

# TOP 10 CD DRIVES & DVD WRITERS

CD drives		Interface type	Data buffer size	Average access time	Read/write/rewrite rate	Dimensions	Packet writing and burning software
	<b>1</b> <b>MSI CR52-A2</b> 0870 727 2100 www.msi.com.tw NEW	internal IDE	2MB	85ms	52x/52x/24x	148x194x42mm	Nero Burning ROM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £41 ex VAT</li> <li>• 1-year warranty</li> <li>• First review May 03</li> </ul>		Retailing for £41, the CR52-A2 astounds with its top-of-the-range specs. Promising 52/52/24-speed rates, only the Asus can match our Best Buy on figures. The MSI's AWSS facilities cut out unnecessary vibration, while the Exact-Rec technology chooses the right writing mode for the occasion.					
	<b>2</b> <b>Asus CRW-5224A</b> 0870 429 3220 www.scan.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	EIDE	2MB	100ms	52x/52x/24x	149x197x42mm	InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £49 ex VAT</li> <li>• 2-year warranty</li> <li>• First review Feb 03</li> </ul>		The Asus offers blistering read/write/rewrite rates of 52/52/24-speed and its innovative CD-RW technology also optimises CD burning for high-speed quality output while ensuring burning errors are minimised. Throw in the two-year warranty and you have a great buy.					
	<b>3</b> <b>LG GCE 8520B</b> 0870 607 5544 www.lge.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	internal IDE	2MB	100ms	52x/52x/24x	149x185x41mm	Superlink, Nero Express
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £49 ex VAT</li> <li>• 2-year warranty</li> <li>• First review Apr 03</li> </ul>		The GCE 8520B combines high speeds with great value for money and a two-year warranty. LG has also incorporated the best in CD-RW burning technology so you get top results from your hardware. It's not as fast as Asus' CRW-5224A or MSI's CR52-A2 but it's definitely a worthy buy.					
	<b>4</b> <b>Asus CRW-4816A</b> 0870 429 3220 www.asus.com LAST MONTH 3	EIDE	2MB	100ms	48x/48x/16x	149x198x42mm	InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £46 ex VAT</li> <li>• 2-year warranty</li> <li>• First review Oct 02</li> </ul>		Asus makes the second-fastest drive available – this 48/48/16-speed (read/write/rewrite) model. With buffer underrun protection, dynamic suspension to cut down vibrations, Mount Rainier support and fast performance you'd expect the CRW-4816A to be costly. At £46, though, it's one of the best deals around.					
	<b>5</b> <b>Teac CD-W540EK</b> 020 8906 9111 www.teac.co.uk LAST MONTH 4	EIDE	8MB	72ms	48x/40x/12x	146x192x42mm	InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £45 ex VAT</li> <li>• 2-year warranty</li> <li>• First review Jul 02</li> </ul>		The CD-W540EK combines decent performance and quiet operation but is soundly beaten by the top four drives' faster burning rates. Fine Focus Control keeps the laser positioned at high speed, while Intelligent Speed Control keeps the success rate high by determining the quickest writing speed without risking errors.					

DVD writers		Drive type	Interface type	CD-RW read/write/rewrite speeds	DVD read/write/rewrite speeds	Average access time	Burning software
	<b>1</b> <b>Sony DRU-500A</b> 0870 243 0056 www.sonyisstorage.com LAST MONTH 1	DVD-R/DVD+R/ DVD-RW/DVD+RW/CD-RW	EIDE	32x/24x/10x	8x/4x/2.4x	200ms	Veritas RecordNow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £212 ex VAT</li> <li>• 1-year warranty</li> <li>• First review Spr 03</li> </ul>		The DRU-500A is the closest thing we've seen to a perfect DVD writer. It's fast, cheap and, thanks to its all-format facilities, offers peace of mind that the drive won't be redundant in a few years time. Software is easy to use while Sony's external version, the DRX-500UL, is ideal if space inside your PC is tight.					
	<b>2</b> <b>Teac DV-W50EK</b> 020 8906 9111 www.teac.co.uk NEW	DVD-R/DVD-RW/CD-RW	internal IDE	32x/16x/8x	12x/4x/2x	140ms	Nero Express
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £195 ex VAT</li> <li>• 2-year return-to-base warranty</li> <li>• First review May 03</li> </ul>		DV-W50EK boasts four-speed DVD-R capabilities, a 2MB data buffer and 140ms access times. Add to this the good software bundle and the excellent price tag and you have an obvious purchase for anyone looking to dip a toe into the waters of DVD burning.					
	<b>3</b> <b>Pioneer DVR-A05</b> 01753 789 500 www.pioneer-eur.com LAST MONTH 2	DVD-R/DVD-RW/CD-RW	EIDE	32x/16x/8x	12x/4x/2x	140ms	VOB Instant CD/DVD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £207 ex VAT</li> <li>• 1-year warranty</li> <li>• First review Spr 03</li> </ul>		Cheap to buy and cheap to run, the DVR-A05 is a must for anyone wanting to burn a number of DVDs without spending hours waiting at a PC. The Pioneer is astonishingly fast and leaves the competition for dust. It's not a complete solution like Sony's all-format model but it comes very close.					
	<b>4</b> <b>Ricoh MP125A-DP</b> 020 8261 4031 www.ricohpmc.com LAST MONTH 3	DVD+R/DVD+RW/CD-RW	EIDE	32x/12x/10x	8x/2.4x/2.4x	140ms	Ahead Nero 5.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £170 ex VAT</li> <li>• 2-year onsite swap warranty</li> <li>• First review Oct 02</li> </ul>		Combining DVD+RW with write-once DVD+R, this internal drive offers up to 2.4-speed write and rewrite facilities and discs are compatible with most standalone DVD players. It is a fast performer whose low price, good software bundle and solid performance secure it a place in our charts.					
	<b>5</b> <b>Philips DVDRW228</b> 0800 896 324 www.philips.com/pcstuff LAST MONTH 4	DVD+R/DVD+RW/CD-RW	EIDE	32x/12x/10x	8x/2.5x/2.5x	140ms	Ahead Nero 5.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £199 inc VAT</li> <li>• 2-year warranty</li> <li>• First review Oct 02</li> </ul>		The Philips' 2.5-speed rating should place it ahead of the glut of 2.4-speed drives but, although it was faster in our tests, the actual speed advantage is minor. Philips also cuts down on errors with Thermo-Balanced Writing, which adapts the method of burning to match the media.					

## Buying advice: DVD drives

If you wish to add recordable DVD to your PC then you'll need to consider which format is the most suitable.

- **DVD-R** This write-once standard has a capacity of 4.7GB and offers the best compatibility with DVD-ROMs and consumer DVD players. It is recognised by

the DVD Forum, a consortium of companies that designed the original DVD standard, and it generally tends to be the cheapest format on the market.

- **DVD-RW** This is also recognised by the DVD Forum. Its 4.7GB discs are reusable up to 1,000 times, although they aren't as compatible as DVD-R discs.
- **DVD-RAM** The DVD-RAM format is rewritable, best suited to data use and

recognised by the DVD Forum. The discs are rewritable 100,000 times but are housed in a caddy so they aren't very compatible. Single-sided discs store 4.7GB while double-sided ones store 9.4GB.

- **DVD+RW** This format is rewritable but not endorsed by the Forum. Its 4.7GB discs offer 1,000 rewrites and good compatibility, while DVD+R is a write-once version of DVD+RW.