



Best Buy presents

We've sorted through the thousands of products tested by our experts over the past year to come up with perfect Best Buys for every Christmas budget

With Christmas fast approaching and purse strings tightening, for most of us spending wisely is a top priority. Fortunately, finding the best presents at competitive prices doesn't nec-

essarily mean compromising on quality. If you're stuck for ideas, take a look at these choice Best Buys from 2008.

And the good news is that with retailers clamouring for your custom, there are

bargains to be had for the savvy shopper. You can keep an eye on all our Best Buys in the run up to Christmas by logging on to www.whichcompare.co.uk and comparing up-to-date prices from dozens of stores.

£30 and under

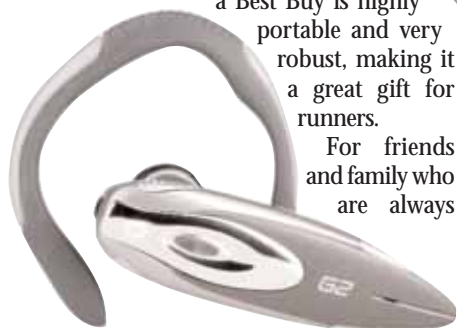
On a budget? Here are some bargain Best Buys that are sure to impress



Some of our favourite tech gadgets make perfect gifts, at a fraction of the price you might expect. The terrific **SA2820** (above) from Philips is a tiny MP3 player, and with a similarly small price – £30 at Comet – it's also budget-friendly. There are trade-offs for its compact dimensions – notably its inability to play video clips, and its small memory – but this 2GB slip of a Best Buy is highly

portable and very robust, making it a great gift for runners.

For friends and family who are always

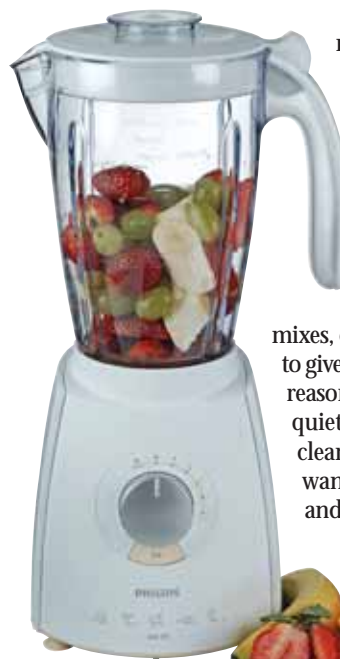


on the go, a Bluetooth headset should help make multitasking easier. For £27 on Amazon.co.uk, the **Jabra BT5020** (bottom left) is a Best Buy headset that sends and receives loud and clear speech transmission using Bluetooth 2.0, which allows a quicker transfer of information. We found that it isn't too badly affected by ambient noise levels.

Anyone whose home is littered with remotes will benefit from owning a universal remote control. Priced at £23 from Pixmania.co.uk, One For

All's well-designed **Comfort Grip URC7950** remote (left) is a simple solution for controlling up to five devices.

But if you want to really blow your loved one away, why not get them a Best Buy hairdryer? The **Philips TreSemme Salon Control Ion Shine** (below) delivers fabulous styling results and is a great choice, particularly for those who like to style their hair slowly and carefully. Eight out of 10 of our testers said this hairdryer, which is available for £20 on Amazon.co.uk, left their hair smooth, with one commenting: 'even after one go I knew this was a product I would buy'. It also has an ionic function, which our testers thought



made a tangible difference to their hair.

You might not look to kitchen appliances when buying bargain gifts to impress, but we've found a great blender for only £30 at Argos. The **Philips HR2067 Multi Blender** (left) blends, mixes, chops and purees with ease to give excellent results, yet it's very reasonably priced. It's also quick, quiet and one of the easiest to clean. It's great for anyone who wants to rustle up smoothies and shakes, but we also have a more advanced model (see '£51-£100') that would make a good gift for food fans with more complex blending needs.

£31-£50

Stepping up a price bracket, we've got gift ideas from binoculars to breadmakers



If you're looking to splash out a little more, we've found a range of impressive – and unusual – ideas for presents that would look great under any Christmas tree.

Digital cameras rank among the top Christmas gifts this year. Costing just £50 at Argos and Jessops, the **Canon Powershot A470** (above left) combines quality with value, making it an





affordable Best Buy camera. This versatile model is a decent choice for anyone looking to start out in digital photography.

Outdoor types and bird watchers will find the **Opticron Vega 8x25** (above) Best Buy compact binoculars just the thing. Priced at £49 in Jessops, they performed well in our tests, with setup and adjustment rated highly by our experts. Optical performance was very good, with exceptional light transmission, so they're ideal for zooming in on detail.

