

TOP 10 POWER & BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

		Power notebooks	Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wxhxd)	Battery type	Screen size			
			Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity				Weight	Max resolution	
1		Evesham Voyager 5815 2.4 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com LAST MONTH 1	• £1,500 ex VAT	• 2-year return-to-base warranty	• First review Spring 03	2.4GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	332x280x42mm	lithium-ion	15in
			Speedstep	60GB	3.6kg				WorldBench 4	119
2		Dell Inspiron 8200 0870 152 4699 www.dell.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	• £1,549 ex VAT	• 3-year collect-and-return warranty	• First review Dec 02	2.2GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	331x276x45mm	lithium-ion	15in
			Speedstep	60GB	3.6kg				WorldBench 4	100
3		AJP 8880E 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	• £1,749 ex VAT	• 2-year return-to-base warranty	• First review Spring 03	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	360x299x55mm	lithium-ion	15.7in
			no	60GB	4.9kg				WorldBench 4	117
4		Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 4	• £1,509 ex VAT	• 2-year return-to-base warranty	• First review Apr 02	1.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	313x263x36mm	lithium-ion	14.1in
			no	40GB	2.95kg				WorldBench 4	118
5		AJP 8880 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 5	• £1,525 ex VAT	• 2-year return-to-base warranty	• First review Nov 02	2.5GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	360x300x55mm	lithium-ion	15.7in
			no	60GB	5.5kg				WorldBench 4	112

		Budget notebooks	Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wxhxd)	Battery type	Screen size			
			Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity				Weight	Max resolution	
1		Multivision Ionix XT 0870 066 0882 www.multivision.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	• £999 ex VAT	• 1-year collect-and-return warranty	• First review Spring 03	2.53GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	332x281x40mm	lithium-ion	15in
			no	60GB	3.4kg				WorldBench 4	115
2		Rock Agenda XP 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com LAST MONTH 2	• £1,199 ex VAT	• 3-year collect-and-return warranty	• First review Spring 03	Athlon XP Mobile 2200+	256MB	328x283x27mm	lithium-ion	15in
			PowerNow	30GB	3.1kg				WorldBench 4	121
3		Hi-Grade Ultinote M6600 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 3	• £1,499 ex VAT	• 2-year collect-and-return warranty	• First review Mar 03	2.4GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	332x285x35mm	lithium-ion	15.1in
			Speedstep	60GB	3.4kg				WorldBench 4	119
4		AJP 8640D-T14 020 8208 9700 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 4	• £1,345 ex VAT	• 2-year return-to-base warranty	• First review Spring 03	2.66GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	332x285x39mm	lithium-ion	14.1in
			no	60GB	3.4kg				WorldBench 4	118
5		ACI Antares 020 8830 1959 www.aciplc.com LAST MONTH 5	• £1,106 ex VAT	• 1-year collect-and-return warranty	• First review Spring 03	2GHz Intel Pentium 4	256MB	330x275x42mm	lithium-ion	15.1in
			no	20GB	3.9kg				WorldBench 4	104

Buying advice: notebooks

If you're after a portable PC to take on the road or an alternative to your bulky desktop system then a notebook is the device for you. If you want a machine to use on the road then a mobile processor is a must. Specifically designed mobile models use less power when running off the battery by dropping to a slower clock speed.

At the Power end of the market look for at least a 1.8GHz CPU. For budget machines, Intel's Pentium 4 processor is rapidly taking over the PIII chip while AMD's Mobile Athlon 4 is also strong. Make sure your chip is at least 1.2GHz.

Memory is important as it ensures smooth performance. Power models should have at least 256MB of RAM, although 512MB is preferable. Budget buyers can settle for 256MB or 192MB.

Since notebook users tend not to load their hard drives with huge apps, 30GB of disk space should be fine for both Power and Budget models.

To maximise portability, opt for a 13in screen. A 15in display will increase the model's size and weight but, as these offer almost as much workspace as a 17in CRT monitor, such a move will pay dividends in terms of productivity. You can usually plug in an external monitor for use in the office

