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 NEW *BEST BUY PC ADVISOR*	• £1,200 ex VAT • 3-year onsite, 3-year-return-to-base warranty • First review April 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	MSI 6	Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200	
		WorldBench 4		**129**		
2 Evesham Axis 2700+ AE 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com NEW *RECOMMENDED PC ADVISOR*	• £1,249 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review April 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	Leadtek Winfast 4	Mitsubishi Diamond Plus 93SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200	
		WorldBench 4		**131**		
3 Dell Dimension 4550 0870 152 4689 www.dell.co.uk LAST MONTH 7 *RECOMMENDED PC ADVISOR*	• £1,299 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review April 03	Intel Pentium 4 2.8GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	Intel 6	Dell 1702 flat-panel 0.264mm 1,280x1,042	
		WorldBench 4		**127**		
4 Mesh Matrix XP 2700+NDX 020 8208 4702 www.meshcomputers.com NEW *RECOMMENDED PC ADVISOR*	• £1,200 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review April 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	1024MB DDR RAM 120GB	Asus A7N8X 6	Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200	
		WorldBench 4		**130**		
5 Hi-Grade Atlas PV4 GPPA4 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com NEW	• £1,200 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review April 03	Intel Pentium 4 2.8GHz	512MB DDR RAM 2 x 80GB	Gigabyte 8PE667 Ultra 2 8	Mitsubishi Diamond Plus 93SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200	
		WorldBench 4	**124**			
6 Systemax Reliance 3307 0870 7297 364 www.systemaxpc.co.uk NEW	• £1,200 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review April 03	Intel Pentium 4 3.06GHz	512MB DDR RAM 80GB	MSI MS-6580V2-L 4	CTX EX950F 0.25mm 1,600x1,200	
		WorldBench 4	**123**			
7 Evesham Axis 2700+ 0870 160 9500 www.evesham.com LAST MONTH 1	• £1,349 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 1-year return-to-base warranty • First review Jan 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 Shepley Power XP2700 0870 758 6445 www.shepleydirect.co.uk NEW	• £1,349 ex VAT • 2-year onsite, 3-year return-to-base warranty • First review April 03	AMD Athlon XP 2700+ 2.17GHz	512MB DDR RAM 120GB	Asus A7N8X 4	Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB 0.24mm 1,600x1,200	
		WorldBench 4	**117**			
9 Best Price Poweroid 2201 0870 220 0444 www.poweroid.com LAST MONTH 2	• £1,399 ex VAT • 1-year onsite, 2-year return-to-base warranty • First review Jan 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**			
10 Systemax Inspire 7352 0870 729 7364 www.systemaxpc.co.uk LAST MONTH 3	• £1,299 ex VAT • 3-year onsite warranty • First review Jan 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**			

new

↑ A clear winner, the Ionix Wonder not only looks good, it offers top quality conponents and outstanding performance at a very reasonable cost

1 Multivision Vision Ionix Wonder

Multivision takes the top spot in the Power chart this month with one of the best looking PCs we've seen in a long time. The Ionix Wonder isn't just a pretty face, though, as it offers top-quality components, outstanding performance and a very reasonable price tag. Put all this together and it's obvious why the Vision Ionix Wonder wins our coveted Best Buy award.

The black case, matching Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB monitor, cunningly disguised CD and DVD drives and blue light make this a system that you'll want to show off – not something you can say about many systems.

But we certainly don't judge PCs on looks alone and the true beauty of the Multivision lies on the inside. An AMD Athlon XP 2700+ processor drives the system to an excellent WorldBench 4 score of 129. The Radeon 9700 Pro graphics card ensured that the Ionix Wonder performed well in our graphics and video encoding tests too. The 120GB Western Digital hard drive means that you've got ample storage space and,

