meshcomputers.com	1	Mar 02	82	£899	2-year return to base	AMD Mobile Athlon 4/1.2GHz	384MB	20GB	56K	Y	308x254x38mm	3kg	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 Fujitsu Amilo M-7800 01344 475 555 www.fujitsu-europe.com	NEW	Sep 02	75	£1,154	1-year collect and return	Mobile Pentium 4/1.6GHz	256MB	30GB	56K	Y	310x255x29mm	2.2kg	15.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 Pro Savage 8DDR	user-definable 8/16/32MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	N/A	24x/8x/8x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2002
	3 NEC Versa Premium P1200 0870 010 6328 www.nec-online.co.uk	3	Jul 02	89	£999	1-year collect and return	Intel Pentium III/1.2GHz	128MB	20GB	56K	Y	310x265x40mm	3.4kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS 630ST	user-definable 8/16MB	N/A	8x	internal	24x/8x/8x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Professional, StarOffice, Norton AntiVirus
	4 HP Pavilion zt 1121s 0870 241 3625 www.hp.co.uk	4	May 02	68	£850	1-year return to base	Intel Mobile Celeron/1.06GHz	128MB	20GB	56K	Y	318x273x36mm	2.6kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 Savage	32MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	N/A	N/A	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2002, Works 6.0
	5 Hi-Grade Notino 2200 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	5	Jun 02	82	£1,099	2-year return to base	Intel Mobile Pentium III/1GHz	320MB	40GB	56K	Y	313x263x36mm	2.1kg	12.1in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS onboard	user-definable 8/16/32MB	Intel Speedstep	6x	external	24x/8x/8x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 6.0

POWER NOTEBOOKS

1 Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I

Still at number one is the Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I, which uses its 1.8GHz Pentium 4 processor to great effect. The processor is twinned with 512MB of RAM and a 16MB DDR (double data rate) RAM ATI Mobility M6 graphics chip. This sterling setup enabled the Ultinote to pull in a WorldBench 4 score of 118, giving it the fastest performance score in our Power notebook chart and, at just £9 over our starting cost of £1,500, the Ultinote is a worthy winner.

As with all notebooks using a power-hungry desktop processor, battery life is not this model's particular strong point, and the Hi-Grade claims a life of just 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. Unfortunately, the software bundled with the system is pretty limited – Office XP SBE is as much as you get.

2 Hi-Grade Notino R5400-2000

The Notino from Hi-Grade bundles Intel's fastest mobile chip into a military-approved rugged chassis. Its 2GHz Mobile Pentium 4's performance failed to better previous P4M machines seen by PC Advisor, only managing a WorldBench 4 score of 91, compared to 103 achieved by Toshiba's 1.7GHz Satellite Pro 6100 (reviewed June 02). But this blow and that of the weaker S3 ProSavage DDR chipset is softened by the Notino costing a good £400 less than the Satellite. Where the Hi-Grade did fair well was in our video encoding tests. Crunching down 500MB of DV (digital video) footage to Mpeg-2 took 10 minutes 53 seconds, not far off a 1.9GHz P4 desktop PC.

The R5400-2000 bundles 384MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, a 40GB hard drive, DVD/CD-RW combo drive, three USB 2.0 ports, FireWire and TV-out as standard. While it doesn't offer the highest performance score, it's a tough companion for the seasoned road warrior.

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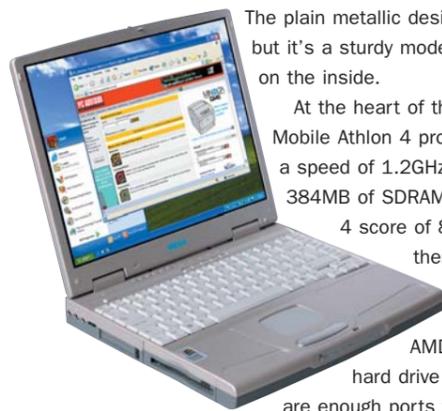


BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

1 Mesh Pegasus 14.1 Pro

Mesh's well-considered package continues to sit at number one, making the Pegasus 14.1 Pro our Best Buy Budget notebook for a total of six months. Although it couldn't match the performance of all its competitors and lacks a CD-RW drive, the Mesh Pegasus 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 processor, 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 processors. A 20GB hard drive is standard and there are enough ports to make it a decent desktop replacement, although we'd like to see FireWire. The rest of the specification is fairly standard – a DVD drive, user-definable graphics memory and a 14.1in screen.



2 Fujitsu Amilo M-7800

The Amilo M-7800 is a well-rounded package with some excellent features that wouldn't look out of place in our Power chart. The WorldBench score of 75 may be average but the review model we looked at only had 128MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM. Production units will be sent out with 256MB so expect better performance.

Inside you'll find a Mobile Pentium 4 chip running at 1.6GHz, a 30GB hard drive and, by the time the Amilo ships, it will also come with a combi DVD/CD-RW drive rather than a single DVD device. There's no floppy drive, but you'll find a memory card slot. The lid overhangs slightly to accommodate a large, crisp 15.1in screen which is well complemented by the graphics chipset.

