

SELECTIVE SEARCH

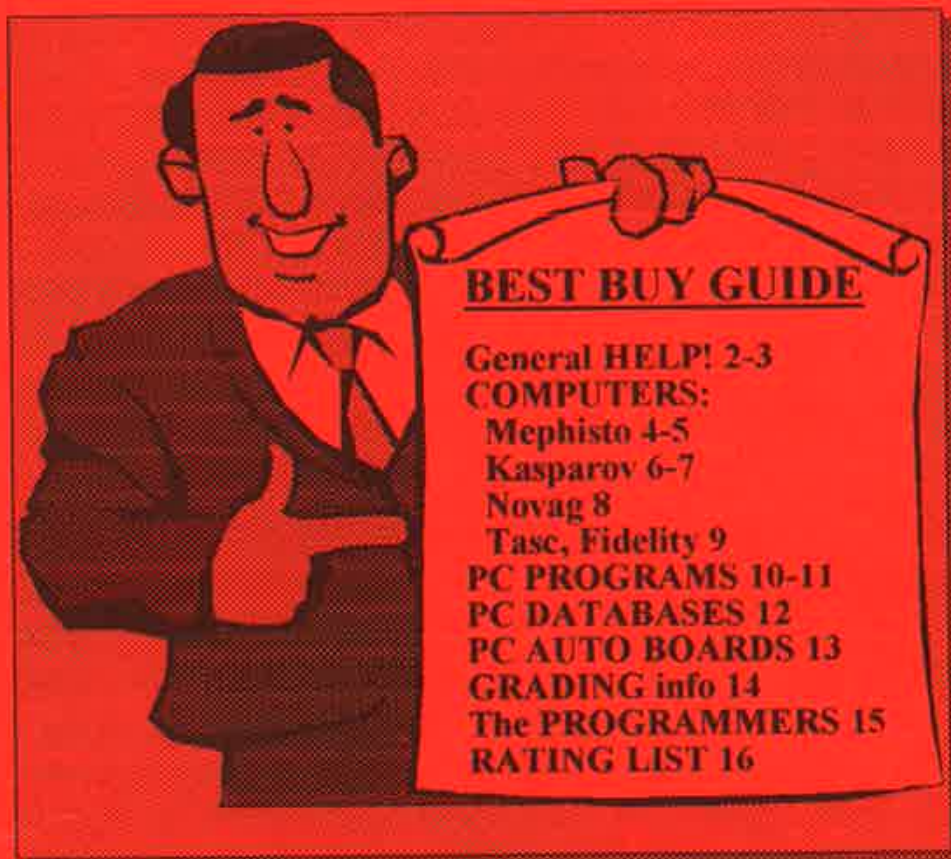
The COMPUTER CHESS News Sheet

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**SPECIAL
EDITION**

**BEST
BUY
GUIDE
for
1996**



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A GUIDE to CHOOSING a Chess Computer

WELCOME to our *1996 BUYERS GUIDE* of Chess Computers, Chess PC Programs and Databases, plus other material which will be of reference value all the year round.

What are the most important considerations when choosing a Chess Computer? I believe they will include those opposite, though individual purchasers will consider some more important than others ▶▶▶

A few further remarks will amplify the list:

- PRICE
- STRENGTH
- Type of BOARD
- Range of FEATURES
- EASE of Use
- RELIABILITY
- VALUE for Money

• **PRICE.** Self explanatory! The Recommended Retail Prices are shown for all of the products in this *GUIDE* and our RATINGS & PRICES TABLE on the back page provides a handy all-in-one comparative listing.

• **STRENGTH.** The most important matter for most people. We give Elo ratings, taken from the Rating List featured in every Issue of our bi-monthly *MAGAZINE*, for every Computer reviewed. A guide to the rating methods used can also be found on page 14.

At the **top** end of the playing strength scale, purchasers should aim to buy a Computer or Program which can play to around 200 Elo above their own standard. This is for your own benefit - you have something to improve up to and your Computer will be a welcome opponent and help for much longer! A Computer that is not good enough can be left on for an hour a move... and will still be not good enough most of the time!

At the **bottom** end I know that many Computers will have an owner who wants maximum strength, yet may also be used by someone in the family who is much weaker or just beginning. Poor Computers cannot play well, but good Computers can usually be set to play below their best! All of the Computers in this *GUIDE* can 'play down' - i.e. be 'told' to deliberately play weaker moves, often called 'Easy' mode. Additionally some have special teaching or training features, and I have indicated this where appropriate.

