Southern Maryland
Mac User Group

20058-D Point Lookout Road
Great Mills, Maryland 20634
Meetings second
Monday of the month from 7pm to 9pm
at the SMARTCO warehouse.

June 2004

Apple today (June 10, 2004)announced new updates to the G5 PowerMac line

All dual processor
reported "Liquid Cooled" systems
8X SuperDrive
Up to 256Mb ATI Radeon 9800 XT
Up to 500Gb storage

Dual 1.8/$1,999
Dual 2.0/$2,499
Dual 2.5/$2,999

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Apple® today unveiled its new Power Mac® G5 desktop line with every model featuring dual 64-bit PowerPC G5 processors. The top model, featuring two 2.5 GHz processors, the industry's fastest front-side bus running at 1.25 GHz per processor, and advanced liquid cooling starts at $2,999. The entry model, featuring dual 1.8 GHz processors, starts at just $1,999.

"Our professional customers, across many creative and scientific markets, have been impressed with the extraordinary performance of the dual processor Power Mac G5 running Apple's Unix-based Mac OS X," said
Philip Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing. "This new Power Mac G5 line has dual processors in every model to deliver even higher performance for our pro customers who need it."

Powered by the PowerPC G5 processor, the Power Mac G5 utilizes 64-bit processing technology for memory expansion up to 8GB, and advanced 64-bit computation while running existing 32-bit applications natively. The top of the line Power Mac G5 now offers dual 2.5 GHz PowerPC G5 processors, each with an independent 1.25 GHz front-side bus for an astounding bandwidth of up to 20 GBps. All Power Mac G5 systems ship with Mac OS® X version 10.3 “Panther," which in combination with the Power Mac G5 provides creative professionals and scientists with computational power never before realized on a desktop system.

The Power Mac G5 outperforms competing desktops on the market today and ran significantly faster than 3.4 GHz Pentium 4 systems on performance tests of the most popular applications for creative professionals and scientists, including:

- On a test of 45 commonly used actions, Adobe Photoshop ran almost twice as fast on a dual 2.5 GHz Power Mac G5 than on a 3.4 GHz Pentium 4-based PC;
- Logic Pro 6 on the dual 2.5 GHz Power Mac G5 played up to 138 more tracks with reverbs (over four times more) than with Cubase SX on a 3.4 GHz Pentium 4-based PC; and
- Final Cut Pro® HD running on a 2.5 GHz Power Mac G5 can run eight streams of 8-bit SD video versus five streams on a dual 3.06 GHz Xeon-based Avid workstation.

The Power Mac G5 line offers leading-edge expansion with dual 1.5 Gbps serial ATA interfaces, the industry’s fastest PCI-X interface technology and AGP 8X Pro graphics. The Power Mac G5 comes standard with either the NVIDIA GeForceFX 5200 Ultra or the ATI Radeon 9600 XT graphics card; the ATI Radeon 9800 XT high-performance graphics card is available as a build-to-order option for incredible 3D design, visualization and gaming. All Power Mac G5 desktops deliver industry-leading connectivity and high-performance I/O, including Gigabit Ethernet, FireWire® 800 and FireWire 400 ports, three USB 2.0 ports, optical digital audio input and output, built-in support for 54 Mbps AirPort® Extreme wireless networking and an optional Bluetooth module.

Pricing & Availability

The dual 1.8 GHz and dual 2.0 GHz Power Mac G5 models are available now, and the dual 2.5 GHz Power Mac G5 model is expected to be available in July through the Apple Store® (www.apple.com), at Apple’s

retail stores and Apple Authorized Resellers. The single 1.25 GHz Power Mac G4, with suggested retail price of $1,299 (US), will no longer be in production and is available for purchase while supplies last through the Apple Store (www.apple.com), at Apple's retail stores and Apple Authorized Resellers.

