DIRECT BUYERS WORLD

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All the best buys are here

Sometimes you just want to know the names of the best products, when they were reviewed, how much they cost and where you can get them. That's where our no-nonsense buyer's guide comes in. Over the following five pages we've picked out the outstanding PCs, peripherals and software packages that we can recommend without hesitation. To make it even easier, we've included the current manufacturer's contact number and price (including VAT), as well as details of when and where we reviewed the product. For the full review, why not check out *PCW* on CD-ROM? Updated quarterly, *PCW* on CD-ROM contains the full editorial from the past 24 issues, in searchable Adobe Acrobat format — it even comes with a copy of Acrobat for viewing, searching and printing. Each CD costs just £9.95 including postage and packing, or £8.96 for subscribers. **Call 01795 414870** to order your copy or turn to ***PCW* Reader Offers** on page 308 for further details. If you can't wait for the next quarterly CD, try out our new **Faxback service** (p620) which provides 24-hour access to your favourite features and reviews.

GORDON LAING
Editor

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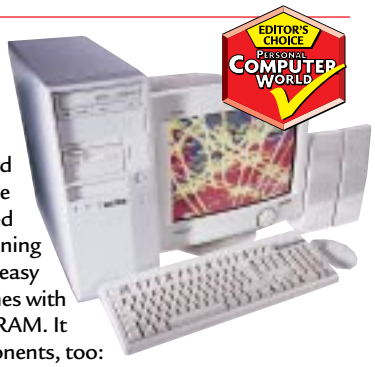
best buys

Entry-level PC

Lexon
Entra 333



This PC is so packed with good components it's hard to believe that it's available for just £499 ex VAT. Based around a Celeron 333 running on a BX motherboard for easy upgrading later on, it comes with an impressive 64Mb of DRAM. It has some excellent components, too: Matrox Millenium G200 graphics card with 8Mb RAM, Creative Labs 64 PCI sound card and a 56K modem.

PCW February '99, p171

Price £586.33 **Contact** Lexon 0181 532 6100 **Also Recommended** Panrix Micro333 **Price** £587.50 **Contact** Panrix 01132 444958 • Protek UltraMX **Price** £586.33 **Contact** Protek 01884 822300 (both PCW February '99)

High-end notebook

IBM
ThinkPad 600

Made for the road warrior, this thin, light, notebook excels in its build quality. Based around a variety of processors, ranging from a Pentium 233MMX right up to a Mobile PII 300, it also has a huge 4Gb hard drive, 32 or 64Mb of RAM and a 13.3in TFT screen and AGP graphics. In short, it has everything you need from a desktop machine in a very portable package.

PCW July '98, p79

Price £4,266.43 **Contact** IBM 0870 601 0136 **Also Recommended** Gateway Solo 9100 **Price** £3,876.33 **Contact** Gateway 0800 282000 (PCW June '98)

Mid-range PC

Tiny
Family Bonus

With an easily upgradeable BX motherboard, the Tiny Family Bonus should keep you happy for a while. And it comes with no less than three useful peripherals: the Umax 610P scanner, the Epson Stylus Color 300 printer and the Fuji DX-5 digital camera.

PCW January '99, p148

Price £1,056 **Contact** Tiny 0800 821333 **Also Recommended** Dan Xplora II Plus **Price** £1,018 **Contact** Dan 0181 830 1100 • Mertec XM300-K2 **Price** £999 **Contact** Mertec 01792 473700 (both PCW January '99)

Mid-range notebook

Sony
PCG-505G

Not only has the PCG-505G fabulous good looks, but it is also the ultimate in desirable equipment. It is not only incredibly small, thin and light for a fully fledged Windows 98 notebook, it also has everything you need to make working a pleasure. There is a floppy and docking station which connect to boost the functionality, and it even has 1394 built in as standard.

PCW December '98, p79

Price £2,300 **Contact** Sony 0870 240 2408 **Also Recommended** Gateway Solo 2500 S6-300SE **Price** £2,173 **Contact** Gateway 0800 172000 (PCW October '98)

High-end PC

Carrera
Power Pro 2-450

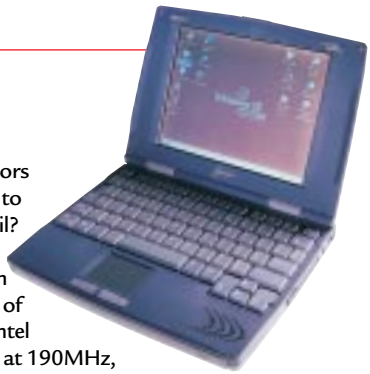
In addition to being a speed monster, the quality of this machine's internal components far outstrips others. The SoundBlaster Live! audio card is a perfect gamer's card with its four-speaker, surround-sound output. Similarly, the fast 450MHz Pentium II processor is a good companion to the powerful Diamond Viper V550 graphics card.

