

hot off the press

Bringing you the latest hardware products that missed the Reviews deadline by a whisker, Will Head takes a look at JVC's first notebook, the ultraportable Mini Note MP-XP7210, while Jason Jenkins peeks at Sony Ericsson's soon-to-be-released smartphone

JVC Mini Note MP-XP7210

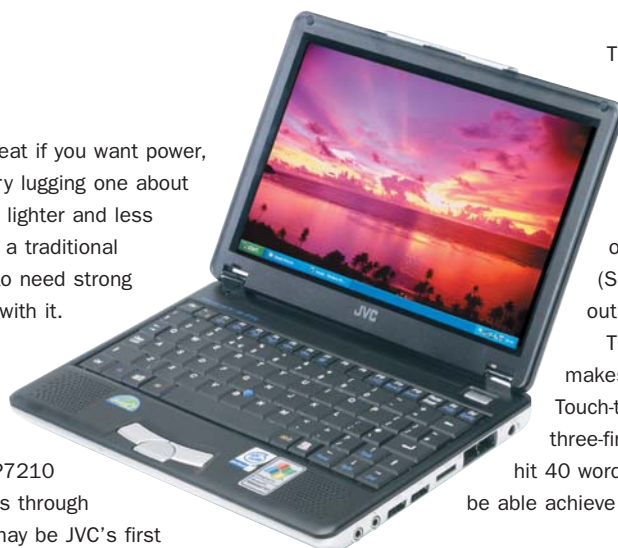
Ultraportable notebook

Desktop replacements are great if you want power, drives and expansion, but try lugging one about and you'll soon be wishing for a lighter and less bulky device. Even if you opt for a traditional subnotebook, you're still going to need strong arm muscles to go on the road with it.

JVC's new ultraportable Mini Note, however, is barely larger than a PDA (personal digital assistant). Measuring just 225x152x29mm, the MP-XP7210 is the smallest notebook to pass through PC Advisor's Test Centre. This may be JVC's first foray into notebooks on these shores, but the Mini Note has proved incredibly successful in Japan. JVC's experience of shrinking technology also stands it in good stead.

Size does matter

Despite being so dainty, the Mini Note's case is reassuringly solid, and should easily be able to cope with the harsh life on the road. And its tiny footprint doesn't mean it's underpowered either. Inside there beats the heart of an 800MHz Mobile Pentium III processor, which may not be a cutting-edge chip but it still packs more than enough oomph for everyday use. The Mini Note also comes stocked with 256MB of RAM and a 30GB hard drive as standard.



The 8.9in widescreen display has a native resolution of 1,024x600 and offers an incredibly sharp image for such a small screen. Expansion-wise you'll find two USB ports, 10/100 ethernet, modem, FireWire, one Type II PC Card slot and an SD (Secure Digital) slot. There's also VGA-out, which connects via a custom cable.

The keyboard, while not full size, makes sensible use of the space available. Touch-typing is out, but for the two- and three-finger typist it's fine. You're not going to hit 40 words per minute but with practice you'll be able to achieve a reasonable type speed.

Last the distance

In terms of battery life, JVC's figures are impressive: the built-in battery will last up to two hours. Bolt on the supplied external unit and you can add on an extra three hours, giving an impressive total of five hours. There's also an optional high capacity battery available that can provide up to nine hours usage.

It may be a new venture for JVC, but judging by first impressions the Mini Note is one to watch. With such an amazing amount packed into such a small space, you could soon find yourself wondering why you've been lugging so much kit around for so long.

JVC: www.jvc.co.uk

Price: TBA

Sony Ericsson P800

Smartphone

The latest smartphone intended to replace both your phone and PDA (personal digital assistant) isn't out until October, but we managed to get our hands on a preproduction model. The Sony Ericsson P800 uses the same operating system as Nokia's 7650 (see September 02) but feels more like a PDA thanks to its large touch-screen, hidden behind a flap. To negotiate the maze of menus you can either use the toothpick-like stylus that clips on the side or the five-way jog dial.

Closed, the P800 acts as a tri-band, GPRS (general packet radio service) and HSCSD (high speed circuit switched data)-capable mobile phone; open it and the device transforms into a fully fledged PDA. Standard PDA functions are present, including address book, calendar and email client. These features are integrated, so if you want to email a contact you simply click on their address, while callers' details will be displayed on the screen. You'll be able to synchronise the information in the P800 with your

PC or notebook via Bluetooth, infrared or cable. It also plays music and video files. Video playback on our unit was smooth, unlike many Pocket PCs which tend to stutter a bit.

Entering text was simple, if a little slow. The handwriting software can only recognise one letter at a time, but there's no need to learn a special input language like Palm's Graffiti.

At the rear of the phone is a tiny digital camera; use this to send picture messages over MMS (multimedia messaging service) to your friends, and add pictures of their faces to the appropriate entry in the address book. There's 12MB of memory to store them on, plus a 16MB Memory Stick Duo storage card which slots into the side.

Sony Ericsson: 0870 523 7237

Price: TBA

