

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 new, no-nonsense buyer's guide comes in. Over the following four 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 (inc VAT), as well as details about when and where we reviewed the product.

For the full review, why not check out *PCW* on CD-ROM? Updated quarterly on a rolling basis, *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 our *PCW* Reader Offers on pages 306 and 307 for further details.



GORDON LAING, Editor

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Personal Computer World Buyer's Charter

If things go wrong Mail order protection scheme

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Anthony George
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VNU Business Publications
VNU House, 32 - 34 Broadwick Street
London W1A 2HG

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ENTRY-LEVEL PC

Mesh K6 3D 300A

Sporting AMD's K6-2 processor, this system from Mesh has everything you could want: 1Mb of L2 cache, a 40X CD-ROM drive, a superb set of six speakers with an AWE64 sound card and a lovely ADI 5GT monitor. But it's the blistering speed that will have you reaching for your credit card.

PCW October 1998, p187



Price £1,198.50, **Contact** Mesh 0181 452 1111 **Also Recommended:** Mertec Home Media **Price** £1,173.83 **Contact** Mertec 01792 473700 • Panrix Nitro 3D, **Price** £1,173.83 **Contact** Panrix 01132 444958 (both PCW Oct '98)

MID-RANGE PC:

Dotlink Power Tower-400SE

If you want a PII 400 for under a grand ex VAT, you could do a lot worse than this Dotlink. It has 64Mb of RAM and a 5Gb hard drive, as well as a 56K modem and SmartSuite 97. And with a BX board there is plenty of room for later expansion.

PCW October 1998, p89



Price £1,174 **Contact** Dotlink 0181 903 6508 **Also Recommended:** Mesh Elite Professional PII **Price** £1,145, **Contact** Mesh 0181 452 1111 • Dan Dantum II/WS **Price** £1,175 **Contact** Dan 0181 830 1100 (both PCW July '98)

HIGH-END PC

Evesham PII 450

Built around Intel's fastest PII yet and running at 450MHz, this machine surpassed the scores achieved in tests by 400MHz PCs. Add to this a lightning-fast 10Gb hard drive and you have got the ultimate performance machine.

PCW Oct '98, p79



Price £2,231 **Contact** Evesham 01386 769600 **Also Recommended:** Viglen C2 Plus 400 **Price** £2,349 **Contact** Viglen 0181 758 7000 • Roldec Predator XL **Price** £2,349 **Contact** Roldec 01902 456464 (both in PCW Sept 1998)

HIGH-END NOTEBOOK

IBM ThinkPad 600

Built for the road warrior, this thin, light, notebook excels in its build quality. Based around a variety of processors, ranging from a Pentium 233MMX and going right up to a Mobile PII 266, it also has a huge 4Gb hard drive, 32Mb RAM and a 13.3in TFT screen.

PCW July 1998, p79



Price £4266.43, **Contact** IBM 0870 601 0136 **Also Recommended:** Gateway Solo 9100 **Price** £3876.33 **Contact** Gateway 0800 282000 (PCW June 1998)

MID-RANGE NOTEBOOK:

Gateway Solo 2500-S6266SE

With a fantastic spec for an incredibly low price, the Gateway Solo 2500 is enough to keep any mobile professional happy. It comes with a Mobile PII 266MHz processor, a whopping 64Mb RAM as standard and a huge 4Gb hard drive. Add in a glorious 13.3in TFT screen supported by 2Mb of graphics RAM and you have yourself a perfect system.

PCW October 1998, p94



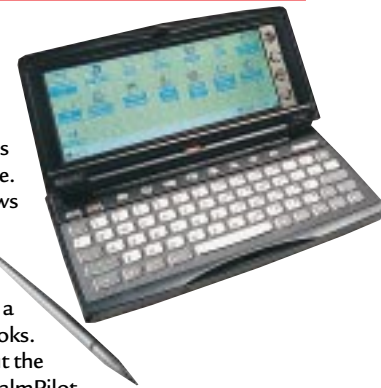
Price £2,500 **Contact** Gateway 0800 55200 **Also Recommended:** Viglen Dossier M **Price** £2,466.33 **Contact** Viglen 0181 758 7000 (PCW August '98)

PDA

Hewlett-Packard 620LX

For cutting-edge technology in your pocket, Hewlett-Packard's 620LX has to be the only choice. It's based on the latest Windows CE2 operating system and is the first PDA we've seen with a colour screen. It's utterly gorgeous and, at £799, a serious threat to many notebooks. PDA fans should also check out the Psion Series 5 and the 3Com PalmPilot.

