

POWER AND BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

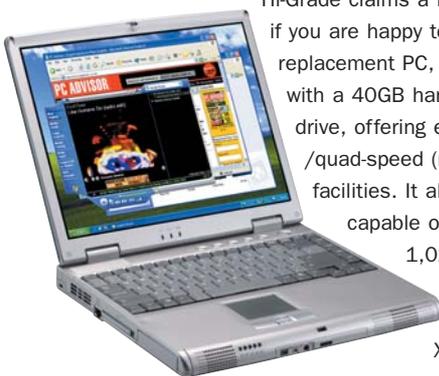
Power notebooks		Last month's position	First reviewed	World-Bench 4	Price	Warranty	Processor type/clock speed	RAM	Hard disk capacity	Modem	Network card	Dimensions (width x depth x height)
	1 Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	1	Apr 02	118	£1,509	2-year return to base	Intel Pentium 4/ 1.8GHz	512MB	40GB	56K	Y	313x263x36mm
	2 Dell Inspiron 8200 0870 152 4699 www.dell.com	2	Jun 02	109	£1,999	1-year collect and return	Intel Mobile Pentium 4/1.7GHz	256MB	40GB	56K	Y	331x276x45mm
	3 Rock Xeno 0870 990 8888 www.rockdirect.com	3	Jun 02	99	£1,299	3-year collect and return	Intel Pentium 4/2GHz	512MB	30GB	56K	Y	313x263x41mm
	4 Compaq Evo N600c 0845 270 4222 www.compaq.co.uk	4	Feb 02	103	£1,537	3-year parts and labour	Intel Mobile Pentium III/1.06GHz	128MB	20GB	56K	Y	305x249x30mm
	5 Samsung Q10TXC 866 0800 521 652 www.samsungelectronics.co.uk	5	Jul 02	87	£1,616	1-year collect and return	Intel Mobile Pentium III/866MHz	256MB	30GB	56K	Y	273x229x19mm
Budget notebooks												
	1 Mesh Pegasus 14.1 Pro 020 8208 4702 www.meshcomputers.com	1	Mar 02	82	£899	2-year return to base	AMD Mobile Athlon 4/1.2GHz	384MB	20GB	56K	Y	308x254x38mm
	2 NEC Versa Premium P1200 0870 010 6328 www.nec-online.co.uk	3	Jul 02	89	£1,065	1-year collect and return	Intel Pentium III/ 1.2GHz	128MB	20GB	56K	Y	310x265x40mm
	3 HP Pavilion zt 1121s 0870 241 3625 www.hp.co.uk	4	May 02	68	£850	1-year return to base	Intel Mobile Celeron/ 1.06GHz	128MB	20GB	56K	Y	318x273x36mm
	4 Hi-Grade Notino 2200 020 8532 6100 www.higrade.com	5	Jun 02	82	£1,099	2-year return to base	Intel Mobile Pentium III/1GHz	320MB	40GB	56K	Y	313x263x36mm
	5 Rock Sigma Si 1500+ 0870 908 888 www.rockdirect.com	NEW	Aug 02	69	£1,099	3-year collect and return	AMD Athlon 4 Mobile1500+/1.3GHz	384MB	30GB	56K	Y	313x265x40mm

POWER NOTEBOOKS

1 Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I

 Still at number one is the Hi-Grade Ultinote M6400-1800-I, which uses its 1.8GHz Pentium 4 processor to great effect. The processor is twinned with 512MB of RAM and a 16MB DDR (double data rate) RAM ATI Mobility M6 graphics chip. This sterling setup enabled the Ultinote to pull in a WorldBench 4 score of 118, beating the Compaq Evo N600c by 15 points and, at just £9 over our starting cost of £1,500, the Ultinote is a worthy winner.

As with all notebooks using a power-hungry desktop processor, battery life is not this model's particular strong point, and the Hi-Grade claims a life of just 1.5 hours. However, if you are happy to use the Ultinote as a desktop replacement PC, this won't be a problem. It comes with a 40GB hard drive and a combo DVD/CD-RW drive, offering eight-speed DVD and 24-/eight-/quad-speed (read/write/rewrite) CD-RW facilities. It also features a 14.1in screen capable of a maximum resolution of 1,024x768. Unfortunately the software bundled with the system is pretty limited – Office XP SBE is as much as you get.



