

## TOP 10 CD DRIVES AND 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><br><b>PC ADVISOR</b><br>BEST BUY                          | <b>Asus CRW-4816A</b><br>0870 429 3220<br>www.asus.com<br>LAST MONTH 1  | • £58 ex VAT<br>• 2-year warranty<br>• First review Oct 02              | EIDE               | 2MB                             | 100ms                         | 48x/48x/16x         | 149x198x42mm<br>InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5            |
|  |  | Offering 48-/48-/16-speed (read/write/rewrite) facilities, the Asus is the fastest drive we've seen. With buffer underrun protection, dynamic suspension to cut down vibrations, Mount Rainier support and fast performance you would expect the Asus to be expensive. At £58, though, it is one of the best deals yet.   |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|    | <b>2</b><br><b>RECOMMENDED</b><br><b>PC ADVISOR</b><br>RECOMMENDED | <b>Teac CD-W540EK</b><br>020 8906 9111<br>www.microwarehouse.co.uk<br>LAST MONTH 2  | • £83 ex VAT<br>• 2-year warranty<br>• First review Jul 02              | EIDE               | 8MB                             | 72ms                          | 48x/40x/12x         | 146x192x42mm<br>DirectCD, Roxio Easy CD Creator |
|  |  | The CD-W540EK combines high performance and quiet operation but its price tag denies it the top spot. Fine Focus control keeps the laser positioned at high speed, while Intelligent Speed Control keeps the success rate high by monitoring CDs to determine the quickest writing speed without risking errors.          |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|    | <b>3</b>   | <b>Cyber Drive CW078D</b><br>01256 707 070<br>www.cyberdrive.de<br>LAST MONTH 3   | • £70 ex VAT<br>• 1-year warranty<br>• First review Jun 02              | EIDE               | 2MB                             | 100ms                         | 48x/40x/16x         | 146x192x42mm<br>InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5            |
|  |  | The CW078D delivers performance on a budget. On paper it is the second fastest in the chart, though it couldn't match the Teac's technology. There's buffer underrun prevention, but it offers little else in the way of cutting-edge features. In testing, the Cyber Drive wasn't quite as fast as the well-heeled Asus. |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|    | <b>4</b>   | <b>LG GCE-8400B</b><br>0870 607 5544<br>www.lge.co.uk<br>LAST MONTH 4   | • £51 ex VAT<br>• 2-year warranty<br>• First review Jul 02              | EIDE               | 2MB                             | 100ms                         | 40x/40x/12x         | 146x185x41mm<br>InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5            |
|  |  | The LG is a competent performer with moderate test results. But whereas the Teac can hold its own even when the competition upped the ante on write and rewrite speeds, the LG isn't as fortunate. Consequently, it is a bit overpriced and underspecified when compared to the Asus and Cyber Drive.                     |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|   | <b>5</b>   | <b>Cyber Drive CW058D</b><br>01256 707 070<br>www.cyberdrive.de<br>LAST MONTH 5   | • £62 ex VAT<br>• 1-year warranty<br>• First review Jul 02              | EIDE               | 2MB                             | 100ms                         | 48x/32x/12x         | 149x207x43mm<br>InCD, Ahead Nero 5.5            |
|  |  | The CW058D is the cheapest drive, but its spec falls short rated at 48-/32-/12-speed (read/write/rewrite). In our tests the CW058D kept the other drives within sight without pushing up the error rate. It may appear to be a laggard on paper, but the Cyber Drive offers decent performance for a modest price.        |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|  |  | 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><br><b>PC ADVISOR</b><br>BEST BUY                          | <b>Ricoh MP125A-DP</b><br>020 8261 4031<br>www.ricoh.co.uk<br>LAST MONTH 1  | • £170 ex VAT<br>• 2-year onsite swap warranty<br>• First review Oct 02 | DVD+R/DVD+RW/CD-RW | EIDE                            | 32x/12x/10x                   | 8x/2.4x/2.4x        | 140ms<br>Ahead Nero 5.5                         |
|  |  | 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 the Best Buy award.                               |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|  | <b>2</b><br><b>RECOMMENDED</b><br><b>PC ADVISOR</b><br>RECOMMENDED | <b>Philips DVDRW228</b><br>0800 896 324<br>www.philips.com/pcstuff<br>LAST MONTH 2  | • £212 ex VAT<br>• 2-year warranty<br>• First review Oct 02             | DVD+R/DVD+RW/CD-RW | EIDE                            | 32x/12x/10x                   | 8x/2.5x/2.5x        | 140ms<br>Ahead Nero 5.5                         |
|  |  | The Philips' 2.5-speed rating should place it ahead of the glut of 2.4-speed drives, but the actual speed advantage is minor, although it was the fastest in our tests. Philips also cuts down on errors with Thermo-Balanced Writing, which adapts the method of burning to match the media.                             |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|  | <b>3</b>   | <b>Sony DRX-120L</b><br>0870 511 1999<br>www.sonyisstorage.com<br>LAST MONTH 3  | • £347 ex VAT<br>• 1-year warranty<br>• First review Oct 02             | DVD+R/DVD+RW/CD-RW | external FireWire               | 32x/12x/10x                   | 8x/2.4x/2.4x        | 140ms<br>Recorder Gold                          |
|  |  | The DRX-120L is an external FireWire drive, so you'll need a matching port on your PC to use it. However, it comes with all the cabling you need and is easy to set up. Performance is strong, and the price is reasonable for an external drive.   |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|  | <b>4</b>   | <b>Pioneer DVR-A04</b><br>01753 789 500<br>www.pioneer-eur.com<br>LAST MONTH 4  | • £275 ex VAT<br>• 2-year warranty<br>• First review Oct 02             | DVD-R/DVD-RW/CD-RW | EIDE                            | 24x/8x/4x                     | 6x/2x/1x            | 200ms<br>VOB Instant CD/DVD                     |
|  |  | Pioneer sticks to the traditional DVD-R/-RW standard, which is its downfall. This choice leaves it struggling to a meagre dual- and single-speed. The 8-/4-speed CD-R/RW facilities are similarly underspecified, but the software bundle is adequate, as is the modest price tag.  |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |
|  | <b>5</b>   | <b>HP DVD200i</b><br>08705 474 747<br>www.hp.com/uk<br>LAST MONTH 5   | • £340 ex VAT<br>• 3-year warranty<br>• First review Oct 02             | DVD+R/DVD+RW/CD-RW | EIDE                            | 32x/12x/10x                   | 8x/2.4x/2.4x        | 125ms<br>HP RecordNow                           |
|  |  | The DVD200i has the specs to compete with the best, running from its 2.4-speed DVD+R/+RW facilities up to the 2MB buffer and error protection technology. But HP's software left it trailing behind the leaders, taking on average an extra minute to complete the tests.   |   |                    |                                 |                               |                     |   |

**Buying advice: DVD writers**

If you're thinking of adding recordable DVD to your system then you'll need to consider which format is the most suitable. DVD-R is a write-once standard with a 4.7GB capacity 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.

DVD-RW is also recognised by the DVD Forum and its 4.7GB discs are reusable up to 1,000 times, although they aren't as compatible as DVD-R discs. DVD-RAM is rewritable, best suited to data use and also 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 is rewriteable and not endorsed by the DVD Forum. Its 4.7GB discs offer 1,000 rewrites and good compatibility. DVD+R is a write-once version of DVD+RW, though only newer drives can write to it.