Know someone who spends a lot of time on the phone? We think they'll love the stylish **Motorola D801 cordless phone** (above). A Best Buy single handset costing £43 on Amazon.co.uk, it's easy to use, with a good range. There's no answering machine, but it does have several advanced features including a Sim-card reader and the ability to send and receive text messages.

If your friends and family prefer to listen rather than talk, perhaps they'd appreciate a pair of Best Buy headphones. The **Sennheiser CX 400 headphones** (left) offer great sound quality and come with three sets of removable silicone pads to improve comfort. And as these headphones, which cost £50 at the Apple Store, are available in black, white, silver, aqua and dark red, there's a colour to suit everyone's style.

For shared listening, the **Pure One DAB radio** (right)



ONLINE

Listen to our Podcast on the hottest gifts for Christmas this year at www.which.co.uk/podcast

BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED

Need to power up your new Christmas gadget? We've tested AA and AAA disposable batteries

The top performers were the pricey **Energizer Ultimate Lithium** (AA and AAA) – £6.99 for a pack of four – which scored full marks in all our tests.

If you want a less expensive battery, the following were all Best Buys: **Panasonic Evoia**

(AA and AAA) at £3.49; **Duracell Plus** (AA and AAA) at £2.88; **Energizer Ultimate** (AAA) at £4.99; and **Duracell Ultra** (AAA) at £3.49. For a bargain Best Buy, look to **Morrison's Extra Long Life batteries** (AA) at only £1.69 for four.

For full details and Best Buy rechargeable batteries go to www.which.co.uk/batteries or see *Which?* November 2008, p55.



proves that cheap doesn't have to mean nasty. Our listening panel thought that sound quality on this £50 digital radio was good, and gardeners and DIY enthusiasts will like its small dimensions and light weight, which makes it easy to carry. Available in white, black and pink, the Pure One is a fantastic entry-level DAB radio (see '£51-£100' for a more advanced model) with some interesting features.

The switchover to digital TV has already begun – if you know someone who is yet to make the move from analogue, they might like to receive a Freeview set-top box this Christmas. Freeview is a digital TV service that comes through your normal aerial – once you have a set-top box to decode the digital signal, the TV shows are free (see our report on

recording from TV, p50, for more). The £40 **TVonics MDR-250** (above) is a Best Buy set-top box that's about the size of a paperback, and it can connect to any TV whether it has a Scart input or not.

For any foodies in your life, a bread-maker is a hassle-free route to delicious fresh bread, made with the ingredients of their choosing. Manufacturer Morphy Richards reigns supreme when it comes to Best Buy breadmakers, and its **48245 Compact** model (left) is a bargain at just £40 from Coopelectricalshop.co.uk. It bakes excellent bread and comes with a couple of handy features that make it easy to use.

For those who like their juice freshly squeezed, a Best Buy juicer could be in order. **Breville's JE24** juicer (right) produces an excellent yield of juice and does so at break-neck speed, making this a great choice. This sturdy-looking twin-speed juicer costs £50 at John Lewis and Currys, and is quite straightforward to use.



£51-100

If you're happy to splash out a little more, you can spoil your loved ones with these gadgets

In this price range, your money can stretch beyond entry-level cordless phones. The fantastic **Siemens Gigaset C475 twin** (right) was the highest-rated model in our latest batch of testing and a clear Best Buy. It's well equipped and has an excellent battery and answering machine. Even more impressive, Siemens has delivered a two-handset package at the low price of £70 at John Lewis.

Speaking of upgrades, you'll also find the **Roberts RD-46 Gemini** (right) – a step-up from the Pure One DAB – impresses. It might not be the prettiest radio we've ever tested, but the RD-46 is a quality model that produces a good sound for the reasonable price of £70 at John Lewis.

Still on the subject of listening pleasures, the **Sony NWZ-A815 MP3 player** (right) excels in almost every department. The sound quality on this 2GB music player is very good, producing great bass even with the supplied headphones. The high-quality display boasts decent viewing angles, despite being a bit small for watching long movies. It costs £55 at Argos.

Back in the kitchen, more sophisticated chefs would appreciate the gift of a **Philips HR2094** blender (left). At £70 in John Lewis, this Best Buy is



more expensive than the budget Philips model, but it's great at all blending tasks. A slick model that's easy to use, it makes excellent purées, smoothies and shakes, and good mayonnaise.

More than £100

If you're going to blow the budget, do it in style with these luxury Best Buys

If you do intend to spend a little more, a digital camera is another product where that extra outlay could prove worthwhile.

For consistently good photos when shooting both indoors and out, the 10Mp Best Buy **Casio Exilim EX-Z1080** (right) delivers, both with or without the flash, and in either fully automatic mode or when using the basic manual adjustment functions.

