

# Maxtor DiamondMax 10 **PC PRO A LIST**

PRICE £60 (£70 inc VAT)

PRICE PER GB 30p (35p inc VAT)

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**VERDICT** Excellent value for money, incredibly quiet and a fine performer too. If you're only going to upgrade one part of your PC, buy this hard disk.

It's very tempting to make a buying decision based on price alone, especially when it comes to hard disks: surely, you just divide the price of the disk by the capacity and opt for the lowest price per gigabyte? If you followed this process, you'd be split between the DiamondMax 10 and the Western Digital Caviar SE, and with prices changing every week it's anyone's guess which would win by this criteria. However, even if the Caviar was 5p cheaper per gigabyte, we'd still opt for the DiamondMax.

The main reason is quietness. We measured 28.8dBA when the Maxtor was seeking, compared to 31.6dBA for the Caviar. As the dBA scale is logarithmic, this makes the difference bigger than it appears.

The second reason is speed, with the DiamondMax 10 proving to have a slight advantage in our suite of tests. The DiamondMax 10 looks good on paper too. Quite apart from a Serial ATA interface, the data density stands at 100GB per platter (there's also



a 300GB model available, but it costs 36p per GB) and buffer size is a mighty 16MB. One of the other notable features is NCQ (Native Command Queuing). Maxtor isn't shouting about NCQ as much as Seagate, but it all adds up to make this a quick disk.

This is despite a seek time of just 10.13ms, higher than Maxtor's claimed time of 9ms and the slowest on show for internal disks. Amazingly, the 16MB buffer outweighed this

disadvantage and the DiamondMax 10 proved to be the third-fastest disk behind the Seagate 7200.8 and somewhat incomparable Raptor in most tests.

Its average STR (sustained transfer rate) was a creditable 53.9MB/sec. For reading and writing large files, only the Raptor and Seagate 7200.8 were quicker, and when reading small files the Maxtor stole the lead. Its Achilles heel was writing small files, where it was by far the slowest internal disk at just 2.4MB/sec.

This won't be noticeable for most day-to-day use, though, and the fact that the DiamondMax 10 was again third fastest in our Photoshop test proves the point rather well.

Using BootVis, we timed the boot into Windows at 29.5 seconds – about the same as the Raptor.

Our only note of caution is that, as with all the internal disks here, we advise some dedicated cooling: the Maxtor became very warm to the touch after being put through our tests.

But this is its only real flaw. It's fast, it's quiet and the 200GB version of the Plus 10 is simply astonishing value at 30p per gigabyte.

## PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
QUIETNESS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★