| Graphics card maker | Sound card | DVD drive speed | Operating system, |
| Graphics chip | Speakers | CD-RW read/ | software and |
Graphics card memory	Subwoofer	write/rewrite rate	extras
ATI	Creative Audigy 2 Platinum	16x	Windows XP Home,
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	6 x Creative Inspire 6700	32x/16x/8x (CD-RW)	Lotus SmartSuite 9.7
128MB	yes	4x/2x/1x (DVD-RW)	
ATI	Creative Audigy 2	16x	Windows XP Home,
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	6 x Creative Inspire 6700	32x/8x/4x (CD-RW)	Ability Office 2002
128MB	yes	10x/2x/1x (DVD-RW)	
ATI	Creative Audigy 2	8x/2.5x/2.5x (DVD+RW)	Windows XP Home,
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	5 x Altec Lansing ADA 995	48x/40x/12x	Microsoft Works 6.0
128MB	yes		
ATI	Creative Audigy 2	n/a	Windows XP Home,
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	6 x Creative Inspire 6700	32x/24x/10x (CD-RW)	Microsoft WorksSuite 2003
128MB	yes	8x/4x/2x (DVD-RW)	
Gainward	Creative Audigy	16x	Windows XP Home
nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4800	5 x Creative Inspire 5.1	24x/24x/10x (CD-RW)	
128MB	yes	8x/4x/2x (DVD-RW)	
ATI	Creative Audigy	16x	Windows XP Home,
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	5 x Creative Inspire 5.1	52x/52x/16x	Lotus SmartSuite 9.7
128MB	yes		
ATI	onboard	16x	Windows XP Home,
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	5 x Creative Inspire 5.1	32x/12x/8x	Ability Office 2002
128MB	yes		
ATI	Creative Audigy	16x	Windows XP Home,
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	5 x Creative Inspire 5.1	52x/52x/124x	Ability Office 2002
128MB	yes		
nVidia	Creative Audigy 2	16x	Windows XP Home,
nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4600	5 x Creative Inspire 5.1	32x/12x/10x	Star Office 5.2
128MB	yes		
ATI	Creative Audigy	16x	Windows XP Home
ATI Radeon 9700 Pro	5 x Videologic ZXR-500	40x/40x/10x	Lotus SmartSuite 9.7
128MB	yes		

new

↑ A good specification and fair warranty earn the Evesham Axis 2700+ AE a deserved second place

Performance in the graphics and video encoding tests were impressive as well – 93.4fps (frames per second) running the Annihilator demo in Quake III at a resolution of 1,600x1,200. The ATI Radeon 9700 Pro graphics card is going to prove hard for the next generation of nVidia cards to beat, but as gamers everywhere wait for the new FX cards to become available the Radeon 9700 Pros are still very much top of the pile.

The Mitsubishi Diamond Plus 93SB is an excellent monitor and the 120GB hard drive is perfect for video-editing enthusiasts and should serve anyone with more moderate storage needs for years to come. In terms of backup, there's a CD/DVD writer which gives you the option of archiving to multiple media types.

The Audigy 2 sound card and Creative Inspire 6700 speaker system handles audio brilliantly, but the Evesham misses out on the top spot due its warranty – three years' cover is a fair deal but it can't match Multivision's six-year offering.

3 Dell Dimension 4550

PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED

Essentially the same system that was placed only seventh last month, the Dimension 4550 has had its price slashed and warranty improved putting it back in the running for an award again. Dell has also changed one or two components – most notably the sound card, now an Audigy 2, which adds a FireWire port to the mix.

We really loved the look of the new Dimension range when we first saw it, and the beautiful flat-panel monitor it comes with perfectly complements the sleek dark grey case and space-age speakers. But the monitor isn't just about looks – the Dell 1702 has a visible screen size of 16in, a dot pitch of 0.264mm and a maximum resolution of 1,280x1,024. Combined with the Radeon Pro 9700 card the display is top notch.

when it comes to backing up your data, you can choose between two formats: CD-RW and writeable DVD.

There's a Creative Audigy 2 Platinum sound card – perfect for all audiophiles – and the Inspire 6700 speaker system is top quality too. In terms of connectivity, you'll find six USB 2.0 ports and an incredible five FireWire ports, one of which is mounted on the front of the tower for easy access. With a six-year warranty, the first three of which are onsite, the Multivision is a great buy at just £1,200 excluding VAT.

