



Contents

662 PCs & portables

Entry-level to high-end PCs, notebooks and PDAs.

663 Printers & scanners

Inkjet, lasers, photo printers and multifunction devices.

664 Peripherals

From digital cameras to modems, monitors to storage, graphics and sound cards.

665 Software

The greats of software. Classic products like Adobe Photoshop, Visual dBase and MYOB.

CREDIT CARD PROTECTION

If ordering goods over £100, we recommend you use your credit card. A credit card not only provides similar protection as that guaranteed under the "Buyers Charter" but, more importantly, it offers the additional advantage of reimbursement to your account of all monies paid for goods not received — usually within 28 days — when a company ceases to trade.

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 the PCW Reader Offers on pages 306 and 307 for further details.

GORDON LAING, Editor

Personal Computer World Buyer's Charter

If things go wrong Mail order protection scheme

Anthony George, our Customer Services Manager, is here to help you if things go wrong or if you have a complaint about advertisements that have appeared in Personal Computer World. Write to him with details of the complaint and he will contact you.

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

Buyers Charter



When you order goods as a private individual reader from a UK supplier's advertisement in Personal Computer World and pay by post in advance of delivery to that Mail Order Advertiser who subsequently ceases to trade and

goes into Liquidation or Bankruptcy prior to delivery of such goods, you may, under the "Buyers Charter", qualify for compensation, providing:

1. You have not received the goods or had your money returned.
2. You have followed the "Personal Computer World" guidelines when placing your order.
3. Have taken all reasonable steps to effect delivery or refund.
4. You have retained proof of purchase, for verification purposes:
 - a) A copy of the original advertisement from which the goods were ordered.
 - b) A copy of Personal Computer World's "Details of Transaction Form" (on opposite page).
 - c) Comprehensive proof of payment.

5. Submit claims so as to arrive "NOT EARLIER THAN TWENTY EIGHT DAYS AND NOT LATER THAN THREE MONTHS" from the official sale date of the magazine.

Claims must be submitted to the Customer Services Manager IN WRITING, summarising the situation and lodged strictly within the time schedule stated. Claims received outside this period will not qualify for consideration for compensation under the "Buyers Charter".

After a supplier who has advertised has become subject to either liquidation or bankruptcy proceedings, Personal Computer World guarantees to process as expeditiously as possible those private individual readers' claims made and submitted, in accordance with those procedures outlined, up to the following limits.

- a) £2,000 for any one advertiser so affected.
- b) £100,000 in respect of all advertisers so affected in any one year.

These sums define the Publishers maximum liability under the scheme, and any additional payments above and beyond these thresholds will be entirely at the discretion of the Publishers.

As soon as legal confirmation that a state of liquidation or bankruptcy exists, the processing of claims will immediately commence. If, however, assets are available and the receiver/liquidator appointed confirms that an eventual payment will be made by way of a dividend, all claims under the "Buyers Charter" will be subject to re-processing and will take into account any shortfall which may then exist.

Payments under the scheme will take into consideration the obligations and liabilities of other interested parties such as credit card and/or insurance organisations etc.

This guarantee only applies to advance postal payments

made by private individuals in direct response for goods itemised/illustrated in display advertisements. It does not cover goods ordered from advertising inserts or cards, classified advertisements or MicroMart, or catalogues obtained from, or supplied by, any advertiser.

The "Buyer's Charter" is designed to safeguard the PRIVATE individual reader. It does not provide protection to any companies, societies, organisations, unincorporated bodies or any other commercially orientated outlet of any description. Similarly, cover is not provided for orders placed from or to any overseas companies or for goods purchased for resale.

CAVEAT EMPTOR

The protection of the "Buyers Charter" only applies to display advertisements carried in this publication. It is not designed for, nor will it protect the consumer, in circumstances whereby goods have been subsequently ordered and paid for as a direct result of any advertisements appearing on the Internet.

