



Product news

High technology pounds the streets

Adidas has teamed up with heart-rate monitor specialist Polar to produce an 'integrated training system' – also known as sportswear with gimmicks. We tested one for six weeks

ANY GOOD?

It's not cheap for starters. The RS800SD set, which includes a digital watch to show data, a stride sensor, a heart-rate transmitter and associated software, costs £355. The transmitter is then attached to an item of Adidas clothing that is fitted with sensors.

However, the Adidas range of clothing to house the technology is limited. It includes three men's T-shirts, two bras and a camisole-style top for women and trainers to house the stride sensor. We tried the medium-impact bra, costing £30. But this clothing isn't essential, as Polar supplies straps to fit the equipment to other gear.

The kit is easy to put on and unobtrusive while exercising. The watch looks bulky but is surprisingly comfortable and light. It's easy to set to record your exercise routine and its display can be customised.

It won't make you exercise if you don't want to

The system's major appeal is the software offering a personalised training diary. Click on an individual exercise record and it displays, in graphical form, anything from heart rates at various stages to steps taken and total distance run. The aim is to monitor the data to see whether you're exercising enough to gain the right results.

It's impressively comprehensive, but you should seriously consider if you really need this amount and type of information. It won't make you exercise if you don't want to. Our tester, a regular runner, found that the novelty swiftly wore off.

VERDICT It gives fascinating insight into your fitness but in probably too much detail. The clothing is nice but not essential. Overall we think this is an expensive gadget with limited benefit.



Stylish – but an expensive gadget

A lean, green electric machine

ECO TRANSPORT

Town travel goes greener with the unique Vectrix – a stylish, electrically powered scooter.

The controls are mostly typical. The throttle works as you'd expect. Twisting it towards you accelerates the bike with enough power to zip away from lights. Twisting it away activates the regenerative braking, reclaiming some of the energy of motion to recharge the batteries.

In general, this braking is all you need to control your speed. Our tester used the conventional brakes, strong and consistent at all speeds, only for stopping quickly or to stand still at a junction.

It's smart, too: if regenerative braking is used when stationary, the bike will reverse, so making man-



Vectrix – quiet but with the looks of a traditional scooter

oeuvring into parking spaces very simple. It is easy to ride, and stable even at low speeds. The electric motor means the ride is smooth and quiet – so quiet it's totally silent at junctions. It is easier to ride than a geared bike and smoother than a petrol model. It has a 125cc classification and a top speed of 62mph. Two hours' full charging from a standard socket will power up the batteries to 80 per cent. A helmet can be stored under the seat.

It costs £6,000 and is available from this month. Contact Vectrix for details – 01962 777600 or www.vectrix.co.uk.

VERDICT Ideal for towns only as it has a maximum distance of 68 miles at an average 25mph.



Yes – the horseshoe gadget's in there

Swiss on a roll

GADGETEER

It's the ultimate lads' gadget – a Swiss Army knife with a mere 85 tools. The Wenger Giant is truly fit for every purpose life can throw at you – from outdoor survival to the office and even includes a cigar cutter. But should one use the laser or telescopic pointer at meetings? Available for £495 from www.swiss-army-tools.com.

6%

of people looking to buy a greener car in Jan 2006

AA PERSONAL LOANS

17%

of people looking to buy a greener car in Oct 2006

AA PERSONAL LOANS

4%

of European cars will be hybrid by the end of 2009

BUYER REPORT

PS3 aims for battle royal with its rivals

We import and test Sony's new games console that will take on the Wii and Xbox 360

FIRST LOOK

The PS3 is large, black and stylish – but quiet when running. It's an enormously powerful console that can produce some spectacular graphics. And, when connected to a high-definition TV, its games can be glorious and frighteningly real in appearance – with the controller's motion sensors adding to the experience.

The stand-out title is *Motorstorm* but there are currently few great games, though more should start to emerge soon.

Games consoles are more like personal computers these days and the PS3 has a web browser to allow game downloads.

You can also play online against others, view DVDs, photos and movie clips, or listen to music. While this all works well, the menus are a little unclear, particularly if you are sitting some distance from your TV.

Games can be glorious on a high-definition television



PS3 – large and stylish, but quiet

In the new format wars, the PS3 plays Blu-ray DVDs, though the Xbox 360 has gone for the rival HD-DVD. It's not clear which format will win, so it's hard to say how much it should influence your buying decision. It is launched on 23 March.

VERDICT The PS3 is impressive and matches its rivals. The 60GB model is £425 and games will cost about £50.

Just out

Olympus MJU 770 SW

Could this be the perfect camera for survival guru Ray Mears? It is waterproof to a depth of ten metres; it can be dropped from a height of one and a half metres; it is crushproof against 100kg; and, if that's not tough enough, it can be used in temperatures as low as -10°C. Priced at £300. More information at www.olympus.co.uk



Canon ES1

Printers aren't renowned for their stylish good looks but this £190 model from Canon may be about to buck the trend. It also takes a new cartridge containing both ink and paper in one unit. Read our verdict in July's *Which?*. It is on sale at Comet and PC World.



Kitchen colours

Simmer in sepia or poach in purple? Provide Britannia with any colour sample and its Colourange service will help co-ordinate your kitchen – including colour-matching selected cookers and cooker hoods. Prices start from £3,499. See www.britannialiving.co.uk



Is it worth it? Yes

Taking out travel insurance is an essential part of going on holiday, but prices vary hugely.

Our report on travel insurance (see 'Holiday cover', October 2006, p30) said that the Best Buys for a 15-day trip to Europe and a worldwide annual policy valid for trips up to 31 days, for

travellers up to the age of 49, were both from online company Travel Insurance Web.

Many people take out travel insurance with their bank, but how much can you save now if you go for a policy with Travel Insurance Web rather than one of the big four banks, such as HSBC?



VERDICT

Single trip, 15 days in Europe

HSBC (online) £36
Travel Insurance Web £8

SAVING £28



VERDICT

Annual, worldwide

HSBC (online) £77
Travel Insurance Web £38

SAVING £39

CORRECT: 6 FEBRUARY

Nokia 330 Auto-Nav

The Finnish mobile phone giant's first-ever dedicated sat-nav, the 330 Auto Navigation, comes with Europe-wide maps. The portable device also incorporates a music player while its 3.5-inch colour touch screen doubles as a video player and photo viewer. More on price and availability at nokia.co.uk

