



POWER NOTEBOOK

PC PRO
A LIST

SavRow Blade 75

PRICE £1,303 (£1,531 inc VAT)

DELIVERY £15 (£18 inc VAT)

SUPPLIER SavRow 020 7428 0030

INTERNET www.savrow.com

VERDICT A stunningly powerful machine, with a great screen and masses of storage, plus three years of accidental damage insurance included in the price.

As the name suggests, SavRow specialises in tailor-made PCs and notebooks, but this usually comes at a price. As such, SavRow rarely threatens the mainstream manufacturer, which builds tens or hundreds of the same system to sell for as low a price as possible. That is, until now.

The Blade 75 is £70 more expensive than the Evesham Voyager C720 (see issue 134, p55), but SavRow offers a raft of extras to justify the price. First, there's the increased resolution of the 17in widescreen TFT, up from 1,400 x 900 to 1,680 x 1,050. The extra Desktop space is great for every use, be it web browsing, working on a spreadsheet or gaming. Just like the Voyager, it has the increasingly prevalent glossy screen that adds richness and vibrancy to images, but will annoyingly reflect bright lights. And just like Evesham, SavRow will replace the whole unit if you happen to find a pixel defect within the first month of purchase.

But you also get SavRow's new three-year Silver Spoon Warranty. This not only gives you three years of next-day collect-and-return cover, but also includes accidental damage, as well as hardware faults. If you spill coffee over the Blade 75, SavRow will pick it up for repairs the next day, no questions asked. It's a huge improvement on the Voyager C720's warranty, which only covers hardware malfunction and the first year as collect-and-return.



With the fastest available mobile GPU onboard, this is a gaming monster.

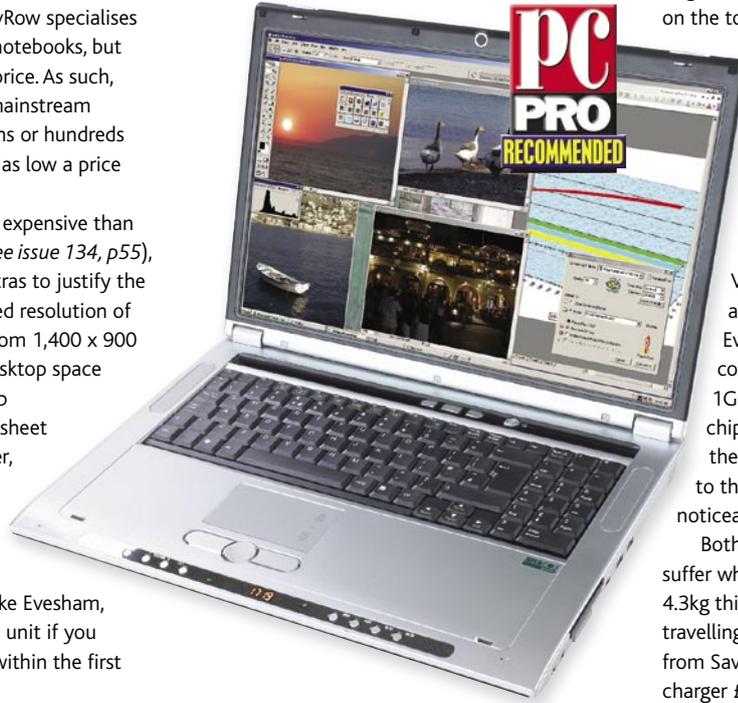
RESULTS

BATTERY
1:11 (INTENSIVE TEST) 1:32 (LIGHT-USE TEST)
HOURS:MINUTES

3D SPEED
1,280 X 1,024, 4X AA, 8X AF
83 (HALF-LIFE 2) 57 (FAR CRY)
FRAMES PER SECOND

2D SPEED
0.89
OFFICE: 1.15 2D GRAPHICS: 0.90
ENCODING: 0.80 MULTITASKING: 0.70

An explanation of our new benchmarks can be found on the cover disc.



SavRow is so confident in this system that the MD's direct line is included in the system manual.

These two improvements alone go some way to justify the extra cost, but SavRow has gone even further by increasing the hard disk size over the Voyager to 100GB. It comes pre-partitioned to give Windows its own dedicated partition, with Windows itself tweaked to install applications and store data on the secondary D drive. And SavRow includes Windows XP Professional too rather than the Voyager's Home Edition.

Just like the Voyager, there's 802.11a/b/g wireless and Gigabit Ethernet onboard, and four USB ports scattered around the right and rear. A mini-FireWire, Type II PC Card slot and media card reader for SD/MMC, Memory Stick and Memory Stick Pro are also on the right-hand side.

Games are powered by the same nVidia GeForce Go 7800 GTX that Evesham uses. Currently the fastest mobile GPU available, it's capable of running Far Cry with HDR and 8x AF at the native 1,680 x 1,050 resolution at a playable 44fps. You'll need to sacrifice some resolution for the latest games (Call of Duty 2 at highest detail settings scored 23fps), but the resolution drop isn't noticeable; it will still look fantastic. As it's fitted into a PCI Express slot, the GPU is upgradable too. Once a better

mobile GPU is released, and provided it remains within the thermal tolerance of the chassis, SavRow will fit it for the cost of the new part.

Elsewhere, there's a full-sized keyboard with large keys and a separate number pad. It's the same setup as the Voyager; the chassis are near identical, with the Blade 75 only adding a webcam above the screen. Unlike the rest of the chassis, the mouse buttons feel a touch loose and our mouse finger veered into the integrated slider bar on the touchpad all too often, resulting in annoying moments when the mouse stopped moving. If you need to lug the 4.3kg Blade 75 around, the chassis is solid enough to withstand a few knocks, and there's always the Silver Spoon warranty to reassure you.

The single compromise over the Voyager is the choice of processor – a 2GHz Pentium M 760 rather than Evesham's 2.13GHz 770. All the other components remain identical, with 1GB of PC4200 RAM and the Intel 915 chipset. In our application benchmarks, the Blade 75 scored a respectable 0.89 to the Voyager's 0.95. The difference isn't noticeable in day-to-day use.

Both the Blade 75 and the Voyager C720 suffer when it comes to battery life, but at 4.3kg this was never going to be a good travelling companion. A second battery from SavRow will cost £72, and an in-car charger £38. And should you want to add a touch of individuality, SavRow still offers a broad range of options, including a custom paint job – anything from geometric shapes to airbrush art – charged according to their complexity.

With only one practically unnoticeable compromise to the Blade 75 and a huge number of improvements over the Evesham Voyager C720, the SavRow machine supplants it on the A List. The warranty is great, then there's the extra hard disk space and the increased screen resolution. Such is SavRow's pride and confidence in the quality of its system, you even get the MD's direct phone number in the system manual.

CLIVE WEBSTER

PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
FEATURES & DESIGN ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
OVERALL ★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS 2GHz Pentium M 760; 1GB PC4200 RAM; 100GB hard disk; Panasonic UJ-840D DVD writer; 256MB nVidia GeForce Go 7800 GTX graphics; 17in 1,680 x 1,050 TFT; 56K modem; Gigabit Ethernet; 802.11a/b/g WLAN; 4 x USB ports; mini-FireWire; serial port; 4-in-1 memory card reader; Type II PC Card slot; DVI; S-Video out; Windows XP Professional; 3yr C&R warranty plus accidental damage cover. Dimensions: 397 x 300 x 43mm (WDH). Weight: 4.3kg. Part code: N/A.