While limited protection still exists when Internet purchases are made from companies based in the UK, no such protection exists — other than that afforded by certain major credit card companies — relative to goods ordered from overseas organisations' web sites. We would strongly urge all readers to consider the following before purchasing via the Internet: Advertised prices invariably exclude transportation charges, do not account for currency fluctuations, Customs & Excise duties, VAT, documentation and/or importation restrictions. Statutory rights are virtually non-existent, guarantees — if any — impossible to enforce, replacement of faulty goods and/or refunds difficult to obtain, no official regulatory organisation to call upon for assistance when things go wrong, and no protection under the "Buyers Charter".

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 '98, 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)

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 '98, 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 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 '98, 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)

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 '98, p94



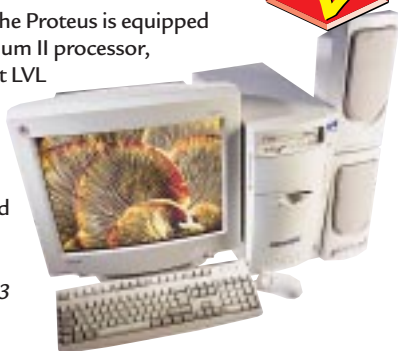
Price £2,500 **Contact** Gateway 0800 55200 **Also Recommended:** Viglen Dossier M **Price** £2,466.33 **Contact** Viglen 0181 758 7000 (PCW August '98)

HIGH-END PC

Atlantic Proteus 450LVD

A true high-end PC, the Proteus is equipped with a 450MHz Pentium II processor, plus the lightning-fast LVL SCSI Cheetah hard drive from Seagate. It's also stuffed with extra peripherals including CD-RW and DVD-ROM drives. A real dream machine.

PCW Nov '98, p163



Price £2,499 **Contact** Atlantic 0990 134725 **Also Recommended:** Armari MB-450 Workstation **Price** £2,899 **Contact** Armari 0181 8107441 • Dell Precision Work'stn 410 **Price** £3,390 **Contact** Dell 0870 9073335 (both in this issue)

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 '98 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 '98 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 '98, 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 '98, 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 '98 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 '98, p83



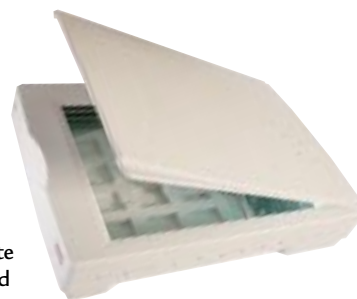
Price £629 **Contact** HP 0990 474747 **Also Recommended:** Canon MultiPASS MPC20 **Price** £370.13 **Contact** Canon 0181 773 3173 (PCW January 1998)

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 '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)

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 '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 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 '98 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 '98 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 '98 p196



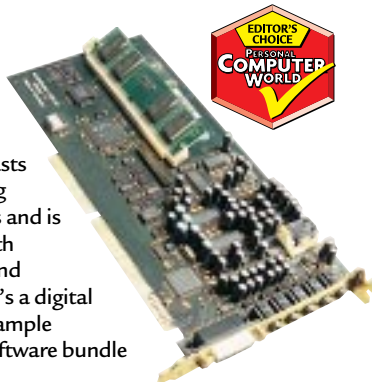
Price £169.99 **Contact** SyQuest 01189 880207 **Also Recommended:** Iomega Zip Plus **Price** £143.83 **Contact** Iomega 07000 466342 • Iomega Jaz 2Gb **Price** £441.71 **Contact** Iomega 07000 466342 (both PCW August 1998)

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 '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 1998)

GRAPHICS CARD

Diamond Viper V550

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

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 1998)

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 '98 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 '98 p196



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

DATABASE

Microsoft Access 97

The 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 1998)

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 '98 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 '98 p88



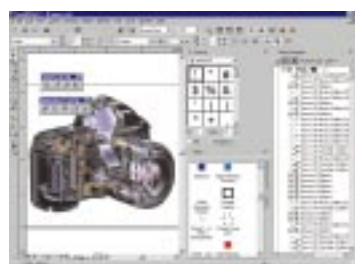
Price £763.75. **Contact** Adobe 0181 606 4001 **Also Recommended:** Adobe PhotoDeluxe 2 **Price** £57.58 **Contact** Adobe 0181 606 4001 • Paintshop Pro 4 **Price** £58.69 **Contact** Digital Workshop 01295 258335 (both PCW Dec '97)

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 '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 October 1998)