PCW January '99, p141

Price £1,550 **Contact** Carrera 0171 830 0486 **Also Recommended** Armari NBX-350 9S **Price** £1,498 **Contact** Armari 0181 810 7441 • Gateway G6-350 **Price** £1,397 **Contact** Gateway 0800 552000 (both PCW Jan '99)

PDA

Hewlett-Packard
Jornada 820e



Fed up with ever-faster processors when all you need is a machine to take notes and check your email? The Jornada could be the answer to your prayers. You can work for a full day without fear of the battery dying and with an Intel StrongARM processor running at 190MHz, 16Mb RAM and an integrated 56K modem, it has everything you need when on the move. And its 8.2in STN screen with a resolution of 640x480 is large enough to see exactly what you are doing.

Price £849 **Contact** HP 0990 474747 **Also Recommended** Psion Series 5 **Price** £429.9 **Contact** Psion 0990 143050 • 3Com PalmPilot Pro **Price** £229 **Contact** 3Com 0800 225252 (both PCW May '98)

Colour inkjet

Hewlett-Packard
DeskJet 895CXi

For all-round excellence you cannot do better than the HP 895CXi. The quality of its output for both text and graphics is impressive given the swift speed at which they are produced. Even its "econofast" mode could be used for vital documents, saving both time and ink. It takes a huge range of papers and replacing ink cartridges is a breeze.

PCW February '99, p151

Price *£292.58* **Contact** *HP 0990 474747* **Also Recommended** *Epson Stylus Color 740* **Price** *£272.60* **Contact** *0800 220546* • *Epson Stylus Color 850* **Price** *£318.43* **Contact** *0800 220546 (both PCW February '99)*

Colour photo printer

Epson
Stylus Photo 700

Colour inkjets have split into two categories, with this type clearly designed to reproduce the most realistic colour photographic prints. Epson has for a long time been the undisputed leader and its Stylus Photo 700 is our choice for inkjet photo printing. However, Lexmark comes very close behind with its 5700.

PCW September '98, p188

Price *£273* **Contact** *Epson 01442 261144* **Also Recommended** *Lexmark 5700* **Price** *£229* **Contact** *Lexmark 01628 481500 (PCW September '98)*

Budget laser printer

Kyocera
FS-600

This personal 6ppm laser printer easily beats all other laser printers in its class. Its speed is impressive, printing out a steady six pages per minute no matter what the paper coverage, and the quality of its output is second to none, both for graphics and text. It is easily upgradeable, taking an impressive 36Mb of RAM. It has a PostScript option and there is even an ethernet port that comes as standard.

PCW February '99, p199

Price *£299* **Contact** *Kyocera 0118 923 0660* **Also Recommended** *Panasonic KX-P6300* **Price** *£257.32* **Contact** *Panasonic 01344 853081 (PCW February '99)*

Business laser printer

Lexmark
Optra K1220

It is rare that you find a printer which is both good value and produces exceptional quality output, yet the Optra K1220 is just such a laser printer. With a rated speed of 12ppm it produces text in good time, but most of all its outstanding quality, both for text and graphics, puts it second to none amongst laser printers.

PCW February '99, p201

Price *£722.63* **Contact** *Lexmark 01628 481500* **Also Recommended** *QMS DeskLaser 1600P* **Price** *£816* **Contact** *QMS 01784 445555* • *HP LaserJet 4000TN* **Price** *£1,316* **Contact** *HP 0990 474747 (both PCW February '99)*

Multifunction device

Hewlett-Packard
LaserJet 3100

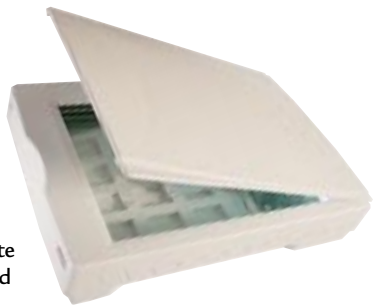
Good laser-print quality from this quiet machine. It's intelligent enough to detect a document dropped into its feeder and it will launch an idiot-proof menu for scanning, copying and emailing. Fast, accurate OCR and 2Mb memory for incoming faxes when the paper supply is exhausted, makes the 3100 an ideal multifunction device.