The Power Mac G5, with a suggested retail price of $1,999 (US), includes:

- Dual 1.8 GHz 64-bit PowerPC G5;
- 256MB 400 MHz 128-bit DDR SDRAM (4GB maximum);
- 80GB Serial ATA 7200 rpm hard drive;
- AGP 8X Pro graphics slot;
- NVIDIA GeForceFX 5200 Ultra with 64MB DDR SDRAM;
- 3 PCI slots (64-bit, 33 MHz); and
- 8x SuperDrive™ (DVD-R/CD-RW).

The Power Mac G5, with a suggested retail price of $2,499 (US), includes:

- Dual 2.0 GHz 64-bit PowerPC G5;
- 512MB 400 MHz 128-bit DDR SDRAM (8GB maximum);
- 160GB Serial ATA 7200 rpm hard drive;
- AGP 8X Pro graphics slot;
- NVIDIA GeForceFX 5200 Ultra with 64MB DDR SDRAM;
- 3 PCI-X slots (one 64-bit 133 MHz, two 64-bit 100 MHz); and
- 8x SuperDrive (DVD-R/CD-RW).

The Power Mac G5, with a suggested retail price of $2,999 (US), includes:

- Dual 2.5 GHz 64-bit PowerPC G5;
- 512MB 400 MHz 128-bit DDR SDRAM (8GB maximum);
- 160GB Serial ATA 7200 rpm hard drive;
- AGP 8X Pro graphics slot;
- ATI RADEON 9600 XT with 128MB DDR SDRAM;
- 3 PCI-X slots (one 64-bit 133 MHz, two 64-bit 100 MHz); and
- 8x SuperDrive (DVD-R/CD-RW).

All Power Mac G5 systems ship with iChat AV, Safari™, Sherlock®, Address Book, QuickTime®, iLife® (includes iTunes®, iPhoto™, iMovie®, iDVD™ and GarageBand™), iSync, iCal®, DVD Player, Classic environment, Art Directors Toolkit X, EarthLink Total Access 2004, GraphicConverter, Microsoft Internet Explorer, OmniGraffle, OmniOutliner, QuickBooks for Mac New User Edition, Xcode and Zinio Reader.

Build-to-order options include up to 8GB of RAM, 250GB Serial ATA hard drives, Combo (DVD-ROM/CD-RW) drive, graphics cards (NVIDIA GeForceFX 5200 Ultra, ATI Radeon 9600 XT, ATI Radeon 9800 XT), AirPort Extreme

Card, Bluetooth module, Apple Wireless Keyboard and Apple Wireless Mouse, PCI-X Gigabit Ethernet Card, Apple Fibre Channel PCI Card and Mac OS X Server version 10.3 “Panther.”

The new 15-in. PowerBook: A laptop for all?

News Story by Ken Mingis

JUNE 02, 2004 (COMPUTERWORLD) - For the past two weeks or so, I've had my hands on the latest incarnation of Apple Computer Inc.'s midrange, bread-and-butter PowerBook, the new 15-in. model unveiled in mid-April. And with this version of its sleek aluminum laptops, Apple has really hit its stride.

If the 12-in. PowerBook is too small (or too slow), and the 17-in. PowerBook is too big (it can't be too fast -- right?), then the 15-in. model is probably just right. Speedy? Check. The 1.5-GHz processor shows its stuff in day-to-day tasks. Versatile? Very much so. With AirPort Extreme now incorporated across the PowerBook line, wireless connections are made easy. The SuperDrive allows for easy CD and DVD burning. The backlit keyboard is useful in dimly lit places. Portable? You bet. You get a bright and clear 1,280-by-854-pixel widescreen LCD, full-size (and solid-feeling) keyboard, all in a package that weighs 5.7 lb.

Add to that the fact that Apple dropped the price of the faster of its two 15-in. models by $100, to $2,499, and what's not to love?

In this case, not much -- although I do have a couple of nits to note.