• **Type of BOARD.** These and how they work are described on page 3 opposite.

• **Range of FEATURES.** All the Computers I have reviewed have an excellent range of features. Key details (e.g. number of levels, size and display) are always shown. ALL can play fast (from 5 secs per move) and only make legal moves. Forget the early 1980's!

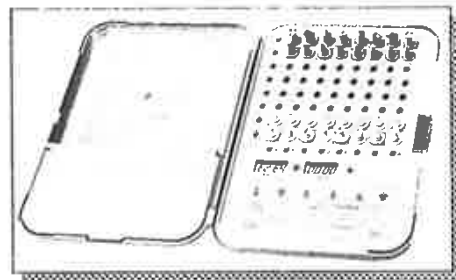
• **EASE of Use.** With every Computer reviewed the user can switch on, put the pieces in their places, and start playing as White. Setting levels, getting hints, taking moves back, and turning the board etc are almost as easy. The more features, of course, the more there is to get used to, but the Manuals are generally helpful and the Computers, especially those with a display, can usually be mastered pretty quickly.

• **RELIABILITY.** I have not recommended any Computer where I have any concerns over reliability. All have a 1 year guarantee except Mephisto's with a 2 year guarantee.

• **VALUE for Money.** Sometimes this is in the eye of the beholder - sometimes it is a simple question of Strength/Price. In a previous *GUIDE* I categorised the Computers and then chose my own best three in each Category. That was probably too subjective (and raised the hackles of some distributors somewhat!). This time the Manufacturers are the categories and I have chosen my favourite products from each one. My honest opinion is that every Computer or Program earning a place in this *GUIDE* is good value for money.

1. Portable Peg Sensory.

The pieces each have 'pegs' on the end which are gently pressed into the 'from' and 'to' holes in a plastic playing surface, to register the users moves. When the Computer makes its move it signifies its reply by lighting LEDs along the co-ordinates. The user presses the appropriate piece into the 'from' and 'to' holes so that the Computer knows the piece has been moved correctly. Computers with a display will also show the moves in algebraic notation there. Playing area size will vary from 3"x3" to 4½"x4½".



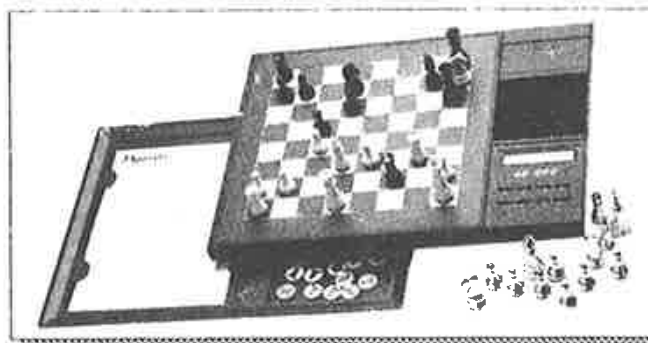
2. Portable Calculator.

The user enters the algebraic notation of his/her chosen move into the calculator-style keyboard, and moves the appropriate piece on the board being used to follow the game. This may be an integral or separate magnetic set provided for portable use, or the users favourite wood board at home - or you might be playing 'blindfold' of course! When the Computer makes its move it will signify the reply using algebraic notation in the display window, and the player manually completes that move on the board he/she is using.



3. Table-top Press Sensory.

These normally have a plastic playing surface with plastic playing pieces. To make the moves the user gently presses the 'from' and 'to' squares - using either their finger tip or the playing piece itself. The Computer will signify its moves by lighting the appropriate co-ordinate LEDs. The user then presses the 'from' and 'to' squares for the piece moved so that the Computer knows the piece has been moved correctly. Computers with a display will also show the moves in algebraic notation there. Playing area size will usually be 8"x8".



4. Table-top Auto Sensory.

These are usually wood boards, larger than the Press-Sensory type, and using wood felted pieces. To make a move the user simply lifts up the appropriate piece and places it onto its new square! Most Auto Sensory boards have a discreet but clear LED in the corner of each square. Thus when the Computer makes its move it will signify first the 'from' square and then, when the user has lifted up the appropriate piece, the 'to' square. Once the piece has been placed at its destination the LEDs will go out and it's the users turn to move! Computers with a display will also show the moves in algebraic notation there. Playing area size for wood boards varies - normally from 10"x10" right up to 16"x16"!



