

TOP 10 POWER & BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

		Power notebooks	Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wx dxh)	Battery type	Screen size
			Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity	Weight		Max resolution
1		Acer TravelMate 800 01753 699 200 www.acer.co.uk NEW	1.6GHz Intel Pentium M	256MB	330x272x30mm	lithium-ion	15in
			Speedstep	40GB	2.6kg		1,400x1,050
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,550 ex VAT • 2-year onsite warranty, 1-year international • First review May 03 	WorldBench 4		126		
2		Evesham Voyager 5815 2.4 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com LAST MONTH 1	2.4GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	332x280x42mm	lithium-ion	15in
			Speedstep	60GB	3.6kg		1,024x768
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,500 ex VAT • 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Spr 03 	WorldBench 4		119		
3		AJP 8880E 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	360x299x55mm	lithium-ion	15.7in
			no	60GB	4.9kg		1,280x1,024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,449 ex VAT • 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Spr 03 	WorldBench 4		117		
4		Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 4	1.8GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	313x263x36mm	lithium-ion	14.1in
			Speedstep	60GB	2.95kg		1,600x1,200
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,509 ex VAT • 2-year collect & return warranty • First review Apr 02 	WorldBench 4		118		
5		AJP 8880 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 5	2.5GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	360x300x55mm	lithium-ion	15.7in
			no	60GB	5.5kg		1,280x1,024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,349 ex VAT • 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Nov 02 	WorldBench 4		112		

		Budget notebooks	Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wx dxh)	Battery type	Screen size
			Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity	Weight		Max resolution
1		Rock Agenda XP 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com LAST MONTH 1	Athlon XP Mobile 2200+	256MB	328x283x27mm	lithium-ion	15in
			PowerNow	30GB	3.1kg		1,400x1,050
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £999 ex VAT • 3-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Spr 03 	WorldBench 4		121		
2		Multivision Ionix XT 0870 066 0882 www.multivision.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	2.53GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	332x281x40mm	lithium-ion	15in
			no	60GB	3.4kg		1,280x1,024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £999 ex VAT • 1-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Spr 03 	WorldBench 4		115		
3		Toshiba Tecra S1 0870 444 8944 www.toshiba.co.uk NEW	1.3GHz Intel Pentium M	256MB	312x274x37mm	lithium-ion	14.1in
			Speedstep	30GB	2.55kg		1,024x768
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £999 ex VAT • 3-year international onsite warranty • First review May 03 	WorldBench 4		115		
4		Hi-Grade Notino W6700-2000 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 3	2GHz Mobile Pentium 4	256MB	352x260x30mm	lithium-ion	15.2in
			Speedstep	30GB	2.7kg		1,280x854
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,069 ex VAT • 2-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Apr 03 	WorldBench 4		109		
5		Hi-Grade M6600-2000 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 4	2.4GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	332x285x35mm	lithium-ion	15.1in
			Speedstep	60GB	3.4kg		1,280x1,024
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1,349 ex VAT • 2-year collect-and-return warranty • First review Mar 03 	WorldBench 4		119		

Buying advice: notebooks

- Processor If you want a machine to use on the go then a mobile processor is a must. Centrino is Intel's latest offering with AMD targeting its Mobile Athlon 4 at users that want to maximise battery life.

At the Power end of the market look for at least a 1.8GHz chip. Bear in mind that although Centrino runs at a slower clock speed (maximum of 1.6GHz) it's one of

the fastest chips available. For Budget machines, Intel's Pentium 4 chip is rapidly taking over the PIII while AMD's Mobile Athlon 4 is also strong. Make sure your processor is at least 1.2GHz.

- Memory RAM is also important as it ensures smooth performance. Power notebooks should have at least 256MB of RAM, with 512MB a preferable amount. Buyers investing in a Budget model can settle for 256MB.

• Hard drive Since notebook users tend not to load their hard disks with huge applications, 30GB of space should be fine on both categories.

- Screen 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, 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
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Professional	Intel's Centrino platform encompasses a Pentium-M chip, 855 chipset and wireless LAN facilities. The technology is known for its portability and long battery life, but the lightweight Acer is also a speedy model with excellent graphics facilities. In terms of actual viewing area the crisp 15in TFT screen is only 0.5in or so shy of the space offered by a bulky 17in CRT monitor.
nVidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	Boasting a fast 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 Professional	If you're after a desktop-replacement system then the 8880E is an option. This heavy and power-hungry model is most suited for use while plugged into the mains, and a 2.8GHz P4 chip helps the AJP achieve a WorldBench score of 117. The 15.7in screen reaches a resolution of 1,280x1,024 and, combined with the Mobility Radeon 9000, gives superb graphics.
ATI Mobility M6 64MB	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 WorldBench 4 score of 118. Weighing just under 3kg, the Ultinote is also one of the lighter models in 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	At 5.5kg the 8880 is a true heavyweight – not ideal if you're constantly on the move. The AJP scored 112 in our WorldBench 4 tests – the lowest in the chart – but it still offers a reasonable performance. It boasts an ATI Radeon Mobility 7500 graphics card with 64MB of installed DDR RAM, which gets the most out of the 15.7in screen.

Graphics card Memory	DVD read rate	CD-RW read/write/ rewrite rate	Operating system, software and extras	Comments
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 32MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	Mobile processors, like the Athlon XP Mobile 2200+ housed in the Rock, use less power than standard chips which means that battery life lasts longer. Combine this with a slimline case and a weight of 3.1kg and the Agenda is ideal if you regularly use your notebook on the train. With a price tag of just £999, Rock deserves our Best Buy award.
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 64MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Home	Multivision's Ionix 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 and 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 Recommended candidate.
ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 32MB	8x	n/a	Windows XP Professional	The Tecra offers a solid performance, but there are plenty of notebooks better equipped to handle Windows apps. It does, however, boast long battery life while its low weight and Wi-Fi features will make it a good acquisition for the executive on the move. With its three-figure frame rates, the 32MB ATI Mobility Radeon 9000 graphics engine will please gamers.
nVidia GeForce 440 Go 64MB	8x	32x/16x/8x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0, McAfee AntiVirus, Nero & Power DVD	With its magnesium chassis and slimline design the Notino bears more than a passing resemblance to Apple's PowerBook. The 15.2in display is capable of a maximum resolution of 1,280x854 and there's a slot-loading combo DVD/CD-RW drive. The top-notch specs – including a 2GHz Mobile Pentium 4 – failed to set our WorldBench test alight, though.
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 decent components and there's even a bundled DVD-RW drive. With a price tag of £1,349, which is close to the ceiling of the Budget price range, the M6600 fails to achieve a higher chart placing. If cost isn't an issue, this notebook is well worth a look.

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

- Graphics Notebook graphics tend to be a step behind the desktop market, but if you're after good 3D performance then

look for nVidia's GeForce4 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 that can often be pushed up to 64MB, but can be minimised if you want to enhance other functions. You might be able to track down a standalone card, though, as they're becoming more common at this price point.

→ The Acer TravelMate is a lightweight but speedy model with excellent graphics facilities