You may recall that the 15-in. model was the last of the pro laptop line to get an aluminum case, following last year's 12-in. and 17-in. models to market by several months. While its bigger and smaller siblings are now at Rev. 3, this is only the second version of the aluminum-clad 15-in. PowerBook -- and the first run got off to a rocky start last fall when owners began seeing white spots on their LCD screens. While the problem units were repaired and the problem was eventually eliminated, it left would-be buyers leery of the 15-in. model.

I'm happy to report no such problems with the current crop, which Apple provided me

for review purposes, though I do have a minor quibble with the LCD screens Apple uses. To be blunt: I want a higher-resolution screen.

Let me explain: The resolution on the 15-in. PowerBooks has remained unchanged for more than two years now, and I think it's time for something a little higher than 1,280 by 854 pixels. Don't get me wrong. There's nothing inherently wrong with the current resolution; it certainly wouldn't stop me if I were eyeing a new PowerBook.

But given the higher resolutions offered on the PC laptop side (some of them *too* high, in my book), I'd like to see Apple offer more choice in its LCD screens. For example, I've had a chance to tinker with a Sony Vaio in recent days, a 14-in. model with a screen resolution of 1,400 by 1,050 pixels. That's essentially the same resolution offered in the 17-in. PowerBook, but packed onto a smaller screen. I know some users say that's too high and everything looks too small. I disagree. Icon sizes and fonts can be changed to make them easier to see and read if need be.

I like the higher resolution, and at 42, my eyes aren't exactly young anymore.

What would I like to see? I'd take the resolution currently available in the 17-in. PowerBook (1,440 by 900 pixels) and pack that into the 15-in. screen. And I'd take the resolution currently available in Apple's 20-in. iMac (1,680 by 1,050 pixels) and use that in the 17-in. model. The result would be a noticeable improvement to the midrange and high-end PowerBooks -- and it would help Apple match the competition in the "real" (i.e., PC-centric) world.

Under the assumption that we'll be seeing G4 chips in PowerBooks for the foreseeable future, I hope that Apple will view new screens as a smart way to goose sales when it updates its PowerBooks down the road.

Speaking of G4 chips, that's the other concern I have about the current lineup. Again, there's nothing wrong with the G4 processor. It has been around for a while and in its current form is speedy enough and thrifty enough on battery power to handle anything you're likely to need it for. I managed about two and a half hours of use on battery power with the processor set to highest speed and LCD brightness all the way up.

But with the first anniversary of the G5 coming up this summer, I -- and a lot of other laptop fans -- are getting antsy for Apple to figure out how to put that speed demon of a processor in a PowerBook.

Apple doesn't talk about future products in general, although officials have warned in recent months not to hold your breath waiting for a PowerBook G5. Yes, they want to do it. And yes, it's safe to assume Apple is working on prototypes. But slipping one of those processors into a portable unit and keeping it cool apparently isn't a task done lightly or quickly. I'm not even going to begin to speculate on when such a laptop might hit the market. It could come at the Worldwide Developers Conference later this month (highly unlikely), or maybe at MacWorld San Francisco in January (possible, but who other than Steve Jobs knows?).

Until that day, Motorola's G4 will soldier on. In this case, the 1.5-GHz chip turned in a respectable 128 benchmark score using Xbench. That's up from the 117 score I got with the latest 1.33-GHz 12-in. PowerBook I reviewed last month and noticeably higher than the 101 score I got with the top-of-the-line iBook (see story). It's even faster than my own tricked-out 1.33-GHz 17-in. PowerBook, which has a fast 7,200-rpm hard drive in it. That machine got an Xbench score of 123 (see story).

For the purpose of comparison, a stock dual 1.8-GHz G5 desktop machine returns a score of about 190 (see story).

So what we have here is an evolutionary, not revolutionary, update to the midrange PowerBook line. The 1.5-GHz chip manages to make this the fastest 15-in. model yet from Apple, a laptop reasonably good on battery power and, most important given the other goodies included (wireless networking, 64MB of video RAM, Universal Serial Bus 2.0 and FireWire 800 ports), one that's reasonably priced.