2 Dell Inspiron 8200

 Dell awed us with the quality of its Inspiron range of notebooks, which is why its 8200 model gets a Recommended award. The Dell's clunkiness is reminiscent of IBM's ThinkPad, but it operates on a level that is way beyond aesthetics. Its 256MB of RAM is combined with a 40GB hard drive and Speedstep-enhanced Mobile Pentium 4 processor running at 1.7GHz. This specification achieved a WorldBench score of 109 which, although powerful, isn't far ahead of the competition. However, thanks to the new 845MP chipset, the Inspiron has been designed to perform better in multimedia content creation, and as an entertainment system the 8200 is second to none.

The crisp 15in screen has a resolution of 1,600x1,200dpi (dots per inch) and, complemented by nVidia's 64MB GeForce4 440 Go chip, will bring games alive with its crisp delivery. The Inspiron 8200 manages to be a decent business performer and entertainment system in one, while defying the standard specifications of both. It is expensive, but buying a top-notch machine so often is.



→ Turn to page 116 to continue the Power notebooks chart

	Weight	Screen size/type	Maximum resolution	Graphics card	Graphics memory	Dual-speed processor	DVD drive speed	Internal/external floppy disk drive	CD-RW read/write/rewrite rate	Battery type	Operating system & other extras
	2.95kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Mobility M6	16MB	N/A	8x (combo drive)	external	24x/8x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Office XP SBE
	3.6kg	15in/TFT	1,600x1,200	nVidia GeForce4 440 Go	64MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	internal	24x/16x/10x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Office SBE, WinDVD
	2.95kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Mobility M6-D	16MB	N/A	8x	N/A	20x/4x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Professional, McAfee Virus Scan 2.0
	2.7kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	ATI Radeon Mobility	16MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	N/A	N/A	lithium-ion	Windows 2000 Professional
	1.35kg	15in/TFT	1,024x768	Intel 830M	8MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	external	24x/8x/8x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Professional
	3kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 Twister K	user-definable 8/16/32MB	AMD PowerNow	8x	internal	N/A	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2002
	3.4kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS 630ST	user-definable 8/16/32MB	N/A	8x	internal	24x/8x/8x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Professional, StarOffice, Norton AntiVirus
	2.6kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 Savage	32MB	Intel Speedstep	8x	N/A	N/A	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works Suite 2002, Works 6.0
	2.1kg	12.1in/TFT	1,024x768	SIS onboard	user-definable 8/16/32MB	Intel Speedstep	6x	external	24x/8x/8x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, Microsoft Works 6.0
	3.2kg	14.1in/TFT	1,024x768	S3 Savage	user-definable 8/16/32MB	AMD PowerNow	8x	internal	20x/8x/4x	lithium-ion	Windows XP Home, McAfee AntiVirus



BUDGET NOTEBOOKS

1 Mesh Pegasus 14.1 Pro



Apart from a brief hiatus when Sony relegated it to second place, the Mesh's well-considered package has been a deserved Best Buy for five months. Although it couldn't match the performance of all its competitors and lacks a CD-RW drive, the Pegasus 14.1 Pro has many redeeming features. The plain metallic design isn't a head-turner, but it's a sturdy model with plenty of beauty on the inside. At the heart of the Pegasus is AMD's Mobile Athlon 4 chip, running at a speed of 1.2GHz, which is twinned with 384MB of SDRAM. As the WorldBench 4 score of 82 demonstrates, there's little difference in performance between Intel's and AMD's processors. A 20GB hard drive is standard and there are enough ports to make it a decent desktop replacement, although we'd like to see FireWire. The rest of the specification is fairly standard – a DVD drive, user-definable graphics memory and a 14.1in screen.



2 NEC Versa Premium P1200



NEC obviously had its budget-conscious customers in mind when it put together the Versa Premium series, and even though the model we reviewed is well within the Budget chart, it is actually a top-of-the-range portable. By opting for the comparatively expensive and high-end Premium P1200, you get a combo DVD/CD-RW drive and a 1.2GHz Pentium III chip, the fastest processor on offer in the range, though not in this chart. This is backed up by 128MB of fast SDRAM, which helped the system to turn in a creditable WorldBench score of 89. All of this power is wrapped up in an attractive matt silver case, and NEC have also thrown in a 14.1in screen and a 20GB hard drive, which all goes to make a thoroughly decent Budget notebook. While the P1200's price tag means that it couldn't quite make it to the top of our chart, the Versa Premium does offer solid performance and the security of coming from a reputable brand.