It has a 38-114mm zoom and 11.4MB of internal memory. We found that the movie quality is good for a camera of this class, and even the camera's more advanced settings are generally easy to use. It costs £140 at Argos.

When it comes to music on the go, there's frequently one player at the top of people's wishlists – Apple's iPod. The **iPod Nano** (below) recently underwent a revamp and this new incarnation is just as easy to use as the old Best Buy model, and the sound quality is still very impressive.

Apple has returned to the original long, thin shape, and a change in appearance isn't the only development – there's also a larger memory, an automatic playlist creator and even shake-sensitive controls. The 8GB model is widely available for £109.

While big-screen TVs are likely to be beyond all but the most extravagant



Christmas budgets, a Best Buy small flat-panel TV is another matter. The 20-inch **KDL-20S3000** (above) from Sony is one of the better smaller-screened LCD TVs around. It costs £289 at Currys and Argos, did well in both our viewing and listening tests, and has loads of easy-to-use features.

If they're happy with the TV they've got, they might want something to watch on it. Freesat is the digital satellite TV service from the BBC and ITV that launched in May and is available to 98% of the population (compared with 75% for Freeview). Once you've paid for the set-top box, satellite dish and installation, there are no ongoing monthly subscription costs (see our report on recording from TV, p50, for more).

Costing £150 at Comet and Argos, the **Humax Foxxsat HD set-top box** (below) is the best Freesat box available, with good HD picture quality and decent SD pictures via both Scart and HDMI. It's also easy to set up and use.



If your loved one can't function without their morning caffeine fix, the stylish stainless-steel **DeLonghi EC330** could prove ideal – and at only £100 at Argos, it's also exceptional value. It gives excellent results using both ground coffee and pre-packed coffee pods, and is a great Best Buy for those who prefer coffee with a robust espresso aroma. For more Best Buy coffee machines, see p66.

BEST BUY COMPETITION

£500 worth of Which? Best Buys of your choice

With Christmas around the corner we are offering you the chance to win your choice of £500 worth of Best Buys from the December 2008 issue of Which? magazine.

TO ENTER, SIMPLY ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION

How big is the memory of the Philips SA2820 MP3 player?

(a) 1GB (b) 4GB (c) 2GB

Worth £500



To enter our Best Buy competition, go to www.which.co.uk/bestbuycompetition or send your entry on a postcard to 'Best Buy December 08', Which?, PO Box 44, Hertford X, SG14 1SH. Include your name, address and postcode, daytime phone number and Which? membership number (on your Which? membership card as your user name). Entries received by 11 December 2008 will be entered.

Winners will be informed in writing 15 days after the closing date. To claim a prize you must contact us, and your claim be received by us, by midnight 20 days after. If we do not hear from you by the deadline we shall select another winner(s).

Upon claiming the prize the winner can choose the item(s) of their choice, subject

to availability and providing the total purchase value does not exceed £500.00. Everything selected must have a Best Buy icon attached, and there is no cash equivalent of the prize available.

Our competition is open only to current Which? members. Those under 18 years of age and employees of Which? Ltd, its associated companies and suppliers are not eligible to enter any Which? competition. Members of their immediate families (namely spouse, children, parents, siblings) are also ineligible, as is anyone living in the employee's household.

Editor's decision is final. Which? reserves the right to feature names, photographs and towns of winners in future promotions.

Winter sun Stuff the Christmas turkey and follow Which? Holiday's guide to the nearest sunshine

Want to get away from the Christmas madness altogether? The seasoned travellers at Which? Holiday reveal their tips for where to trade the stress of the festive season for some winter sun. All the destinations listed are less than three hours' flight away.



The Algarve

Sandy beaches and a golf course within 10 minutes of every major resort. No wonder the Algarve (above) remains a firm favourite.

Costa Blanca

Bingo in Benidorm, golden beaches and historic Valencia on the doorstep. Bring a cardie for the cooler evenings.



Costa del Sol

Sea, sand, sun and something for most tastes, from rustic whitewashed Nerja to the ever-lively Torremolinos.

Mallorca

Relaxation is the key thanks to the mild winter temperatures and crystal clear waters of a winter in Mallorca (above).

Malta

Beaches and resorts are in short supply, but culture vultures should flock to Valletta (right) and Mdina.

Tunisia

A rich mix of culture and history, from Roman ruins to Islamic gems and Berber villages.

Turkey

From big and busy Bodrum to petite and bijou Kafi, the beaches of southwest Turkey are the perfect antidote to a hectic British Christmas.

For information on deals and prices, save time and check out some price comparison sites. Sites such as www.traveljungle.co.uk and www.travelsupermarket.com offer a good guide to what's available, but they're not totally comprehensive.