PCW May 1998 p262.



Price £799 **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 1998)

COLOUR INKJET:

Hewlett-Packard DeskJet 890C

As all-round colour inkjet printers go, Hewlett-Packard's DeskJet 890C is hard to fault. Equally happy with photos or business graphics, it's our choice for the home or small office. Meanwhile, those on a budget should look no further than Canon's BJC-250, but those wanting the bigger picture will not be disappointed with HP's DeskJet 1120C A3.

PCW September 1998 p186.



Price £317.25 **Contact** HP 0990 474747 **Also Recommended:** Canon BJC-250 **Price** £116.33 **Contact** Canon 0121 680 8062 • HP DeskJet 1120C **Price** £446.50 **Contact** HP 0990 474747 (both PCW Sept '98)

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 1998, p188.



Price £273 **Contact** Epson 01442 261144 **Also Recommended:** Lexmark 5700 **Price** £229 **Contact** Lexmark 01628 481500 (PCW September 1998)

BUDGET LASER PRINTER

Panasonic KX-P6300

A decent laser printer at under £200 excluding VAT? That's Panasonic's KX-P6300, which not only turns out great results in fast time but also boasts one of the smallest footprints of any printer. Its unusual vertical design, along with being a great-value all-rounder, made it our Editor's Choice in our entry-level laser group test.

PCW February 1998, p194



Price £217.38 **Contact** Panasonic 0500 404041 **Also Recommended:** Kyocera FS-600 **Price** £280.83 **Contact** Kyocera 01734 311500 • Minolta PagePro 6 **Price** £351.33 **Contact** Minolta 01908 200400 (both PCW Feb '98)

BUSINESS LASER PRINTER

Hewlett-Packard LaserJet 4000TN

King of the laser printers, Hewlett-Packard has impressed us yet again with its latest office machine. Being 25 percent faster than the LaserJet 5, with 10,000-page toner cartridge, two 250-sheet input trays, network interfaces as standard and boasting superb output, the 4000TN should be the first choice as an office workhorse.

PCW February 1998 p77



Price £1662.63 **Contact** HP 0990 474747 **Also Recommended:** QMS DeskLaser 1400P **Price** £938.83 **Contact** QMS 01784 442255 (PCW March 1998)

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 1998, p83



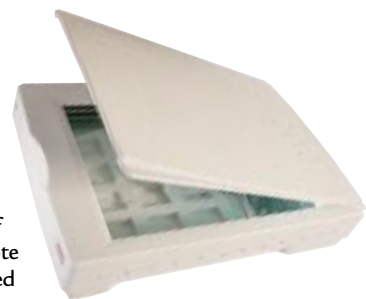
Price £629 **Contact** HP 0990 474747 **Also Recommended:** Canon MultiPASS MPC20 **Price** £370.13 **Contact** Canon 0181 773 3173 (PCW January 1998)

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 older systems, or users wanting top performance, should stick to SCSI.

PCW September 1998, 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)

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 also has a 3X zoom. Add its advanced features, including scripting facilities and you have a highly desirable and indispensable camera.

PCW October 1998, 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 1998)

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 panel, below) which was our Editor's Choice in the high-end section.

PCW April 1998 p204.



Price £440.63 **Contact** Nokia 01793 512809 **Also Recommended:** Mitsubishi DiamondPro 700 **Price** £569.88 **Contact** Mitsubishi 01707 276100 (PCW April 1998)

MODEM

BT Prologue K56EV Plus Modem

This smart little K56Flex modem features a headset, allowing it to be used as a hands-free telephone. Add a pair of speakers and you've got a full duplex speakerphone. The K56EV also supports AudioSpan (SVD) operation, enabling voice and data to be transmitted simultaneously.

PCW July 1998 p80



Price £119.95 **Contact** Direct Source 0118 981 9960 **Also Recommended:** Pace 56 Voice **Price** £139 **Contact** PMC 0990 561001 (PCW November 1997)

REMOVABLE STORAGE

SyQuest SparQ

With such differing capacities, interfaces and prices, there's no one removable storage device to satisfy all needs. As an overflow for your existing hard disk, the SyQuest SparQ is a clear winner, boasting excellent performance and low price. The external Iomega Zip Plus offers a good combination of ease of use and portability.