2 Evesham Axis 2700+ AE

PC ADVISOR RECOMMENDED

In second place this month is the Evesham Axis 2700+ AE and when you consider that it scored a whopping 131 in our WorldBench 4 tests you'll see why it's well worth its Recommended award.

As its name suggests, the Evesham is powered by an Athlon XP 2700+ processor which, combined with a Leadtek Winfast motherboard with an nForce2 chipset and 512MB of DDR (double-data rate) RAM, matched the second highest ever score we've seen.

↑ Having slashed its price and improved its warranty, the Dell Dimension 4550 moves from seventh to third position and takes a Recommended award

The speakers, funky and stylish as they are, don't take full advantage of the seven channel sound support that the Creative Audigy 2 offers but this isn't too much of an issue – if you really want 6.1 rather than 5.1 surround sound then you can always just get a new speaker system. We're not sure that it makes much of a difference to the untrained ear anyway.

In terms of performance the Dell's no slouch either – 127 is a very good WorldBench 4 score and the 2.8GHz Pentium 4 chip has much to do with that. There's now a three-year onsite warranty to cover the 4550 and the price has come right down to £1,299 excluding VAT, making this system an excellent buy.

4 Mesh Matrix XP 2700+ NDX

Taking forth place and with it the final Recommended award this month, the Mesh Matrix XP 2700+ NDX is powered by an Athlon XP 2700+ processor running at 2.17GHz. This helped the Mesh to a stunning score of 130 in the WorldBench 4 tests, though an usually large amount of DDR RAM – 1GB of it – would also have played a part.

The first thing you notice about the Mesh is its unusual case –

mainly dark grey with a beige front. While it might not be everyone's cup of tea, it does stand out from the average PC and there's no denying that internally it's one of the neatest and roomiest PCs that we've seen in the *PC Advisor* Test Centre.

The Audigy 2 sound card and Creative's Inspire 6700 speaker system do a great job with the audio. Backup facilities are taken care of by a CD/DVD writer with a quad-/dual-speed DVD writer/rewriter. The Radeon Pro 9700 and Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB relay images perfectly, and the system is covered by a three-year onsite warranty.

5 Hi-Grade Atlas PV4 GPPA4

The Atlas PV4 GPPA4 narrowly misses out on a Recommended award this month but is still a very competitive and reasonably priced system.

A decent if not outstanding WorldBench 4 score of 124 was partly thanks to the 2.8GHz Pentium 4 processor and 512MB of DDR RAM. It's also the only system in this category to opt for an nVidia GeForce4 Ti 4800 graphics chip, made by Gainward.

The pair of 80GB Maxtor hard drives are configured to Raid-0 which means you can access your data much more quickly than you could on a standard hard drive.

The Creative Audigy sound card doesn't offer seven-channel support like the Audigy 2, which might matter to you if you're a serious audiophile but for the average user it won't make an awful lot of difference. The CD/DVD writer gives you a plethora of backup options and there's a three-year onsite warranty too.

6 Systemax Reliance 3307

Systemax only takes sixth place in the chart this month despite being powered by a 3GHz Pentium 4 processor.

The systems we've seen using this particular processor haven't got anywhere near to the top WorldBench 4 scores and even though 123 is the highest score we've seen from

a 3GHz P4, it's still a way from the record of 132 (see page 58).

Another thing we have noted when evaluating systems powered by these chips is that disabling the HT (hyperthreading) technology actually improves performance by a few points. WorldBench 4 wasn't designed with HT in mind so it would be unfair to say that it wasn't all it's cracked up to be on the basis of this evidence alone, however, when HT was enabled the score dropped to 120.

Otherwise this PC has everything you would expect from a system in this category, with 512MB of DDR RAM, an 80GB hard drive, and an ATI Radeon 9700 Pro graphics card. The CTX monitor offers a good image though it lacks extras such as a USB hub. A three-year warranty and a price of £1,200 excluding VAT make this PC good if not brilliant value for money.