PCW June '98, p83

Price *£629* **Contact** *HP 0990 474747* **Also Recommended** *Canon MultiPASS MPC20* **Price** *£370.13* **Contact** *Canon 0181 773 3173 (PCW January '98)*

Flatbed scanner

Umax
Astra 610P



Once again, the Umax Astra 610P parallel-port scanner has won our budget flatbed scanner group test, boasting an unbeatable combination of performance and value. Note that our three recommended scanners require enhanced parallel ports found only on modern PCs, so users wanting top performance, or those with older systems, should stick to SCSI.

PCW September '98, p229

Price *£69.33 Contact Umax 01344 871329* **Also Recommended** *Agfa SnapScan 310P* **Price** *£116.50* **Contact** *Agfa 0181 231 4200* • *Microtek Phantom 330CX* **Price** *£75.95* **Contact** *Microtek 01908 317797 (PCW Sept '98)*

best buys

Digital camera

Kodak
DC260

Once again Kodak has produced the best digital camera for under £1,000. Not only does it have a high resolution, producing excellent images at 1,536x1,024 pixels, but it also has a 3X zoom. Add its advanced features, including scripting facilities and you have a highly desirable and indispensable camera.

PCW October '98, p226

Price £899 **Contact** Kodak 0800 281487 **Also Recommended** Epson PhotoPC 700 **Price** £587.50 **Contact** Epson 0800 289622 • Ricoh RDC-4300 **Price** £599 **Contact** Ricoh 01782 753355 (both PCW October '98)

Monitor

Nokia
Multigraph 447Za

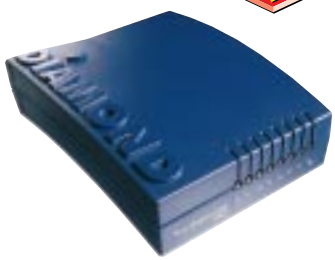
No matter what you do, it's vital to get a good monitor with a clean, flicker-free display. In April 1998's group test we looked at 17in models and found Nokia's Multigraph 447Za to be the best in our entry-level category. Those with more to spend should check out the Mitsubishi (*see the details panel, below*) which was our Editor's Choice in the high-end section.

PCW April '98, p204

Price £440.63 **Contact** Nokia 01793 512809 **Also Recommended** Mitsubishi DiamondPro 700 **Price** £569.88 **Contact** Mitsubishi 01707 276100 (PCW April '98)

Modem

Diamond
SupraExpress 56e Pro



With ever-shifting goalposts, it makes sense to go for a modem which supports all the current standards, as well as simultaneous voice and data. Combine this with a roaring speed, superb ease of use and a low price, and you have the best-value modem around.

PCW December '98, p211

Price £75 **Contact** Diamond Multimedia 0118 944 4401 **Also Recommended** Zoom FaxModem 56Kx **Price** £89 **Contact** SCS Data Communications 01494 748904 (PCW December '98)

Removable storage

Iomega
Jaz 2Gb

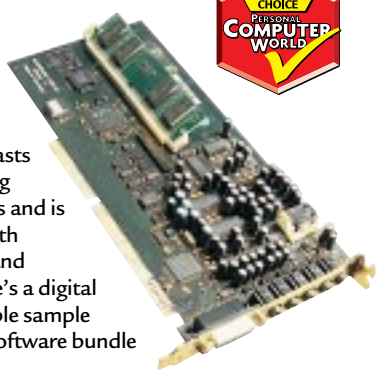
With such different capacities, interfaces and prices there is no one removable storage device to satisfy all needs. With the large capacity of 2Gb, the Jaz drive from Iomega should act as both an overflow for your hard disk and a back-up device to store all your vital data. If you are looking for something smaller, try either the Iomega Zip, with a capacity of 100Mb or the 120Mb LS-120.

PCW August '98, p118

Price £270 **Contact** Iomega 0800 973194 **Also Recommended** Iomega Zip **Price** £70 **Contact** Iomega 0800 973194 • Imation SuperDisk 120 **Price** £105 **Contact** Imation 01344 402200 (both PCW August '98)

Sound card

Terratec
EWS64 S



A cut-down version of the heavyweight EWS64XL, Terratec's S model still boasts much of the same sampling and processing capabilities and is also a great games card with accelerated DirectSound and positional 3D audio. There's a digital I/O option and upgradeable sample memory, and the decent software bundle includes Cubasis AV.

PCW July '98, p210

Price £149.23 **Contact** Terratec 01600 772111 **Also Recommended** Creative Labs AWE 64 Gold **Price** £129.25 **Contact** Creative Labs 01245 265265 (PCW July '98)

Graphics card

Diamond
Viper V550

Sporting Riva's latest TNT chipset, the Viper V550 graphics card provides absolutely storming 3D performance, with a full 3D feature set and good image quality to boot. Its 16Mb of RAM provides ultra-high 2D desktop resolutions in standard Windows applications.