PCW May 1998 p196



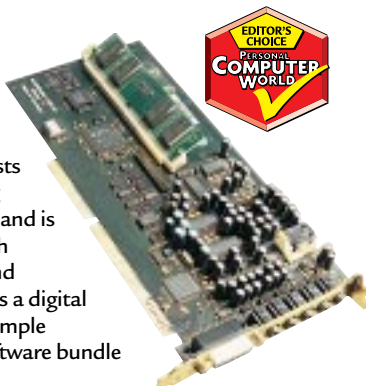
Price £169.99 **Contact** SyQuest 01189 880207 **Also Recommended:** Iomega Zip Plus **Price** £143.83 **Contact** Iomega 07000 466342 • Iomega Jaz 2Gb **Price** £441.71 **Contact** Iomega 07000 466342 (both PCW August 1998)

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, upgradeable sample memory and the decent software bundle includes Cubasis AV.

PCW July 1998 p210



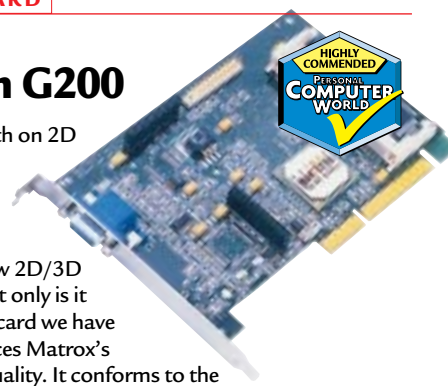
Price £149.23 **Contact** Terratec 01600 772111 **Also Recommended:** Creative Labs AWE 64 Gold **Price** £129.25 **Contact** Creative Labs 01245 265265 (PCW July 1998)

GRAPHICS CARD

Matrox Millenium G200

Blisteringly fast both on 2D and 3D applications, the the Matrox Millenium G200 is based around a new 2D/3D chip, the G200. Not only is it the fastest 2D/3D card we have seen, it also produces Matrox's legendary image quality. It conforms to the AGP 2X standard and supports up to 16Mb of RAM.

PCW October 1998, p92



Price £129, **Contact** Matrox 01753 665544 **Also Recommended:** ATI Xpert@Play **Price** £139.83 **Contact** ATI 01628 533115 (PCW December 1997)

ACCOUNTING

Tas Books 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 1998 p198

Price £229.13 **Contact** Bestware 01752 201901
Also Recommended: TAS Books **Price** £116.33 **Contact** Megatech 01372 727274 (PCW June 1998)

PERSONAL FINANCE

Microsoft Money Financial Suite 98

Microsoft Money Financial Suite 98 is our choice for personal finance. It offers online banking and updating facilities, plus Sage compatibility, all at a bargain price.

PCW May 1998 p196



Price £49.99 **Contact** Microsoft 0345 002000
Also Recommended: Quicken 98 **Price** £39.99 **Contact** Intuit 0181 990 5500 (PCW June 1998)

DATABASE

Borland Visual dBase 7

The first 32-bit version of Borland's classic database manager is a significant upgrade from version 5.5 and a must-have for dBase developers so long as 16-bit compatibility is not required. Access is particularly good value when bought with Office 97 Pro.



PCW March 1998 p92

Price £292.58 **Contact** Borland 01734 320022
Also Recommended: Microsoft Access 97 **Price** £276.13 **Contact** Microsoft 0345 002000 (PCW October 1997)

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 4.0.

PCW June 1998 p132



Price £99.95 **Contact** Serif 0800 376 7070
Also Recommended: Quark XPress 4 **Price** £1,169 **Contact** Quark 01483 454397 (PCW June 1998)

IMAGE EDITING

Adobe Photoshop 5

With version 5, Photoshop is better than ever, although some web designers will want a little more. The legendary Paint Shop Pro and fun PhotoDeluxe cater at entry level.



PCW June 1998 p88

Price £763.75. **Contact** Adobe 0181 606 4001 **Also Recommended:** Adobe PhotoDeluxe 2 **Price** £57.58 **Contact** Adobe 0181 606 4001 • Paintshop Pro 4 **Price** £58.69 **Contact** Digital Workshop 01295 258335 (both PCW Dec '97)

DRAWING

Corel CorelDraw 8

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

PCW October 1998, 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 October 1998)