Of course, for $300 more, you can snag the newest 17-in. model. I'll have a look at that particular PowerBook later this month.

Apple updates PowerBooks, iBooks

News Story by Peter Cohen and Jim Dalrymple

APRIL 19, 2004 (MACCENTRAL) - Following up on five major product announcements at the National Association of Broadcasters show in Las Vegas yesterday, Apple Computer Inc. today announced upgrades to its entire line of portable computing products. Apple's pro PowerBook models have been bumped to a top speed of 1.5GHz, while the consumer iBook now reaches speeds of 1.2GHz.

"The year of the notebook didn't end in December, it's still going," Greg Joswiak, Apple's Vice President of Hardware Product Marketing, said.

AirPort Extreme wireless networking and an internal Bluetooth module are now included standard with all PowerBook models. On the 15-inch and 17-inch models, graphics performance has been improved with the inclusion of ATI's Mobility Radeon 9700 graphics processor; 128MB of VRAM is also available as a custom configuration.

"We've always tried to focus on having good graphics engines. Creative Pro customers demand high graphics performance," Joswiak said of the new graphics chips.

The new 12-inch PowerBook G4 model has been bumped up to 1.33GHz, and has seen its VRAM increased from 32 to 64MB. A larger 60GB drive is now standard issue, as well. It's available in Combo Drive and SuperDrive versions for $1,599 and $1,799, respectively.

The 15-inch PowerBook G4 is available in a 1.33GHz version equipped with a Combo Drive for $1,999. The 1.5GHz model comes with a 4x SuperDrive for $2,499. The 17-inch PowerBook G4 is available with a 1.5GHz processor and 4x SuperDrive for $2,799.

The 12-inch and base 14-inch iBook G4 models now both run at 1.0GHz. Each model includes 256MB DDR SDRAM expandable to 1.25GB, two USB 2.0 ports, FireWire 400, VGA video out, 10/100baseT Ethernet, and slot-loading Combo (DVD-ROM/CD-RW) drives. The 12-inch model comes equipped with a 30GB hard drive while the 14-inch gets a 40GB hard drive. Like their predecessors, they come with a slot for an AirPort Extreme wireless networking card and can be ordered with an internal Bluetooth module. They cost $1,099 and $1,299 respectively.

The 14-inch model is also available with a 1.2GHz processor, 60GB hard drive and included AirPort Extreme card. What's more, for the first time on the iBook line, the 14-inch model can be custom-ordered with a 4x SuperDrive (DVD-R/CD-RW) optical drive. It's priced at $1,499.

"All of these things together make the iBook the perfect computer as the hub of the digital lifestyle," said Joswiak. "We are always trying to make the value better -- we're doing really well here and we're not going to let up."

Apple's previous 12-, 15-, and 17-inch PowerBook models came in five configurations. At the low-end, the 12-inch PowerBook featured a 1GHz PowerPC G4; 512K L2 cache; 256MB DDR266 SDRAM; 40GB Ultra ATA/100; NVIDIA GeForce FX Go 5200 (32MB DDR); 10/100BASE-T Ethernet; FireWire 400; AirPort Extreme Ready; Mini-DVI out; and a Combo Drive. The higher-end 12-inch model had all of the same features except it included a DVD burning SuperDrive. The 12-inch models were priced at $1,599 and 1,799 respectively.

The 15-inch PowerBook had a 1GHz PowerPC G4; 512K L2 cache; 256MB DDR333 SDRAM; 60GB Ultra ATA/100 ATI Mobility Radeon 9600 (64MB DDR); Gigabit Ethernet; FireWire 400 & 800; AirPort Extreme Ready; DVI & S-Video out; and a Combo Drive. As with the 12-inch model, the 15-inch PowerBook came in a high-end configuration that featured a DVD burning SuperDrive, as well as a 1.25GHz processor, 512MB RAM and a 60GB hard drive. The 15-inch models were priced at $1,999 and $2,599 respectively.

