

Bargains for all seasons

Money saving should be a regular habit – so this month we advise on ways you can get great value, from current accounts through to toasters



Keep an eye on everything you spend – whether by switching financial products regularly or by checking on any extra charges on purchases

1 You can spend a fortune on the latest hi-tech gizmos, but there are always bargains for the careful shopper.

For photographers, the Canon Powershot A460 (below) is great value at £90. It missed out on being a Best Buy as it doesn't have many advanced features. However, it's a good all-rounder, is quite light and has a decent zoom for its size. Image quality is OK and focusing is reasonably sharp. It's worth replacing the supplied alkaline batteries with a set of rechargeables if you plan to use it regularly.



viewing, while the sound quality was pretty good, too. It's fairly simple to use, though the layout of the remote control could be better.

We gave the Pure One digital radio an 'Exceptional Value' label when we reviewed it in November 2006, and it's still a great deal. The model proves that, at £50, cheap doesn't have to mean nasty. Our listening panel thought that sound quality was 'detailed' with 'good clarity'. It's also small and light, making it easy to carry around your house and garden.

Sony's DVPNS15 is currently the best DVD player on test and, at £45, is half the price of some of its rivals. When we tested it in June, our expert panel found that it rated highly for

2 One of the best ways to ensure you are getting the best deal with money products is to regularly switch financial providers. Some current accounts give cash bonuses when you join, such as the £100 offered by First Direct when you pay in £1,500 a month for the first three months, although you should maintain this to avoid charges. Look out, too, for competitive interest rates, such as our Best Buy Alliance & Leicester current account, which offers 6.5 per cent on credit balances. New offers are always appearing – and it's usually easy to switch.



4 There are always good money-saving tips to try when it comes to washing. Laundry appliances with timer delays allow you to use night-time Economy7 power. Using eco programs will use less power and water, though they do tend to run for longer periods of time. An appliance with fuzzy logic will use only as much water as is necessary, so it will stop using water as soon as laundry or crockery is free from dirt. Models that don't have it use a specific amount of water, even if the garments/plates are clean.



3 Bargains on small domestic appliances such as toasters can be found around holiday times when some promotions take place. There are also discounts at the end of a catalogue cycle when shops are clearing their end-of-line stock. Among current good offers are the Best Buy Kenwood toaster TT560 (shown and £19.99 in Comet), and the Best Buy Prima PS0003 slow cooker from Robert Dyas (£13), which can provide a healthy and good-value meal when you get home after work.



5 When buying a large household product, it's important to remember to check for extra charges and services. We looked for a Best Buy AEG-Electrolux L16830 washer-dryer (see report, p56). The best deal was £479 plus free delivery at John Lewis. It also offered a two-year warranty and would pick up and recycle an old appliance for £9. It will provide installation, upon request, at a cost of £25.

Currys also offered a handy £480, but with just a standard one-year warranty. It had an option to install your new machine for just £8.96 and would recycle your old one free – but charged £19.95 for delivery. We all have different needs – so do your sums before buying.

John Lewis