



Apple has been at it again. Just when you've got over its last product, convinced yourself that you were right to stick with your PC, remembered how you'd have to buy all your software again and managed to get your PC to run for at least a day without crashing, Apple releases some nice new shiny products. Very nice, very shiny products.

Your PC may not be the greatest looker, it has occasional sulks and sometimes it throws a real tantrum, but you know it and it does what it does pretty much okay. But it's not enough to stop you looking at the gorgeous new Apple offering and feeling a tinge of guilt next time you sit down at your faithful PC.

I mean, £2,000 for notebook? Who in their right mind would pay that when you can have a fast, albeit sensible, Windows model? Who needs faster wireless networks or speedier FireWire – we'll get them in time, and won't have to pay half as much. And at the end of the day, does it really matter what your notebook looks like as long as it does the job?

But it's not enough. You still look twice, do your sums again. And for a moment you want to pick up the phone before the sensible part of your brain kicks in.

Despite the imitations and copies, there's something undeniably special about an Apple product. And no matter which way you try to justify it, the PC platform rarely comes close. You can wrap your PC up in translucent blue plastic, but you know in your heart it's no iMac.

If you want to see what you're missing out on before you slink back to your PC and reassure it that there is no other contender for your heart, turn to page 46.

Be warned, though – you may not be able to look your PC in the eye for a while. ■

Will Head, reviews editor

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Scoring and testing explained

Each review rates a product according to a set criterion for its type. The score is broken down at the end of the review to show how we reached our final verdict. Ratings range from 1 to 10 and fall into the following classifications:

- 1 to 3 – poor
- 4 to 6 – average
- 6 to 8 – good
- 8 to 10 – excellent

How we rate hardware

- **Features** This score rates the specification of a product by current standards. For example, a 2.6GHz PC with 512MB of RAM and a 120GB hard drive would score highly.
- **Build quality** This rating denotes how well the product is made and the quality of the components.
- **Value for money** The price of a product will often be the deciding factor between

a good review and a bad review. This is not to say that cheaper products will always win out, but the better the price/performance and features ratio the higher the score.

How we rate software

- **Ease of use** Rates how easy software is to install and use.
- **Features** Indicates how much the package contains. An office suite that

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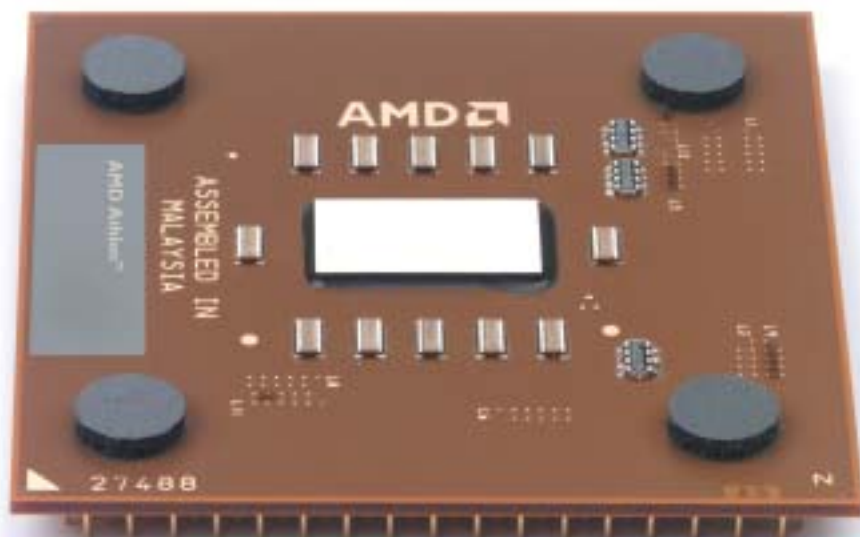
Power PCs

226 Top 10 charts

Our Top 10 charts start on page 226. Located at the back of the magazine, the charts are designed so they're a cinch to navigate. The at-a-glance comments and buying advice help you make the right purchasing decision. Products we've already tested are ranked in our charts after competing against existing entrants. The result is a definitive guide to the best hardware available on the market.



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only came with a spreadsheet would score poorly.

- Value for money Lots of features, good performance and a low price tag will result in a good score.

Prices

All prices are quoted by the manufacturer or distributor and exclude VAT. Please note

that prices are only intended as a guide and you may see products on sale for less or more than our quoted price. *PC Advisor's* recommendations are for guidance only and are not a guarantee of suitability. The publisher takes no responsibility for purchasers' decisions.

PC Advisor Gold award

Outstanding hardware products receive a *PC Advisor* Gold award. This may indicate that the product will enter our charts next month but *PC Advisor* Gold also honours excellence in a product that is not covered in our existing charts.

