

## NOTEBOOK ROUNDUP

## LAP DANCE

It's back-to-school season, and that can mean only one thing: great computer deals | BY JOSHUA GOLDMAN

**F**ORGET THE KIDS—WHEN THE likes of Best Buy offer great back-to-school deals on laptops, it's *you* who benefits. Today's laptops have the same capabilities (and power) as many of their desktop counterparts but take up a fraction of the space.

When it comes to buying one, there are two key factors most people consider: weight and price. If you travel a lot, opt for something lighter than four pounds (unless you enjoy lugging things around). Going smaller can help in other ways as well—as a rule of thumb, the bigger the

notebook, the shorter the battery life.

As for price, compared with desktops, notebooks aren't cheap—a good one will cost you at least \$1,000. But luckily, since people won't carry something ugly, at least you get a sleek-looking machine for all those hard-earned dollars.

Make sure the laptop you buy meets the following requirements

SPECS TO CHECK

**PROCESSOR**

Intel Pentium M or AMD Turion 64 for PCs, G4 for Macs (get as fast a speed as your wallet allows)

**MEMORY**

A minimum of 512 megabytes

**HARD DRIVE**

60 gigabytes or more

**OPTICAL DRIVE**

Unless you're making movies, a DVD-playing, CD-burning drive is plenty

**PORTS**

USB 2.0 and FireWire (aka 1394)—the more, the merrier

**WIRELESS NETWORKING**

Look for it built in; 802.11g is ideal

**WARRANTY**

Don't skimp—get as much as you can afford

**SONY VAIO T350P, \$2,300**

It's small and has a long battery life, but it's the built-in wireless radio, which lets you surf the Web on Cingular's high-speed cellular network, that makes this Vaio the road warrior's ultimate tool. [sonystyle.com](http://sonystyle.com)

**ALIENWARE AREA-51M 7700, \$1,999**

This gaming powerhouse uses the most advanced graphics card, which means it will play the latest and most demanding games with ease. Its backbreaking heft, however, makes it an unlikely travel companion. [alienware.com](http://alienware.com)

**DELL INSPIRON 700M, \$999**

The epitome of always-on-the-go computing, the 700M features a bright, 12.1-inch screen, weighs only 4.1 pounds, and is just 1.5 inches thick. [dell.com](http://dell.com)

**PANASONIC TOUGHBOOK W2, \$2,300**

Encased in magnesium alloy, the 2.8-pound, semirugged W2 is as strong as it is light. It has an anti-shock hard drive and can take a one-foot drop onto the floor. [panasonic.com](http://panasonic.com)



**APPLE  
POWERBOOK  
G4, \$1,999**

The PowerBook offers more than good looks. The current 15-inch model has a large wide-screen display and a superfast DVD burner and uses the most reliable operating system, Mac OS X.

[apple.com](http://apple.com)



**TOSHIBA  
QOSMIO G25-  
AV513, \$2,999**

The Qosmio G25 (pronounced cos-mee-oh) features a built-in TV tuner, a bright, 17-inch wide-screen display, and impressive speakers (for a laptop). It's the finest portable entertainment center around—and yes, it'll handle spreadsheets, too.

[toshiba.com](http://toshiba.com)



**HP SPECIAL  
EDITION L2000  
LIVESTRONG,  
\$899**

The Lance Armstrong-themed L2000 is built for endurance and performance. It also trumps those yellow bracelets when it comes to support—\$50 from each sale goes to the Lance Armstrong Livestrong Foundation.

[shopping.hp.com](http://shopping.hp.com)

## CARRY ON

Your image, like your notebook computer, needs protecting. Skip the cheap fabric, and dare to go with colors and style.

**ACME MADE  
DESIGNER SLIM,  
\$170**



**JACK SPADE NYLON-  
CANVAS VERTICAL  
MESSENGER, \$125**



**BALLY  
HAMILTON,  
\$795**



**JACK SPADE  
NYLON CANVAS  
DAY BAG, \$90**



**APC  
ULTRA-LIGHT POWER-  
READY CASE, \$40**



► For shopping information, see page 151.