

TOP 10 POWER & BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

		Power notebooks	Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wx dxh) Weight	Battery type	Screen size	
			Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity			Max resolution	
1		Evesham Voyager 5815 2.4 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com LAST MONTH 1	• £1,500 ex VAT	2.4GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	332x280x42mm 3.6kg	lithium-ion	15in
			• 2-year return-to-base warranty	Speedstep	60GB			1,024x768
			WorldBench 4				119	
2		AJP 8880E 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	• £1,535 ex VAT	2.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	360x299x55mm 4.9kg	lithium-ion	15.7in
			• 2-year return-to-base warranty	no	60GB			1,280x1,024
			WorldBench 4				117	
3		Dell Inspiron 8200 0870 152 4699 www.dell.co.uk LAST MONTH 2	• £1,549 ex VAT	2.2GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	331x276x45mm 3.6kg	lithium-ion	15in
			• 3-year collect-and-return warranty	Speedstep	60GB			1,600x1,200
			WorldBench 4				100	
4		Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 4	• £1,509 ex VAT	1.8GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	313x263x36mm 2.95kg	lithium-ion	14.1in
			• 2-year return-to-base warranty	no	40GB			1,024x768
			WorldBench 4				118	
5		AJP 8880 020 8208 9710 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 5	• £1,349 ex VAT	2.5GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	360x300x55mm 5.5kg	lithium-ion	15.7in
			• 2-year return-to-base warranty	no	60GB			1,280x1,024
			WorldBench 4				112	

		Budget notebooks	Processor	RAM	Dimensions (wx dxh) Weight	Battery type	Screen size	
			Dual-speed	Hard disk capacity			Max resolution	
1		Rock Agenda XP 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com LAST MONTH 2	• £999 ex VAT	Athlon XP Mobile 2200+	256MB	328x283x27mm 3.1kg	lithium-ion	15in
			• 3-year collect-and-return warranty	PowerNow	30GB			1,400x1,050
			WorldBench 4				121	
2		Multivision Ionix XT 0870 066 0882 www.multivision.co.uk LAST MONTH 1	• £999 ex VAT	2.53GHz Pentium 4	512MB	332x281x40mm 3.4kg	lithium-ion	15in
			• 1-year collect-and-return warranty	no	60GB			1,280x1,024
			WorldBench 4				115	
3		Hi-Grade Notino W6700-2000 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com NEW	• £1,099 ex VAT	2GHz Mobile Pentium 4	256MB	352x260x30mm 2.7kg	lithium-ion	15.2in
			• 2-year collect-and-return warranty	Speedstep	30GB			1,280x854
			WorldBench 4				109	
4		Hi-Grade Ultinote M6600 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com LAST MONTH 3	• £1,499 ex VAT	2.4GHz Mobile Pentium 4	512MB	332x285x35mm 3.4kg	lithium-ion	15.1in
			• 2-year collect-and-return warranty	Speedstep	60GB			1,280x1,024
			WorldBench 4				119	
5		AJP 8640D-T14 020 8208 9700 www.ajp.co.uk LAST MONTH 4	• £1,199 ex VAT	2.66GHz Intel Pentium 4	512MB	332x285x39mm 3.4kg	lithium-ion	14.1in
			• 2-year return-to-base warranty	no	60GB			1,024x768
			WorldBench 4				118	

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 go 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 processor. 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 is also 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.

Since notebook users tend not to load their hard drives with huge applications, 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 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 Radeon 9000 64MB	8x	24x/24x/10x	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 7.0	If speed is not your most important purchasing consideration then Dell's Inspiron is worth a look as it offers quality components at a reasonable 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 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	At 5.5kg the 8880 is a true heavyweight – not ideal if you're constantly on the move. The AJP offers reasonable performance, scoring 112 in our WorldBench 4 tests, and at £1,349 it's the cheapest model in the chart. 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.
nVidia GeForce 440 Go 32MB	8x	24x/8x/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 7.0, McAfee AntiVirus, Nero & Power DVD	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 £1,499, 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 well worth a look.
nVidia GeForce4 420 Go 32MB	8x	24x/8x/8x	Windows XP Professional	The AJP 8640D 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 over long periods of time.

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 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.



← Thanks to a price cut, the £999 Rock Agenda XP nabs the number one spot from Multivision in this month's Budget chart