

Picture this

Panasonic has launched its second micro four-thirds camera, the Lumix DMC-GH1. The successor to the Best Buy Panasonic G1, the main difference with the GH1 is its HD video-recording mode.

The GH1 is slightly larger than the G1 but it uses the same lenses. Instead of an optical viewfinder, the GH1 has an electronic viewfinder that allows you to preview shots as you adjust the camera settings.

We found it easy to use – it has a button that switches from photo mode to video mode with

a single press. We also liked the way the focal area in the viewfinder enlarges when you're focusing manually.

The GH1 can shoot video in HD, and, though we're yet to see a consumer-level camera produce video that's as good as standalone HD camcorders, we expect great things from this model. It will be bundled with a specially designed Lumix G Vario HD 14-140mm lens, which focuses and zooms silently – something that many consumer-level camcorders fail to do.

The lens also allows you to alter the aperture while using the movie



mode – an impressive element of manual control for a camera's movie function.

The GH1 is widely available online and on the high street, bundled with the 14-140mm lens for around £1,300.

Go to www.which.co.uk/gh1 to watch our video review of the Panasonic GH1.

VERDICT If its test results are as good as its predecessor's, it could be another Best Buy for Panasonic.

Graco's smooth ride

The U'go is Graco's latest release in the sub-£100 buggy category. We'll be sending it to the lab for full testing later in the year. In the meantime, our first impressions come from taking it, an 18-month-old child and her mother for a trip to the park.

Overall, the U'go appears to be a decent buggy, but the folding mechanism is complicated and the harness is fussy to do up. It is fairly compact, pushes well and is quite smooth, even on gravel paths and cobbles. The foam-covered fixed-height handles are ergonomically angled and comfortable, though both they and the back wheels are quite close together, so they won't suit wider or tall people. The hood is fairly small but it's supplied with a large rain cover; unfortunately this takes up a lot of basket space.

It costs £99 and is widely available online. Read more about this and other buggies at www.which.co.uk/pushchairs.

VERDICT It's a decent buggy, but a couple of drawbacks make it less easy to use than our Best Buys.



Blu-ray recording to hit the UK

Panasonic has unveiled the DMR-BS850, the first Blu-ray DVD recorder to launch in the UK. It comes packaged as part of a twin-tuner Freesat PVR with a 500GB hard drive.

It gives you access to Freesat channels (including the HD channels) with the ability to record them to hard disk and then archive the HD content to Blu-ray disc.

The PVR component will perform all the usual PVR tricks, and the 500GB hard drive stores around 250 hours of standard definition TV, but it's the Blu-ray recorder that will attract the most attention. The ability to archive high-definition content will be welcome news to all Freesat viewers. The current Humax Foxsat-HDR offers twin-tuner Freesat recording to hard drive, but there's no facility to archive HD content.

The DMR-BS850 will be BD Live compatible, giving you access to a greater wealth of information from the internet to supplement DVDs. It will be released in the UK later this year and will cost around £999.

Watch our video review of the Panasonic BS850 at www.which.co.uk/bs850.

VERDICT Panasonic has a fantastic AV product record and this is the first Blu-ray recorder on the UK market. It's ideal for high-definition archiving, but it could be expensive.



Frame resolution revolution?

The new 13-inch HD digital photo frame from AgfaPhoto has an incredibly high resolution – 1280x800 – which means picture details show up well on the screen.

On first impression, we found that the images on screen suffer slightly when viewed at very oblique angles and, unfortunately, the attractive metal stand can't be adjusted to help solve this issue. The screen is quite reflective, but the images are bright and can be seen in strong daylight.



The frame can display photos and play video clips and MP3 audio files, though the small speaker on the front is no substitute for a stereo's speaker. It has a calendar and an alarm, 256MB of internal memory and is compatible with a wide range of memory cards. It also has a USB connection.

The controls are at the rear of the screen and are a little slow to respond at times. They align with icons that appear on the screen, but we found it a little tricky to know instinctively which button matches which icon.

The frame will cost around £230 and comes with a choice of three surrounds: glossy black, matt black and silver – all of which seem to be easily scratched.

A 10-inch version is also available, though this has a lower resolution.

VERDICT The large screen is great for detailed pictures and it seems easy to use, but slightly slow to respond and a little expensive.



Asus's shiny Seashell

Asus continues to bring out new versions of its successful Eee PC netbook, and the Eee PC 1008HA Seashell is the latest.

It's becoming trickier to make a netbook stand out, as more and more features have become standard, including wireless networking, Bluetooth, a built-in webcam and microphone, and a keyboard that makes full use of the limited space that such a small computer offers.

Asus has managed to include all these in an unusually sleek and slim casing, with the whole package only weighing slightly more than a kilo – no great burden in your briefcase. The polished casing (watch out for smeary fingerprints) suits the slim design well, and the 10-inch screen seems extra bright and clear thanks to the glossy finish (though this means you will get reflections).

It costs around £380 from Amazon.co.uk.

VERDICT Our full test, due online in July, will find out how well it measures up technically, but if all you want to do is check email or do some word processing on the move, then it should be up to the task.

JUST OUT

A peek at what's new and coming soon in the shops

Aqua Soundz water-proof speakers £42

Amazon.co.uk

Aqua Soundz floating wireless speakers aim to let you enjoy the music from your MP3 player, even when you're relaxing in the pool or the bath. It includes a small transmitter and speaker system. Our first tests found that the transmission range was impressive, but the sound quality wasn't – particularly when compared with similarly priced portable speaker systems we've tested.



Beko CDA565F £400

Currys

Beko has launched the A-rated CDA565F, a frost-free fridge-freezer with a difference. It has more space in the freezer than in the fridge – the ratio of fridge to freezer is 40:60. Beko claims the CDA565F is able to work in room temperatures as low as -15°C – generally fridges and freezers shouldn't be kept in temperatures lower than 10°C, so we will be testing these claims as soon as we can get it into the lab.



AEG Electrolux U88106 oven £850

Magnet, John Lewis and independents

The AEG Electrolux U88106 double oven is an attractive under-counter, stainless steel model. It's classed as very energy efficient – AA – and is said to occupy the same space as a regular single oven. It has only just been released so we haven't had time to test it yet, but AEG Electrolux has a decent pedigree of Best Buy ovens, so we have high hopes for this model in our tests.



DuoWalker pushchair adapters £29 a pair

Independent retailers

EasyWalker claims its new child car seat adapters for the DuoWalker double pushchair are a world first. The adapters allow you to fix two Best Buy Cabriofix Maxi Cosi child car seats to the DuoWalker Sky frame at once.