→ Turn to page 116 to continue the Budget notebooks chart

**POWER NOTEBOOKS****3 Rock Xeno**

The Xeno is an impressive powerhouse of a notebook, packing a 2GHz Pentium 4 processor and 512MB of RAM, which helped pull in a WorldBench 4 score of 99. This isn't the highest score in the chart, but because the Xeno doesn't use a dearer mobile processor, the price is kept low. Bear in mind, though, that the desktop chip means battery life will suffer.

The Rock comes with 30GB of hard drive storage and a combined DVD/CD-RW drive. Graphics are provided by an ATI Mobility M6 card with 16MB of DDR (double data rate) RAM, so they are superior to the onboard graphics still found on the Agenda Si. Software is thin on the ground, but it is protected by a two-year collect-and-return warranty.

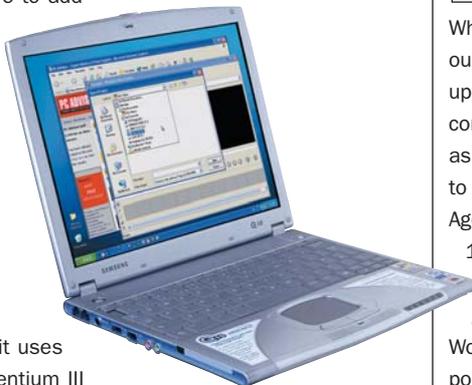
**4 Compaq Evo N600c**

Despite a 1.06GHz Intel Mobile Pentium III lying beneath its slim exterior, the Evo's WorldBench 4 score of 103 managed to beat the 1.2GHz Rock Agenda Si. Though the N600c weighs a mere 2.7kg, there's clearly no shortage of power beneath the bonnet.

The Radeon Mobility card will maximise frame rates, so it won't falter on 3D graphics. The N600c's 14.1in screen may not be huge, but its colour scheme and character definition are among the best we have seen in this category. Storage and drives aren't that generous: the hard drive is a mere 20GB and, although DVD playback is provided, CD-RW and floppy drives are absent, so you will have to add this on if you need to backup to CD.

**5 Samsung Q10TXC 866**

Samsung's Q10TXC 866 may not rival its competitors for speed, but it has plenty of redeeming features. In terms of specification it uses a low-voltage Mobile Pentium III processor, running at 866MHz. This is twinned with 256MB of RAM, an 8MB integrated Intel 830 graphics chip and 30GB hard drive. This line-up allowed the Samsung to turn in a WorldBench 4 rating of 87 – a score that is more suited to a Budget notebook. If you're looking for top performance at the lowest price then the Samsung isn't the machine for you.

**BUDGET NOTEBOOKS****3 HP Pavilion zt 1121s**

HP is targeting the home and student market with its Pavilion zt 1121s. It doesn't run to a floppy drive, but HP offers you the option of a discount on an external USB unit. The notebook has an attractive grey and silver finish and some funky purple lights around the touchpad. Performance from the 1.06GHz Mobile Celeron processor twinned with 128MB of RAM, a 20GB hard drive and S3 Savage graphics card is not the best by any means – it could only go as far as a WorldBench score of 68. However, what prevents this low score from taking the HP out of the chart altogether is its equally low price. You can get more for your money if you shop around, but not from a brand with such a good record for quality.

**4 Hi-Grade Notino 2200**

It is perhaps unfair that the Notino 2200 should be stuck down at number four, because it is actually an exceedingly good deal. This slim and light Hi-Grade subnotebook gives you the ultimate combination of portability on a budget. However, to keep the Notino's weight down Hi-Grade has had to make a few compromises, such as the use of an external floppy drive and the inclusion of only a sparse smattering of ports – all you get is VGA-out and three USB sockets. However, on the plus side its small size doesn't mean the Notino isn't still powerful – its 320MB of RAM and 1GHz Mobile Pentium III combine to achieve a WorldBench 4 score of 82.

**5 Rock Agenda Si 1500+**

While AMD appears to have our desktop PC charts sewn up, for a long time Pentium's competitor has not been half as prominent when it comes to portable PCs. Rock's Agenda Si uses the 1.3GHz 1500+ Mobile Athlon processor, but not to any great effect. The Agenda's WorldBench score of 69 is just one point above our slowest performer, a machine that is also a lot cheaper than the Agenda. Fortunately, the rest of the Si 1500+ line-up is as strong as you'd expect from Rock, with 384MB of RAM and a 30GB hard drive. This is all backed up by a generous three-year warranty. It's just a shame that slow performance and a high price keep it at number five.

**NEW**