











TOP 10 POWER PCs

		Power PCs	Processor type	RAM	Motherboard	Monitor	
			Processor speed	Hard disk capacity	USB ports	Dot pitch	
						Maximum resolution@75Hz	
1		Multivision Vision Ionix Wonder 0870 066 0882 www.multivision.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	• £1,200 ex VAT • 3-year onsite, 3-year return-to-base warranty • First review Apr 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	MSI 6	19in Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		129		
2		Mesh Matrix XP 2700+NDX 0870 046 4747 www.meshcomputers.com LAST MONTH 4	• £1,200 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review Apr 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	1024MB DDR RAM 120GB	Asus A7N8X 6	19in Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		130		
3		Evesham Axis 2700+ AE 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com LAST MONTH 2	• £1,249 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review Apr 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	256MB DDR RAM 120GB	Leadtek Winfast 4	19in Mitsubishi Diamond Plus 93SB 0.25mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		131		
4		Dell Dimension 4550 0870 152 4689 www.dell.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	• £1,299 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review Jan 03	Intel Pentium 4 2.8GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	Intel 6	17in Dell 1702 flat-panel 0.264mm 1,280x1,042
			WorldBench 4		127		
5		Hi-Grade Ultis PV4 GPPA4 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 5	• £1,200 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review Apr 03	Intel Pentium 4 2.8GHz	512MB DDR RAM 2 x 80GB	Gigabyte 8PE667 Ultra 2 8	19in Mitsubishi Diamond Plus 93SB 0.25mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		124		
6		Systemax Reliance 3307 0870 729 7364 www.systemaxpc.co.uk LAST MONTH 6	• £1,200 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review Apr 03	Intel Pentium 4 3.06GHz	512MB DDR RAM 80GB	MSI MS-6580V2-L 4	19in CTX EX950F 0.25mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		123		
7		Evesham Axis 2700+ 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com LAST MONTH 7	• £1,349 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review Feb 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	Asus A7N8X 8	19in LG F900P 0.24mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		129		
8		Best Price Poweroid 2201 0870 220 0444 www.poweroid.com LAST MONTH 9	• £1,249 ex VAT • 3-year onsite, 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Feb 03	Intel Pentium 4 2.8GHz	512MB DDR RAM 2 x 80GB	MSI 845E Max2 4	19in CTX PR960F 0.24mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		117		
9		Shepley Power XP2700 0870 758 6445 www.shepleydirect.co.uk LAST MONTH 8	• £1,349 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 3-year return-to-base warranty • First review Apr 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	Asus A7N8X 4	19in Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		117		
10		Systemax Inspire 7352 0870 729 7364 www.systemaxpc.co.uk LAST MONTH 10	• £1,299 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review Feb 03	AMD Athlon XP 2600+ 2.13GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	MSI MS-6712 6	19in CTX PR960F 0.24mm 1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4		118		

Buying advice: Power PCs

If you are buying a new system or replacing an aged one and money is no object then the Power PC chart is the place to look. The price constraints of the Budget and Superbudget charts mean that compromises have to be made. In the Power chart, however, there is no price limit. This means manufacturers can put in whatever components they like – regardless of cost. Obviously we're still looking for value for money, but the extra freedom allows makers to put in that little bit extra.

- Processor The 3.06GHz Pentium 4 is the latest offering from Intel which features HT (hyperthreading) technology, although as the results are mixed at the moment you may be better off with a cheaper 2.8GHz chip. In terms of AMD Athlon processors, the latest models on the market are the XP 2700+ and the 2800+ but anything over a 2400+ is fine in this category.
- Memory Expect 512MB and ensure that it's the fast DDR RAM. Rambus is seldom used these days although you will see it in some systems.

Performance-wise, though, Rambus isn't an awful lot different to DDR RAM. Look for DDR333 RAM, although DDR400 is becoming available and will prove a better bet in the future.

- **Storage** If you are going to use your PC for video editing and holding lots of footage then go for the most storage you can afford. An 80GB hard drive is the minimum hard drive size you can expect in this category and a system with two hard drives is preferable.

Have backup covered with a 40/32/
10-speed (read/write/rewrite) CD-RW drive.

