



First look

£170 million

what the UK would save on energy if washing machines were used at 30°C

ENERGY SAVING TRUST

New eco-friendly detergents from Aquados and M&S

Washing the environmental way

LAUNDRY DETERGENTS

The biggest environmental impact of washing your clothes is the amount of energy used. But choosing an eco-friendly detergent also lowers environmental impact – so we have tested new products from Aquados and Marks & Spencer.

M&S claims to have gone through an environmental revolution and has marketed itself recently in a very green way – although a local government report last year said the amount of its recyclable packaging was the lowest of all the major supermarkets.

We tested just its biological powder, as the non-biological version had not been launched when we went to press. The product's packaging is made from 80 per cent recycled cardboard. No optical brightening agents or phosphates are used. We found that it is as effective as Ecover's biological powder. It costs £2.99 for 1kg, giving ten washes at 30p each. The range will

roll out to all stores early this year.

Aquados's Simply Active Biological and Simply Sensitive Non-Biological capsules both contain phosphates. Phosphates in water cause algae to grow aggressively, which, in turn, depletes water of oxygen, thus suffocating fish and

other aquatic life. In a good sewerage system this shouldn't be a problem, as phosphates are removed before effluent makes its way into rivers and the sea. But leaks do happen.

Our tests showed that Aquados's non-biological capsules weren't as effective as Ecover non-biological powder; its biological capsules scored the same overall as Ecover's standard washing powder. Its plastic tubs are made from virgin materials but are totally recyclable. The powders also contain optical brighteners.

They're available from Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Morrisons at £2.99 for 0.75kg which gives 15 washes at 19p each.

SEE ALSO On p56 we look at how well laundry detergents clean at 30°C – and on p62 we test liquid detergents.



M&S powder (left) – looking for a greener market – as is Aquados (right)

WIRELESS SECURITY



A wireless security system that will call you

The AlertMe portable home security and monitoring system claims to be 'people-friendly'. This wireless setup alerts homeowners to any disturbances, via mobile phone and the internet, and negates the need for drilling or professional fitting, being installed within an hour.

The system's sensors report any problems via broadband, while a supplementary alarm listens for existing carbon monoxide or smoke detectors.

Any activity is communicated to the system's servers, which phone, email or text customers. It costs £399 plus a £11.75 monthly service charge.

This is something new to consider for homeowners and renters. More from www.alertme.com

Freeview to broadcast HD

TELEVISION

High-definition (HD) television is currently available only to those who subscribe to a satellite or cable provider. However, that could change over the next few years as the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Five have taken the first steps towards an agreement that will make HD channels available through Freeview – although you will need a new digital box. We'll keep you updated as this news unfolds,



although we expect that it will be at least a couple of years before the service begins to roll out across the country.



Red tape overcome

WIND TURBINE

Our wind turbine is up and running. It was finally installed at the end of October after months of red tape, delays and general tearing out of hair.

Keep an eye out in the future for our overall report on it. In the meantime, the amount given in grants by the government's Low Carbon Buildings Programme for some household solar panels and wind turbines has been cut – this will make it harder for people to afford home power generation of this kind.



PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN TRENHOLM, ALAMY

59%

the decrease in domestic burglaries
in Britain from 1995 to 2005-06

BRITISH CRIME SURVEY

1.2 billion

texts sent each week in the UK
(more than were sent in all of 1999)

MOBILE DATA ASSOCIATION

Panasonic and Canon come up trumps with two great models

Cameras that delight

DIGITAL CAMERAS



On form: Panasonic's new Lumix and Canon's new PowerShot

A small Panasonic and a larger Canon are the latest additions to our list of Best Buy cameras.

The **Panasonic Lumix-FX100**, price £300, joins the growing band of 12Mp compacts. It's neat, with a 28-100mm lens, and is available in black or silver.

The FX100, like all other Panasonic cameras, comes with image stabilisation, but this didn't perform brilliantly.

Overall image quality is better than average. Exceptionally low

levels of distortion mean that it's good for capturing scenes with lots of straight lines, such as buildings or cityscapes.

The 28mm setting also means you have a better chance of fitting everything in. This setting is great for constricted indoor shots, too, and the FX100 also benefits from an excellent flash, although, sadly, there's no face detection.

The 8Mp **Canon PowerShot A720 IS**, price £180, is a replacement for the popular A710 IS,

also a Best Buy. It shares the 35-210mm lens, and has a good image stabilisation system for sharper shots, especially in dim light or when you've zoomed in. One new feature is face detection, which makes taking shots of people much easier.

It has all the important manual adjustments if you want a bit more creative potential – shutter-speed priority, aperture priority and manual focus.

Image quality is average, although where it really stands out is close-up photography. If you like to take tight pictures of flowers, for example, this is a great choice.

It also takes pretty good movies. It's just about bearable if you have big pockets, and weighs 270g.

VERDICT Two great new cameras. Go for the cheaper Canon if you want more versatility.

New year, new phone?

MOBILE PHONES

Our latest mobile phone test has uncovered four Best Buys that may be the answer if it's a case of new year, new phone for you. The **Samsung G600** is a slim slide-style camera phone. Sound and battery life are good, and it's easy to use. It has an impressive music player with an FM radio, and its 5Mp camera draws attention – though its overall quality is not special.

The camera on the **Sony Ericsson W580i** is superior, thanks to its better display. This is surprising, as the W580i is much cheaper than the G600 and is being marketed as a music phone. However, its overall excellent performance is

less of a shock, as it's part of the top-class Walkman range.

Samsung has also released the **D900i**, an updated version of the popular D900 handset. This adds an FM radio and new chrome casing to what was already a pretty impressive device. Battery life and signal strength have been improved.

Sony Ericsson also has the 3G-compatible **T650i**. Sound quality, reception and battery life are all excellent. Its attractive stainless steel case makes it pretty durable, but its tiny buttons can be tricky to operate.

STILL LOOKING? We've got more than 135 other phones at www.which.co.uk/mobilephones



New phones, clockwise from top left: Sony Ericsson's T650i and W580i and Samsung's G600 and D900i

Just out

Philips blender £20

Start your New Year detox with Philips' HR2000 blender, the replacement for April 2006's Best Buy HR1720. This new version has a 400W, three-speed motor with a 1.5-litre removable jug and a five-star blade that can crush ice. Available now from Argos and Amazon.



TomTom Go 920T £399

This new flagship model comes pre-installed with maps of Europe and North America on its 4GB internal memory. It includes enhanced positioning technology, which TomTom claims uses movement and gravity sensors to calculate drivers' positions when GPS signals are unavailable. It has a slim design and soft-touch finish.



Pure Highway £70

Pure's latest digital radio brings DAB to your car. It's powered through the vehicle's cigarette-lighter socket but also takes AA batteries to make it portable. It has FM reception and lets you connect your MP3 player to your car radio. Available now.



Dishwasher tablets

Finish has launched All in 1 tablets (from £2.99 for 14) and Max in 1 (from £3.49 for 12). Max in 1 features wrapperless tablets that claim to give superior results at lower temperatures. Fairy has released its Active Bursts Pure Clean (£6.78 for 28) with a new formula. Fairy says it 'gets rid of the food residue that you can see and the residue you can't'. We're currently testing all three. Results soon.