The Amilo M-7800 comes with XP Home and the handy bonus of a good software package, so you can start using it straight out of the box. We'd like to see a better warranty than a one-year collect-and-return, though.

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POWER NOTEBOOKS

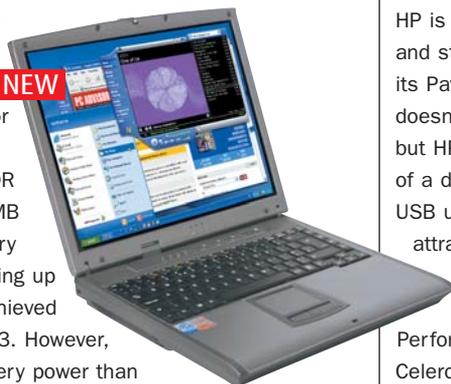
3 Dell Inspiron 8200

The Inspiron's clunkiness is reminiscent of IBM's ThinkPad, but it operates on a level that is way beyond aesthetics. Its 256MB of RAM is combined with a 40GB hard drive and Speedstep-enhanced Mobile Pentium 4 processor running at 1.7GHz. This specification achieved a WorldBench score of 109 which, although powerful, isn't far ahead of the competition. However, thanks to the new 845MP chipset, the Inspiron has been designed to perform better in multimedia content creation, and as an entertainment system the 8200 is second to none. The Dell manages to be a decent business performer and entertainment system in one, while defying the standard specifications of both. It is expensive, but buying a top-notch machine so often is.



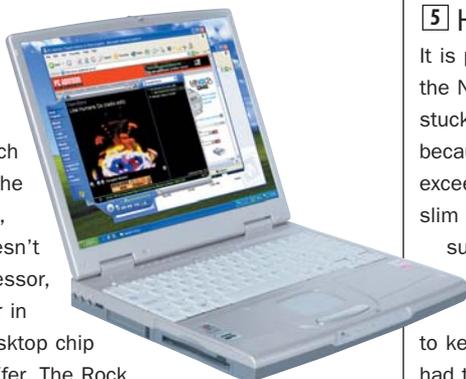
4 Rock Quaddra

Rather than taking the usual Mobile processor route, Rock has opted for a desktop Pentium 4 processor in its new notebook, the Quaddra. With 512MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, 32MB of dedicated graphics memory and a 40GB hard drive backing up the 2.4GHz Pentium 4, it achieved a WorldBench 4 score of 113. However, the P4 consumes more battery power than Intel's Mobile offering and runs at a higher temperature. The Quaddra's screen offers good-quality visuals, and the DVD/CD-RW combo drive provides extra backup and entertainment. If you keep this notebook on a desktop and don't have to worry too much about battery life it's a good buy, especially with its three-year warranty.



5 Rock Xeno

The Xeno packs a 2GHz Pentium 4 processor and 512MB of RAM, which helped pull in a WorldBench 4 score of 99. This isn't the highest score in the chart, but because the Xeno doesn't use a dearer Mobile processor, the price is kept low. Bear in mind, though, that the desktop chip means battery life will suffer. The Rock comes with 30GB of hard drive storage and a combined DVD/CD-RW drive. Graphics are provided by an ATI Mobility M6 card with 16MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, which offers superior quality to onboard graphics. Software is thin on the ground, but it is protected by a two-year collect-and-return warranty.



BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

3 NEC Versa Premium P1200

The P1200 is a top-of-the-range portable with a combo DVD/CD-RW drive and a 1.2GHz Pentium III chip, the fastest processor in the Versa range, though not in this chart.

This is backed up by 128MB of fast SDRAM, which helped the system to turn in a creditable WorldBench score of 89. All of this power is wrapped up in an attractive matt silver case, and NEC have also thrown in a 14.1in screen and a 20GB hard drive, which all goes to make a thoroughly decent Budget notebook. While the P1200's price tag means that it couldn't quite make it to the top of our chart, the Versa Premium does offer solid performance and the security of coming from a reputable brand.



4 HP Pavilion zt 1121s

HP is targeting the home and student market with its Pavilion zt 1121s. It doesn't run to a floppy drive, but HP offers you the option of a discount on an external USB unit. The notebook has an attractive grey and silver finish and some funky purple lights around the touchpad.

Performance from the 1.06GHz Mobile Celeron processor twinned with 128MB of RAM, a 20GB hard drive and S3 Savage graphics card is not the best by any means – it could only go as far as a WorldBench score of 68. However, what prevents this low score from taking the HP out of the chart altogether is its equally low price. You can get more for your money if you shop around, but not from a brand with such a good record for quality.



5 Hi-Grade Notino 2200

It is perhaps unfair that the Notino 2200 should be stuck down at number five, because it is actually an exceedingly good deal. This slim and light Hi-Grade subnotebook gives you the ultimate combination of portability on a budget. However,

to keep the Notino's weight down Hi-Grade has had to make a few compromises, such as the use of an external floppy drive and the inclusion of only a sparse smattering of ports – all you get is VGA-out and three USB sockets. However, on the plus side its small size doesn't mean the Notino isn't still powerful – its 320MB of RAM and 1GHz Mobile Pentium III combine to achieve a WorldBench 4 score of 82.