	Graphics card maker Graphics chip Graphics card memory	Sound card Speakers Subwoofer	DVD drive speed CD-RW read/ write/rewrite rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	Creative Audigy2 Platinum 6 x Creative Inspire 6700 yes	16x 32x/16x/8x (CD-RW) 4x/2x/1x (DVD-RW)	Windows XP Home, Lotus SmartSuite 9.7	The Ionix is one of the best-looking PCs we've seen. It also offers top-quality components, outstanding performance and a reasonable price tag. The Multivision performed well in our graphics and video encoding tests, while its Audigy2 Platinum sound card is perfect for audiophiles. With a six-year warranty, the Ionix offers complete peace of mind too.
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	Creative Audigy2 6 x Creative Inspire 6700 yes	n/a 32x/24x/10x (CD-RW) 8x/4x/2x (DVD-RW)	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2003, Pinnacle Studio	Thanks to a price cut, the Matrix XP climbs the chart to second place this month. Achieving a score of 130 in our WorldBench 4 tests, the Mesh Matrix XP is aided by its speedy Athlon processor and a massive 120GB of memory. Despite its unusual styling, internally it's one of the roomiest and neatest PCs that we've seen – ideal for upgraders.
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	Creative Audigy2 6 x Creative Inspire 6700 yes	16x 32x/8x/4x (CD-RW) 10x/2x/1x (DVD-RW)	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2002	Despite having the fastest WorldBench score in the chart, the Evesham is knocked down to third place by high-climber Mesh. The Axis is powerful, pumps out great audio and the monitor offers superb image quality. It's let down by its three-year warranty – this may be reasonable, but it can't come close to Multivision's six-year offering.
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	Creative Audigy2 5 x Altec Lansing ADA 995 yes	8x/2.5x/2.5x (DVD+RW) 48x/40x/12x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 6.0	Slipping to fourth place this month, Dell's Dimension 4550 remains truly outstanding – the beautiful flat-panel complements the sleek dark grey case and space-age speakers. This slim monitor has a visible screen size of 17in and, combined with the Radeon 9700 Pro, ensures a decent display. The Audigy2 sound card is another fine addition.
	Gainward nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4800 128MB	Creative Audigy 5 x Creative Inspire 5.1 yes	16x 24x/24x/10x (CD-RW) 8x/4x/2x (DVD-RW)	Windows XP Home	Powered by a 2.8GHz P4 processor, the Hi-Grade PV4 is the only Power system that houses an nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4800 graphics chip. The pair of 80GB hard drives are configured to Raid-0, which means you can access your data more quickly than you can on a standard drive. The Audigy sound card doesn't offer seven-channel support, however.
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	Creative Audigy 5 x Creative Inspire 5.1 yes	16x 52x/52x/16x	Windows XP Home, Lotus SmartSuite 9.7	The value-for-money Systemax uses a 3.06GHz P4 chip and it's fair to say that this particular processor can't get anywhere near the top WorldBench 4 scores. Otherwise this Power PC has everything you would expect, including plenty of RAM and ATI's excellent Radeon 9700 graphics card. The CTX monitor could do with a USB hub, though.
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	onboard 5 x Creative Inspire 5.1 yes	16x 32x/12x/8x	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2002	Our former Best Buy still offers good value for money – its impressive performance is on a par with the number one Multivision. Graphics are ably handled by the Radeon 9700 Pro and LG monitor, although there's no standalone sound card. That said, the onboard chip on the nForce motherboard still offers six-channel support and performs fairly well.
	nVidia nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600 128MB	Creative Audigy2 5 x Creative Inspire 5.1 yes	16x 32x/12x/10x	Windows XP Home, Star Office 5.2	A price cut sees the Poweroid 2201 leapfrogging Shepley and now sits at number eight. Its major shortcoming is a low WorldBench 4 score. The Audigy2 sound card is a bonus, however, and there are two hard drives which make it easier to keep important files safe. The results in our graphics and video-encoding tests were also impressive.
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	Creative Audigy 5 x Creative Inspire 5.1 yes	16x 52x/52x/124x	Windows XP Home, Ability Office 2002	The Shepley, which slips down one position, suffers from a low performance score. However, the XP2700 is not badly specified and offers some components that better those of the opposition. The memory is the faster DDR400 as opposed to DDR333 and Shepley has included a TV tuner card. The system also comes with an impressive five-year warranty.
	ATI ATI Radeon 9700 Pro 128MB	Creative Audigy 5 x Videologic ZXR-500 yes	16x 40x/40x/10x	Windows XP Home Lotus SmartSuite 9.7	The Inspire has been around for a while, but it still has something to offer. Although its performance is unimpressive, its graphics are handled superbly by the Radeon Pro 9700 card and CTX PR960F display. In terms of sound, the Audigy card still offers good audio quality but it doesn't have the seven-channel support of its updated sibling.

DVD writers are becoming more widely available but one of these could push up the overall cost of the system.

- **Monitor** Look for a 19in screen that offers a resolution of 1,600x1,200 and a dot pitch of 0.25mm or less. Flat-panel displays are increasingly more common but can vary wildly in quality – look for a display that can support a resolution of at least 1,280x1,024.

- **Graphics card** The ATI Radeon 9700 graphics card is just about top dog at the moment, though nVidia's GeForce4 Ti 4600 also offers strong

performance. Look for at least 64MB of RAM – 128MB is even better.

- **Sound card and speakers** Creative's Audigy2 card offers top-quality sound and adds an extra FireWire port. The company's Inspire 5300 system and Videologic's ZXR-500 models, offering a subwoofer with five satellite speakers, are often bundled with Power PCs. The Audigy2 can support seven channels so if you buy a system with this then you'll need a subwoofer and six satellites to use it to its full potential – the Creative Inspire 6700 speakers are a good bet.

↓ The good-looking Ionix offers top-quality components and outstanding performance at a reasonable price

