

# [all change]

We review new products



## Keeping it fresh

Braun has come up with a new accessory for its hand-held blenders – a click-on vacuum attachment that removes the air from special glass containers to 'maintain the freshness of your food longer'.

We asked eight volunteers to try the Multiquick Fresh System handblender (£100), which comes with vacuum adaptor and two Freshware containers. All our testers liked the



Fresher food with Braun's new system?

blender (similar models scored highly when tested in January 2003). Overall, they found the vacuum adaptor easy to use. They stored foods such as bagels, guacamole, fruit, hummus and salad, and most felt it kept food fresher.

You can buy the vacuum adaptor (£14) and containers (from £14) separately from John Lewis. However, they're compatible only with the 5000 handblender series. For other stockists, call Braun on 0800 7837010.

# Clash of the consoles

It's being billed as the battle of the hand-held games consoles but it's a bit of a mismatch, as the two machines are almost too different to compare.

Sony has attempted to recreate the graphical quality of the Playstation 2 in a hand-held console, whereas Nintendo's new Gameboy has two displays and a pen and touchscreen control method.

The wide screen of the Sony Playstation Portable (PSP) is, frankly, stunning to look at. Because you are holding it close to your face, it fills your vision and is comparable to playing games on a large TV screen. The double-screen Nintendo takes a bit of getting used to, with some games requiring you to

look at both screens while using the lower touch-sensitive screen for control.

Because they're new products, there are few games for either console at the moment, although the Nintendo is compatible with the Gameboy Advance games. Ridgeracers, on the PSP, is impressive, as it has incredible graphics. The standout game on the Nintendo was WarioWare Touched! – excellent fun, if a little difficult to describe (it's a rapid-fire compendium of small games). The stylus control works well, is innovative, and may well appeal to people who aren't normally keen on video games.

PHOTOGRAPHY NICK WRIGHT

## New LCD TV from Sharp

They're small, stylish and portable. Liquid crystal display (LCD) TVs are becoming more popular, particularly those with 15- and 17-inch screens. Sharp's new LCD TV – the LC-15SH1E – wasn't around in time to be

included in last month's report (see 'Small LCD TVs', *Which?*, April 2005, p48).

However, having tested it, we've found it's not as good as our Best Buys: its picture and sound fail to match the Sony KLV-17HR3 and the Philips 17PF9946.

It got average ratings for quality of still images (such as digital photos), ease of use and Teletext. It has well-placed front-panel controls, with clear labelling, but its remote control is tricky to use as the navigation keys are flat. Also, switching channels is

slow. It has audio outputs so you can connect it to a hi-fi, but it has no PC input, so you can't use it as a computer monitor.

So, if you're interested in a portable LCD TV, we'd recommend you stick to our Best Buys – see the table, below.

### LCD TVs

| MODEL                   | Performance |         |       |        | Convenience |      | Score (%) |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------|-------|--------|-------------|------|-----------|
|                         | Price (£)   | Picture | Sound | Stills | Ease of use | Text |           |
| <b>Sony KLV-17HR3</b>   | 650         | ☆       | ☆     | ☆      | ○           | ○    | <b>63</b> |
| <b>Philips 17PF9946</b> | 400         | ☆       | ☆     | ○      | ○           | ☆    | <b>62</b> |
| <b>Sharp LC-15SH1E</b>  | 400         | ○       | ○     | ○      | ○           | ○    | 52        |

### KEY

★ ☆ ○ ● ●  
Best Worst  
■ Best Buy



The new Sony Playstation Portable, left, recreates stunning graphics in a hand-held format, while Nintendo's new Gameboy, far left, features two screens and stylus control

The Sony can play back videos from its memory card or discs that will be sold separately. You can also view photos and listen to music on it, making it a great all-rounder.

Both machines are wireless, like modern laptops, which means that you can play against others who also own them.

Overall, the PSP was preferred by our testers. The Nintendo is definitely the quirkier machine and might take a bit of getting used to. It does have the advantage of being available in the shops as you read this (£100 on the high street), whereas the Sony may not be released until September or even Christmas. If you can't wait, import one, like we did, from [www.lik-sang.com](http://www.lik-sang.com). Prices start at £149, although you may be charged import duty on top.



Sharp's new LCD TV lost the battle in our tests

## Smart-Scart

There's a host of equipment that we hook up to our TVs these days – DVD players and recorders, set-top boxes and VCRs. Most require a TV Scart input to link them up and it's easy to run out of sockets.

A multiple Scart adaptor with a switchable output is one solution. However, you have to switch manually between devices, which is a bit of a pain.

The Bluedelta Smart-Scart is the first adaptor we've seen that switches between devices automatically, and it works pretty well. It's a mains-

powered device with four Scart inputs. When it detects signals on more than one input – say both your DVD player and set-top box are switched on – it uses a priority system for deciding which device to route through to the TV. Input four has priority over input three, which has priority over two, which has priority over one. The instructions give good connection diagrams for six possible combinations and there are more examples on the website ([www.smart-scart.com](http://www.smart-scart.com)). It also allows you to record from one machine while watching from a third – for example, you can record from your TV

to your VCR while watching a DVD.

In our tests it did as it claimed, though we do think that the lack of a manual override could be a drawback, particularly while you're getting used to the system. If, for example, you've connected a DVD player into a high-priority input, the player will monopolise the device even when it isn't playing – so you'll have to switch it to standby before it will 'release' the Smart-Scart for other equipment. A manual override would cater for those moments when you're not sure what the device is doing.

All in all, it's a useful device if you find your TV is running out of Scart sockets. It costs £39 (inc p&p) from [www.smart-scart.com](http://www.smart-scart.com)



The Smart-Scart allows you to plug several devices into your TV at once

## Dyson – The Ball

Four and a half years in the making, the latest Dyson DC15 upright vac, known as The Ball, is curiously reminiscent of one of James Dyson's first products – his 1974 Ballbarrow (a wheelbarrow).

Instead of using wheels, this new vac rests on a ball, the idea being that this makes it easier to manoeuvre than other uprights.

We've whisked one off to our test lab but, in the

meantime, we enlisted 23 volunteers to try it out.

Comparing it with another Dyson upright – the DC07 – most testers agreed The Ball is easier to control. But some found it large, unwieldy and very heavy to use. For full technical results, see next month's *All Change*.

Is Dyson on a roll with The Ball? Find out next month

