



LaCie 250GB USB 2



PRICE £91 (£107 inc VAT)

PRICE PER GB 36p (42p inc VAT)

SUPPLIER www.savastore.com (code: 10273585)

VERDICT Quiet, compact and with a decent capacity, the LaCie offers outstanding value for money, even when compared to the internal disks on test.

Unlike LaCie's d2 Big Disk and other external optical drives, the 250GB USB 2 doesn't boast a stylish aluminium design. Instead, it uses a smaller, more portable case in gunmetal grey. Aside from four indentations in the top (which make things sturdier when stacking several disks) this is simply a plain, minimalist box.

It isn't all that much larger than the 3.5in desktop disk that resides inside it, measuring just 112 x 189 x 36mm (WDH). On the rear you'll find the power switch and connection for the external PSU. The PSU makes it less convenient than the portable Seagate to transport around, but it also prevents the disk from becoming too hot. Anyhow, weighing in at just under 1kg, it won't break your back.

We're not concerned by the lack of FireWire either, as not all PCs have the required interface and only having USB 2 has evidently kept costs down. The LaCie costs less per GB than several of the internal Serial ATA disks on test.



If this wasn't enough, it's a decent performer too. We measured the average STR as 34.7MB/sec, while other disks appeared to be limited to about 27MB/sec over USB 2. From our results, these faster transfer rates seem to be the hallmark of LaCie drives. Average seek time in our tests was slightly quicker than most external disks at 10.6ms, although LaCie claims less than 10ms.

In our real-world tests, the disk was the fastest USB 2 device to read both large and small files at 32MB/sec and 9.2MB/sec respectively. Only when compared to LaCie's d2 Big Disk using FireWire 800 did it look slow. Using the d2 Big Disk with USB 2, however, proved slightly slower than this 250GB USB 2 model.

When writing large files, the LaCie fell in the middle of the tightly bunched pack at 22.8MB/sec, and its only real failing was writing small files. Here, it could manage only 1.9MB/sec, while LaCie's d2 Big Disk (over USB 2) steamed ahead at 11.1MB/sec. Having said this, no other external disk was significantly quicker.

LaCie doesn't bundle any backup software with the 250GB USB 2, which explains why there's no button on the drive. In fact, there's only a single LED on the front panel to give any indication of what the disk is doing.

Essentially, this is a no-frills external hard disk that does its simple job of providing storage exceedingly well. At this price, you can choose your own backup software and it will still be cheaper than all but the smaller-capacity 200GB Seagate. If you need USB 2 external storage, look no further.

PC PRO RATINGS	
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
QUIETNESS	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★