The high-end 17-inch PowerBook came equipped with a 1.33GHz PowerPC G4; 512K L2 cache; 512MB DDR333 SDRAM; 80GB Ultra ATA/100; ATI Mobility Radeon 9600 (64MB DDR); Backlit Keyboard; Gigabit Ethernet FireWire 400 & 800; AirPort Extreme built-in; DVI & S-Video out' and a DVD burning SuperDrive. The 17-inch PowerBook sold for $2,999.

Apple's previous 12- and 14-inch iBook G4 models came in three configurations. All units sported a slot-loading Combo drive and 256MB DDR SDRAM and Radeon 9200 graphics with 32MB VRAM (the graphics system remains unchanged in the new models).

At the low-end, the 12-inch iBook sported an 800MHz processor and 30GB hard disk; the 14-inch models were available at 933MHz with a 40GB drive and 1.0GHz with a 60GB hard drive. Prices remain unchanged from the previous models.

Real People Reviews by Daniel M. East
Product: 3380 all-in-one
Manufacturer/Vendor/Developer: HP
MSRP: $699.00
Review date: June 11, 2004

PULL QUOTE: “Small offices will love the combination and simplicity.”

DESCRIPTION (What's it do? What's it got?): HP’s small office solution for fax, color scanning and black laser/copier with all of the bells and most of the whistles. Enough RAM and speed for nearly any office or home office.

MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: OS 9.1x or later; OS X 10.1 or later; phone line for fax and USB ready Mac.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: Two things stand out for me with the 3380; first, the ease of setup and use was nothing shy of plug in and go. In fact, before I even downloaded the latest drivers and software, I was able to just print clean looking output right out of the box (a nice testimony about OS X as well). Second, once the software was loaded up, HP's director makes every function a snap to use. Whether using the Director or right from Photoshop to scan or whatever, the 3380 does a fine job with nearly any output job.

LIKES : With 32 Mb RAM, performance is really great from this all-in-one. The copier is really excellent with very good quality output from all resolutions. The fax is all HP with true 33.6 transmissions and 4 Mb RAM - both send and receive work exactly as they should. The 24 bit scanning is color accurate within about 3% of yellow and red with green tones appearing very accurate and saturation is spot on. In fact, scans of a variety of originals (old photos, new photos, magazine covers and original sketches as well as text to OCR) were clean and clear from edge to edge. The only mild distortion was in the upper right corner that appeared to be from how the lid sat on the

upper edge of a larger original.

DISLIKES : My only issues with the 3380 are that the printing from PDF, text docs and web pages all produced a slightly top-heavy intensity on the text; however, after tapping out the toner and recalibrating the printer, the issue was resolved. Also, like other HP products, this is a large device that may overwhelm a desktop in a small home office, but is ultimately going to take far less space than a scanner, office fax and copier if placed separately.

HOW DOES THIS PRODUCT COMPARE? : The only thing really close to the
3380 is the Brother 8840D at 599.00 and, while less costly, has PostScript Lev. 3, but only 32 Mb of RAM (the 3380 maxes at 96 Mb). The 3380 offers more capacity and, in terms of ease of use, HP wins out with user friendly features and operating costs.

WHO MIGHT ENJOY THIS PRODUCT? For those who need a stand-alone fax as
well as a black ink laser, this is a great option when you consider the features and costs. Small offices will love the combination and simplicity.

TEST SYSTEM: Apple Titanium PowerBook G4 500 - 1 GB RAM - 10.3.4

FINAL THOUGHTS: Personally, I have mixed feelings about such combo devices; however, I find them very effective for those specific situations where such a device is needed. Given the cost of the individual items (scanner, black laser printer, copier, fax) vs. this unit and its cost factors, HP delivers a competitive and good quality product with little to complain about.

OVERALL RATING: 4 out of 5 stars VERY GOOD

For more information, visit: http://www.hp.com/

Daniel East is the founder and president of The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs); a member of The Apple Consultants

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