

Hotpoint's new Aqualtis washer reaches respectability

Changes for the better

SECOND WASH

The striking two-tone colour scheme and the large, distinctive door of the £350 Hotpoint Aqualtis AQXXL 129 have been turning the heads of potential buyers since its launch last year. However, in January (p49) we told members to avoid buying the Aqualtis, because its cleaning on both the cotton and easy programs was disappointingly poor. After our article was published, we invited representatives from Hotpoint to meet our research team and discuss our results.

Hotpoint suggested that its flagship washing machine had performed poorly because we'd programmed it incorrectly. It believed that the test stains we used, including chocolate and wine, were too heavy for the 40°C program.

We design our tests to mimic use in the home. Each program is chosen in agreement with our independent testers after carefully considering the controls and the

manufacturers' instructions. Our stains are challenging but shouldn't pose major problems for modern machines.

The Aqualtis has shorter main programs designed for cleaning clothes that are lightly soiled – for example, with sweat. We tested the machine's 40°C program for col-



The Aqualtis: getting better

oured loads. But Hotpoint says that if clothes are more heavily stained, consumers should use the whites program and lower the temperature to 40°C. We felt that the manual didn't explain this properly to users, who are unfamiliar with this approach. So we rejected Hotpoint's claims but agreed to take another look if it improved the instructions.

Hotpoint has now changed its instruction manual, so we've re-tested this model using the new instructions and our improved test program. The results show improved cleaning on cotton and easy-care loads.

VERDICT The Hotpoint Aqualtis isn't a Best Buy, but it achieves a respectable 57 per cent score and is no longer a Don't Buy.

See our January 2008 report or visit www.which.co.uk/washing_machines for full results on the Hotpoint Aqualtis and Indesit Moon.

STYLISH INDESIT



A new Moon rising

You don't have to clean the dispenser

In our latest tests we've also tried the eye-catching Indesit Moon. This new washing machine is available for £300 and Indesit hopes its style and simplicity will woo shoppers. Unlike other machines, which have ten to 15 wash programs, this model has just six. We like the innovative self-cleaning detergent dispenser that is fitted to the inside of the porthole opening.

VERDICT The Moon is user friendly and on first impression appears to be best suited to removing light stains, such as deodorant, rather than heavier dirt.

Pre-soaking and scrubbing dishes not yet a thing of the past

Power cleaning pots and pans

FIRST WASH

A dishwasher that saves water, space and time sounds too good to be true – but the PowerClean range from Whirlpool claims to do all this. So we tested the ADP 8000 freestanding model, available for £350.

The PowerClean system uses 32 high-pressure water jets to blast off baked-on food from pots and pans.

Whirlpool claims this is a time- and water-saving alternative to pre-soaking, scrubbing and second wash cycles and that it will even clean burnt lasagne dishes.

We loaded the machine with dirty pots and pans covered with hardened fat, milky hot chocolate and other greasy food. We then ran the main wash program with the PowerClean intensive option. This washed and dried plates and cutlery well, and didn't use too much water, but the pots and pans were still quite dirty at the end of the program.

At three hours, the main program is longer than similar programs on all the machines we've recently tested. Using the PowerClean option saves ten minutes. The energy-save program uses less water and electricity but still washes and dries well.

VERDICT Washing and drying is impressive and the ADP 8000 has some interesting program options. But it's not quite as good as its Best Buy sibling, the ADP 5406 (see November, p58). And you may still need to scrub greasy pots and pans.



New Whirlpool: can save time

35%
of British homes had a
dishwasher in 2005-06
NATIONAL STATISTICS

30 million
number of iPhones expected
to be sold in the US in 2011
ISUPPLI

Why carry five gadgets when one will do?

Smarter than your average phone

SMARTPHONES



From left:
Apple
iPhone,
Blackberry
8300,
Nokia N95,
and Sony
Ericsson P1i

Smartphones combine mobile phones with the functions of handheld computers, allowing you to send and receive emails and documents as well as make calls. As they have moved from business users to become mainstream, many manufacturers have added new functions, such as cameras (see p55) and music players. The latest trend is to include built-in GPS sat-navs (see p62). Smartphones don't have any standard set of features, so we've divided them into four groups.

Phone keypad

We tested four phones that retain the small keypad commonly found on mobile phones. The Nokia E65, N95 and 6110 Navigator, and HP iPaq 514 were all good for calls, but their lack of a proper Qwerty keyboard means that none is suitable for sending long notes. But the Nokias handle all other PDA (personal digital assistant) tasks pretty

well. Of these the N95 has the best multimedia features.

Touch screen

The E-Ten Glofiish X500+, Mio A501, Apple iPhone and HTC P3450 Touch, P3300 and P3600 have a touch screen instead of a keypad. These are good phones, though most disappoint as PDAs because their operating systems allow only limited editing of Office documents and can lack responsiveness. The exception is the iPhone. It's great for handling data, synchronises easily with other applications and has excellent wireless connectivity. It's got a great music player, too.

Qwerty keypad

More traditional smartphones have a proper keypad. Our six models included the 8300 and 8800 from the best known smartphone manufacturer, Blackberry. These models have the best email systems. We

also tested the Nokia E61i and E90 Communicator, the Samsung i600 and the Motorola Q9. The Nokias perform well, although the Communicator is rather large.

Keyboard and touch screen

The HTC X7500 is almost a micro-computer and handles data well. However, it's huge, so is very awkward to use as a mobile phone. The T-Mobile MDA Vario II is slightly smaller, if still pretty large. But the Sony Ericsson P1i is more manageable and generally functions well. The Palm Treo 750 and the E-Ten Glofiish M700 have too many weaknesses, such as allowing only limited editing of Office documents, to be deemed good choices.

VERDICT Which one you go for is a personal decision, as smartphones have so many different functions. See www.which.co.uk/smartphones for full reviews.

Just out

Magellan GPS series

The handheld Triton global-positioning system series targets both leisure walkers and dedicated adventurers. The six models range from the 200 at £100 to £420 for the 2000, which has touch-screen controls, a built-in 2Mp camera and a digital compass. See www.magellangps.com



Sharp microwave £159/179

Sharp says its 900W combination microwave, R879, can roast all meats and can even cook pizza. It has a double quartz grill, three defrosting levels and a 26-litre stainless-steel interior. Available in both white and silver from Argos, Tesco Direct and independents.



Dualit food processor £185/£199

Dualit's debut food processor comes with a 1.5kW motor, three bowls and a sealed-drive system that claims to let you pour straight from the bowl without any leaks. We're testing this now, so watch out for the results in 'First look' soon. Available from Debenhams and John Lewis in cream and white or in polished chrome.



Bose SoundDock Portable £279

This is a new version of the Sound Dock digital music system, primarily designed for iPods. Its slim design, carrying handle and rechargeable battery make it great for music on the move. The dock rotates, so it can be protected when the system is not in use. Available in high-gloss white or black.

