

[product news]

One-off reviews of recent launches

A-rated drier impresses

Although it's common for washing machines and dishwashers to have A-ratings for energy efficiency, tumble driers lag far behind. It takes six times more energy to dry a 6kg load of cottons than it does to wash them and, until now, most driers have had a C-rating for energy efficiency. The White Knight CL847, the first A-rated model we tested back in 2003, took seven hours to dry on its low-energy program, which was somewhat impractical.

Luckily, a new generation of A- and B-rated driers is on the way and the first we've tested, the AEG-Electrolux T59800, has shot to the top of our condenser driers Best Buy table. This drier uses heat pump technology, a bit like a fridge in reverse, to provide the heat for drying.

Overall, this is a good machine; it dries swiftly and evenly and is easy to use. It uses a third less energy than our other Best Buys (see table, below)

without making drying times any longer. The wide variety of programs includes one for leisure wear, which did a good job of drying a full load of jeans.

It's not entirely perfect, though. Cleaning the filter that protects the heat pump is tedious, as you have to dismantle and reassemble the filter cartridge. As a sensor drier, it chooses its own drying times based on the humidity of the load. We found it overdried clothes slightly on the recommended programs. But you can adjust the level of dryness or choose a damper sensor programme if you find that your clothes come out a bit stiff. In addition, although it traps an adequate amount of the water from your load, it doesn't trap as much as the other Best Buy condenser driers, so it's best used in a well-ventilated room. It costs £500 online.

Verdict A good machine and a definite step in the right direction for energy-hungry tumble driers.



SCORE

Ignores price and is based on:

Drying time and energy consumption	45%
Ease of use	17.5%
Trapping water	15%
Evenness of drying	10%
Creases	7.5%
Noise	5%

Best Buy condenser driers	Specification				Performance		Use				Score (%)
	Price (£)	Sensor	Full load (kg)	Size hxxwxd (cm)	Drying times	Evenness	Water caught	Ease of use	Noise	Energy used	
MODEL											
1 AEG-Electrolux T59800	500	✓	6	85x60x62	★	★	○	★	○	★	65
2 Miele T4262C	550	✓	6	85x60x58	○	★	★	★	★	○	65
3 AEG-Electrolux T56800	400	✓	6	85x60x63	★	★	★	★	★	○	61

Kitchen scales that work out the calories

As well as weighing ingredients, the Salter Nutri-Weigh Dietary Computer Scale also tells you their nutritional content. We asked five people who were either on a diet or who had an interest in their diet to try it out. They weren't convinced.

The scale has a database that stores the

nutritional values – including salt, fat, carbohydrate and calorie content – of more than 1,430 foods. However, many products vary depending on type and brand and this isn't always catered for in the database (for example, the fat content of own-brand pork sausages can vary between 8.2g and

Nice idea – but time consuming to use



26g per 100g). You can add foods into the database but to enter everything you eat could take hours.

Although our triallists liked the idea of the scale, they all agreed that it was time consuming to use. Another niggles was that the buttons sometimes registered twice or not



USING THE TABLE Specification

Price We give the cheapest, widely available price as we went to press. Online price in *italics*.
Sensor Automatically chooses the drying time.

Performance

Drying times Overall times for drying four different types of load, including cottons and synthetics.
Evenness The worst driers leave some items soggy and others bone dry.

Use

Water caught How little water from the washing escapes out of the drier and into the room.
Ease of use Ease of loading, programming and cleaning the water bottle, lint filters and heat exchangers.

A PVR and DVD recorder in one

Personal video recorders (PVRs) make recording from TV a cinch. All you do is select a show from the on-screen electronic programme guide (EPG), and it then records on to an internal hard drive. All the PVRs we've tested so far have been Best Buys (see 'PVRs', *Which?*, Dec 2005, p70). Our only grumble is that, once the memory is full, you either have to delete some of your recordings or transfer them to a separate VCR or DVD recorder.

That is, until now. The Sony RDR-HXD710 combines a DVD recorder, Freeview tuner, and a built-in hard drive capable of storing around 80 hours of television. So if you've recorded the

entire series of *Doctor Who* and want a permanent copy for future viewing, you can simply transfer it from the PVR to DVD. Even better, the Sony also allows you to edit what you've recorded – for example, you can delete the credits or merge a two-part episode. It has a three-minute buffer when recording, so if the show starts a little early or runs a little over, you won't miss a thing. However, it can't cope with any major schedule changes.

Picture and sound quality of recordings is superb – as good as live TV. We also liked the recording quality of the DVD recorder. Considering the number of features the machine has, it is pretty easy to set up and use. Once you've picked up

the basics of working the various menus, some of the more advanced features are intuitive. This is just as well, as the accompanying manual is daunting and the remote control is poorly designed and over cluttered.

There are a few other niggles. Its single digital tuner means you can't record one digital channel and watch another. It can't record subtitles, and it can't receive Top-up TV. At £499 from Comet it's pricey, although a cheaper version with a smaller hard drive is available.

Verdict On first impressions, a good machine that combines the versatility of a PVR with the convenience of saving your recordings to DVD.



The Sony PVR/DVD recorder is an excellent machine

Roundup

NEW CAMERA PHONES

We've just tested some new camera phones: the Sharp 903 has a 3.2Mp lens and the Nokia N90 boasts Carl Zeiss optics. They're both 3G models and great for digital snapping, but a little bulky and not up to the standard of the Best Buy Sony Ericsson k750i. Check out full results on www.which.co.uk/mobilephones



The pocket-sized Game Boy Micro

GAME BOY MICRO

Measuring just 101x50x17mm, the Game Boy Micro is a smaller version of the Game Boy. After hours of *Pokemon*, we can report that it's no less comfortable to play than a normal Game Boy, and that the screen is bright and clear despite being small. We give it a slightly sore thumbs-up.

XBOX 360

Microsoft's replacement for the Xbox, the Xbox 360, came out last month – turn to p49 to see what makes it special. To find out whether it offers a genuine step forward, read our review in February's issue.

the gadgeteer

Gadgeteer #16 Teddyfone

What better way for a child to enter the world of mobile communications than with a phone shaped like a teddy? Aimed at children between four and ten, the phone has no keypad, so kids must select one of three pre-programmed numbers – enough for mum, dad and grandma (anyone can call the phone if they have the number). The canny parent will buy a Teddyfone for their child but claim it's a talking teddy. Then it can be used as a method of control: 'Hello, Johnny, Teddy here, remember to tidy your room, or you'll upset Teddy! Let the psychiatrists sort it out in 30 years' time. See www.teddyfone.com for more information.



at all. Four out of five of our trialists said they didn't think the scale was good value and they wouldn't buy it. It costs £95 from John Lewis.

Verdict Fiddly to use and the information isn't always accurate. Use the values on labels and keep a food diary instead.