PCW November '98, p198

Price Approx £150 **Contact** Diamond Multimedia 0118 944 4400 **Also Recommended** MetaByte Wicked 3D **Price** £211.50 **Contact** Watford Electronics 01582 745555 (PCW November '98)

Accounting

Bestware
MYOB

Ideal for the owner-manager and good for bookkeepers, too, Mind Your Own Business (MYOB) is our choice for accountancy software. We also recommend TAS Books which offers good bookkeeping and very powerful analysis.

PCW June '98, p198

Price *£229.13* **Contact** *Bestware 01752 201901*
Also Recommended *TAS Books* **Price** *£116.33* **Contact** *Megatech 01372 727274 (PCW June '98)*

Personal Finance

Microsoft
Money Financial Suite 99

Microsoft Money Financial Suite 99 is our choice for personal finance. It offers online banking and updating facilities, as well as Sage compatibility, all at a bargain price.

PCW February '99, p80

Price *£49.99* **Contact** *Microsoft 0345 002000*
Also Recommended *Quicken 98* **Price** *£39.99* **Contact** *Intuit 0181 990 5500 (PCW June '98)*

Database

Microsoft
Access 97

This industry-standard database application is also the best. With its wizards, infamous Office Assistants and standard Windows interface, Access 97 is relatively easy for the novice. And its powerful relational features and VBA integration make it suitable for developers, too.

PCW November '98, p220

Price *£299* **Contact** *Microsoft 0345 002000*
Also Recommended *FileMaker Pro 4* **Price** *£169*
Contact *FileMaker 0845 603 9100 (PCW November '98)*

DTP

Serif
PagePlus 5

Inexpensive, easy-to-use and surprisingly well equipped, PagePlus 5 offers extremely capable desktop publishing. Those wanting the choice of professional publishers will have to fork out more for Quark XPress 4X.

PCW June '98, p132

Price *£99.95 Contact Serif 0800 376 7070*
Also Recommended *Quark XPress 4* **Price** *£1,169* **Contact** *Quark 01483 454397 (PCW June '98)*

Image Editing

Ulead
PhotoExpress 2.0

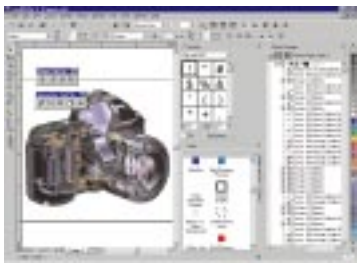
Ulead has succeeded in removing the frustration factor often involved in getting to grips with digital pictures. PhotoExpress 2.0 is a pleasure to use, with a great, clearly structured interface and fast, in-depth tools. It has pre-set editing modes for the novice and custom adjustments for each editing function, so the power user will be kept happy, too.

PCW January '99, p202

Price *£34.95* **Contact** *BIT 01420 83811* **Also Recommended** *Adobe PhotoDeluxe 3* **Price** *£45.83* **Contact** *Adobe 0181 606 4001 • Paint Shop Pro 5*
Price *£69.95* **Contact** *Digital Workshop 01295 258335 (both PCW January '99)*

Drawing

Corel
CorelDraw 8



Not one of Corel's classic years, but this is still the Windows drawing package to own. Version 8 of this giant suite boasts better drawing and new interactive tools. Artists on a budget should check out Micrografx Windows Draw 6.

PCW October '98, p203

Price *£464.13* **Contact** *Corel 0800 581028* **Also Recommended** *Adobe Illustrator* **Price** *£351.32* **Contact** *Adobe 0181 606 4000 • Freehand*
Price *£327.82* **Contact** *Macromedia 01344 458600 (both PCW October '98)*

Information Managers

Starfish
Sidekick 98

The best personal information manager boasts wide customisability as its greatest strength. For heavyweight contact management, you need look no further than Goldmine 4 (*see the details panel, below*).

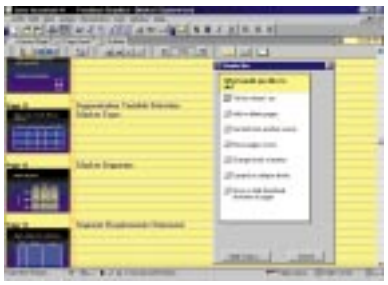
PCW August '98, p204

Price £39.99 **Contact** Starfish 0181 875 4455
Also Recommended Goldmine 4 **Price** £229 **Contact** AVG 0171 335 2222 (PCW August '98)

Presentation Graphics

Lotus
Freelance 97

This is our choice for electronic presentations. For you it may also come down to which office suite you own or are considering, but as part of Microsoft Office 97, PowerPoint won't let you down.