7 Evesham Axis 2700+

Last month's Best Buy has been pushed all the way down to seventh place this issue but it still offers good value for money. Powered by an AMD Athlon XP 2700+ processor the Evesham manages an impressive 129 in the WorldBench 4 tests and that's on a par with the Multivision system in the top spot. The ATI Radeon 9700 Pro, fast becoming a standard in this category, combines well with the LG F900P to give brilliant visuals.

Also on the plus side there's a DVD writer offering write/rewrite rates of dual and single speed and Evesham has included a FireWire port. However, there's no standalone sound card – the audio is handled by an onboard chip on the nForce2 motherboard, which does offer six-channel support and still performs fairly well.

8 Shepley Computers Power XP2700

Entering the chart in eighth place is the Shepley Computers Power XP2700. Shepley's first foray into the Power PCs category in *PC Advisor,* the Power XP2700 suffers mainly from a relatively low WorldBench 4 score of 117.

However, it's not a badly specified PC and offers components that are on a par and in some cases better than those of the opposition. The memory, for example is the newer and faster DDR 400 (PC3200) as opposed to the DDR 333 (PC2700) that most other models in this chart use.

Alongside the 128MB ATI Radeon 9700 Pro graphics card and Creative Audigy sound card, Shepley has included a TV tuner card and Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 930SB monitor.

The system comes with an impressive five-year warranty but, with a performance that can't match that of the other entrants, the Shepley sticks at eight.

9 Best Price Poweroid 2201

In the face of stiff competition, last month's number-two system, the Best Price Poweroid 2201, drops to ninth position. One of its major shortcomings was a poor WorldBench 4 score of 117 – the lowest in the chart and some 14 points short of the second-placed Evesham's result.

The Audigy 2 sound card is a bonus, however, and there are two hard drives which makes it easier to keep important files safe. A DVD writer offers another backup option for storing files offsite.

Though the Pentium 4 chip running at 2.8GHz isn't the latest Intel processor on the market it still offers plenty of power and consequently the results in our graphics and video-encoding tests were impressive. At £1,399 it's one of the pricier models in this category though.

Buying advice

• 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 make sure that it is the quicker DDR (double data rate) RAM, rather than SDRAM. Rambus (RDRAM) is seldom used these days although you will see it in some systems – performance wise it isn't an awful lot different to DDR RAM though. Look for DDR333 RAM, but DDR400 is becoming available and should 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. An 80GB hard drive is about the minimum hard drive size you can expect in this category – however, a system with two hard drives is preferable. Have backup covered with a 40-/32-/10-speed (read/write/rewrite) CD-RW drive. DVD writers are becoming more widely available but this 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 monitors are becoming 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 but 128MB is even better.**

• Sound card and speakers **Creative's Audigy offers top-quality audio and adds an extra FireWire port. Creative's Inspire 5300 system and Videologic's ZXR-500s, offering a subwoofer with five satellite speakers, are often bundled with Power PCs. The Creative Audigy 2 sound card 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 6700s are a good bet.**

10 Systemax Inspire 7352

Rounding off the Top 10 is the Inspire 7352 from Systemax. Pushed all the way down from third to tenth place by the spate of new entries, the Inspire still has something to offer though it has been around for a while.

An AMD Athlon XP 2600+ chip helped the Systemax to a slightly disappointing WorldBench 4 score of 118, but the graphics are handled superbly by the ATI Radeon Pro 9700 and the stunning CTX PR960F display. In terms of sound, the Audigy still offers good audio quality even if it doesn't have the seven-channel support of the Audigy 2.

The warranty isn't bad either with three years of onsite cover – there's even a Creative Muvo MP3 player thrown in for good measure – but you can find a better deal than the Inspire 7352 in our Power PC chart.

Unsure of a technical term? Find out exactly what it means in our searchable Glossary which is on the cover disc