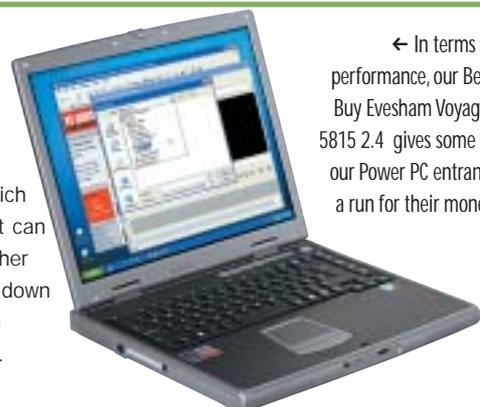
Graphics card Memory	DVD read rate	CD-RW read/write/ rewrite rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
nVidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	Boasting Intel's latest Mobile P4 chip, running at an impressive speed of 2.4GHz, the Evesham Voyager achieved a WorldBench 4 score that wouldn't look out of place in our Power PC chart. The 15in display and GeForce4 420 Go card means that you can expect crystal-clear output. A robust and speedy notebook, the Evesham's best feature is its price.
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	8x	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0	If speed is not your most important purchasing factor then consider Dell's Inspiron as it offers quality components and a competitive price. The 15in screen is possibly the most outstanding feature – images on the display are excellent and it stretches to a resolution of 1,600x1,200. The graphics setup is impressive and the software package generous.
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	8x	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Professional, MP3 player	The 8880E is suited to use while plugged into the mains as it's both heavy and power-hungry (due to the 2.8GHz P4 chip). The AJP is pricey but it comes with a good warranty and is bundled with a removable MP3 player. The 15.7in screen reaches a resolution of 1,280x1,024 and, combined with the Mobility Radeon 9000, gives superb graphics display.
ATI Mobility M6 16MB	8x	24x/8x/4x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Office XP SBE	Even though its 1.8GHz Mobile Pentium 4 processor is starting to age, let us not forget the Hi-Grade's speedy WorldBench 4 score of 118. Weighing just under 3kg, the Ultinote is also the lightest model in both our charts. This machine's major flaw lies with the dedicated graphics memory – 16MB is a miserly offering compared to the opposition.
ATI Mobility Radeon 7500 64MB	8x	24x/14x/8x	Windows XP Professional, TV tuner, MP3 player, remote control	At 5.5kg this portable PC is a true heavyweight. The 8880 offers decent performance, though, scoring 112 in our WorldBench 4 tests. It also boasts an ATI Radeon Mobility 7500 graphics card with 64MB of installed DDR RAM – perfect for getting the best out of the 15.7in screen. An MP3 player, TV tuner and remote control are also included.

Graphics card Memory	DVD read rate	CD-RW read/write/ rewrite rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	Multivision's Ionix XT offers a high-quality 15in screen and an ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 graphics card, which together provide an excellent display. It's lightweight yet sturdy, offers an unbeatable combination of performance and components, while coming in at a pleasingly low £999 ex VAT. This all adds up to a worthy winner.
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 32MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	As mobile processors use less power than standard CPUs the battery shouldn't drain too quickly, so the Rock is ideal if you regularly use your notebook on the train – it's also the lightest notebook in the chart. We would have preferred to see 512MB of DDR RAM, though, and the Agenda costs £200 more than the Best Buy Multivision.
nVidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB	8x	24x/16x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 6.0	With a WorldBench 4 score of 119, the Ultinote is a high performing machine. It offers top-notch components and there's even a bundled DVD-RW drive. With a price tag of £1,499, which hits the ceiling of our price range, the M6600 fails to achieve a higher chart placing. Of course, if cost isn't an issue then this notebook is worth a look.
nVidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Professional	The AJP 8540D is the only model in the Budget chart to come with an external USB floppy drive. It also provides a generous 60GB of storage space and 512MB of DDR RAM. The 3.4kg T14 is fairly light and portable but the 14.1in screen, which only stretches to a resolution of 1,024x768, could cause eye strain if used for long periods of time.
ATI Mobility Radeon 8500 64MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	Offering slightly less in the way of components than the rest of the competition, this fifth-placed notebook loses out despite reaching a reasonable WorldBench 4 score of 104 and a low price of £1,106. On the down side, the Antares comes only with 20GB of storage space – the bare minimum even for a Budget notebook.

so, depending on where you plan to use your notebook, a large screen may not be essential. All our Budget notebooks have screens with 1,024x768 resolution and 32bit colour. Resolutions beyond this are possible on some models, but they sometimes can't fit all the information on the screen – you'll end up scrolling around the display to view a whole document.

Notebook graphics tend to be a step behind the desktop market, but if you're

after good 3D performance then look for nVidia's GeForce 4 Go or ATI's Mobility Radeon chips. At the Budget end, onboard graphics with user-definable RAM are the most popular choice. They use system memory, which can often be pushed up to 64MB, but can be minimised if you want to favour other functions. You might be able to track down a standalone card, though, as they're becoming more common at this price.



← In terms of performance, our Best Buy Evesham Voyager 5815 2.4 gives some of our Power PC entrants a run for their money