PCW March '98, p200

Price £49.35 **Contact** Lotus 01784 445808
Also Recommended MS PowerPoint 97 **Price** £325.47 **Contact** Microsoft 0345 002000 (PCW March '98)

Remote Access

Traveling Software
LapLink Tech

The high-end version of this extremely versatile product, LapLink Tech, has all the features of the standard version but also lets you print from the host machine onto a remote printer, or vice versa, and talk to whoever is using the host machine. It includes anti-virus and hard-disk cloning utilities.

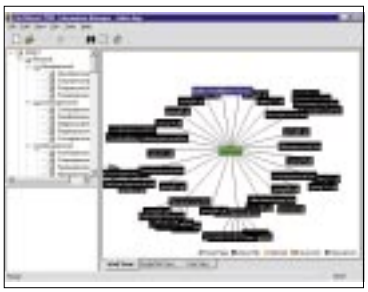
PCW December '98, p233

Price £169.95 **Contact** Traveling Software 01344 383232
Also Recommended Symantec pcAnywhere **Price** £75.08 **Contact** Symantec 0171 616 5600 (PCW December '98)

Web Design

SoftQuad
HotMetal Pro 4.0

This is an excellent all-rounder and HotMetal Pro 4 gets our thumbs up for web design.
For a slick interface and Office 97 integration, Microsoft's FrontPage 98 is certainly worth a close look.



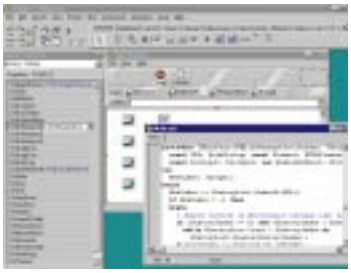
PCW January '98, p196

Price £123.38 **Contact** SoftQuad 0181 387 4110 **Also Recommended** FrontPage 98 **Price** £116.30 **Contact** Microsoft 0345 002000 (PCW January '98)

Programming Tool

Symantec
Visual Café 2

Visual Café 2 is the most productive visual Java tool out there and has the option of native-code compilation for Windows. Windows developers should go for Borland Delphi 3 which, although more complex, comes into its own on larger applications.



PCW April '98, p177

Price from £79 **Contact** Symantec 0171 616 5600
Also Recommended Borland Delphi 3 **Price** £95.18 **Contact** Borland 01734 320022 (PCW April '98)

Anti-Virus

Norton
AntiVirus 4.0

Norton AntiVirus 4.0 is our choice for protecting your PC. It offers the best combination of features, ease of use and performance. Its virus detection rate is first class and there are free online updates for the life of the product.

PCW April '98, p124

Price £49 **Contact** Symantec 0171 616 5600
Also Recommended Dr Solomon's HomeGuard **Price** £29 **Contact** Dr Solomon's 01296 318700 (PCW April '98)

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Missed a feature or a review? Try our 24-hour faxback service.

Updated every month, our easy-to-use Faxback service gives you instant access to a complete range of product reviews, features and workshops via your fax machine.
To use the service, simply follow the instructions below. Calls are charged at 50p per minute at all times, with an average duration of four minutes.
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(The faxback service is not available outside the UK.)

1 From the choices below, select the article(s) you wish to receive. Note the number of pages in the article.
2 Using the handset on your fax machine, dial 0660 600632. If you do not have a handset, press the fax machine's On Hook or Telephone button, then enter 0660 600632 on the keypad.
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4 The article(s) you have requested will now come through your fax machine.

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PCs and Notebooks	Issue	Pages	Code
Pentium II notebooks	June-98	4	2001
Network computers	July-98	9	2002
300MHz Celeron vs AMD K6-2 3DNow!	October-98	12	2003
450MHz PCs	November-98	11	2004
Undercover PC group test	December-98	20	2005
Xeon Server roundup	December-98	4	2006
Hardware Group Tests	**Issue**	**Pages**	**Code**
Laser printers	February-98	10	2101
17in monitors	April-98	10	2102
PDAs and handhelds	May-98	14	2103
Sound cards	July-98	11	2104
Removable storage	August-98	5	2105
Colour inkjets	September-98	14	2106
Budget flatbed scanners	September-98	9	2107
Digital cameras	October-98	12	2108
3D graphics cards	November-98	12	2109
Communications hardware	December-98	11	2110
Digital video	January-99	13	2111
Software Group Tests	**Issue**	**Pages**	**Code**
Web design	January-98	11	2201
Presentation tools	March-98	9	2202

PCW Faxback number: 0660 600632

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