MEPHISTO models

MANHATTAN

Table-top press sensory - 50 levels - saves game - 5 move take back - chess instructor - 3,500 position opening book - mains or battery - 11½"x9" - 1700 Elo - £89.

CHESS SCHOOL

Table-top press sensory - the same playing program as the Manhattan (above) - mains or battery - 11½"x9" incl. Training Course book and exercises which relate to the School computer - complete with attractive leatherette case - an excellent all-round machine for the keen beginner-hobby player - 1700 Elo - £119.

SUPER MILANO/NIGEL SHORT (Schroder)

Table-top press sensory - unlimited playing levels - saves game - full game take back and replay - graphic 2 line display - position evaluations - recommended line of play - clocks - 27,500 position opening book - many fine training features - will display all of its opening book lines for learning/practice - clip-on lid for journeys etc - one set of Staunton playing pieces and one magnetic disc set for travel - a fine all-round computer and deservedly a top seller - mains or battery - 13½"x10" - leatherette case available as an extra - 2080 Elo - £199.

BERLIN PRO (Lang)

Table-top press sensory - unlimited playing levels - 68020 processor running at 24MHz + hash tables! - saves up to 50 games - full game take back and replay - graphic 2 line display - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - analyses in monitor/player-player mode for playing through games - 45,000 unique position opening book - one set of Staunton playing pieces and one magnetic disc set for travel - laptop clip-on lid for journeys - mains only - a genuinely brilliant machine and the top strength press sensory computer - 2340 Elo - £595.

• The NIGEL SHORT and BERLIN PRO use an almost identical board.

Mephisto prides itself on its multiple Federation recommends!



Koninklijke Nederlandse Schaakbond

Chess School



Nigel Short/Berlin Pro



MONTREUX (de Koning)

Table-top press sensory - a new, improved quality, release of the Kasparov RISC 2500 - unlimited playing levels - saves games - full game take back and replay - graphic 2 line display - position evaluations - forward analysis - clock times - 5 playing styles - 80,000 position opening book - a fine, competitive program - mains only - 16"x11"

- The Montreux is a RISC 2500 look-alike but the board is black/light bronze with black surround which is much better - processor is ARM6 instead of ARM2 for extra speed - program is on a 256K chip instead of 128K - hash RAM is 128K - 2300 Elo - **£449**.

MONTREAL

Table-top wood, auto sensory - *discontinued!*? - no doubt Saitek/Mephisto has found that their Kasparov PRESIDENT (£100 cheaper) gets virtually all the sales!

EXCLUSIVE with MM5/POLGAR, RISC1 and 2, GENIUS 68030

EXCLUSIVE board: high quality wood, with wood, felted pieces - mains only - 16"x16" - good choice of modules for varying playing strengths and features - swap between modules for the difference in cost - all prices include board, playing module and display.

[1] **with MM5/POLGAR** (Schroder).

3 or 4 years old now, but still excellent value - the MM5 has a 4-digit display, the POLGAR a graphic display and more levels plus full view of 27,500 opening book via display - **EXCLUSIVE + MM5** 2040 Elo **£495**; **EXCLUSIVE + POLGAR** 2030 Elo - **£595** (s/h £495).

[2] **with RISC1 and RISC2** (Schroder).

- RISC1 is basically the Polgar but with a 14MHz RISC processor + hash tables, making it 5 or 6 times faster - same graphic display - evaluations - forward analysis - clocks - view opening book - unlimited levels etc - **EXCLUSIVE + RISC1** 2310 Elo - **£695**.

- The RISC2 is a new upgrade program which gives extra strength for those aiming really high! - **EXCLUSIVE + RISC2** 2355 Elo - **£945**

[3] **EXCLUSIVE + GENIUS 68030** (Lang).

The renowned Genius program on the 68030 processor at 33MHz + hash! - saves up to 50 games - full game take back and replay - graphic 2 line display - position evaluation - recommended line of play - 3 playing styles - clocks - analyses in monitor/player-player mode for playing through games - 45,000 unique position opening book (user extendable) - mains only - 2395 Elo - **£1295**.

- **SECOND-HAND modules** are sometimes available and offer a small saving (you can hardly tell if a module is second-hand, it's the board which reveals that!). My ratings for some of the best buys for readers who may get the chance to purchase one are:-

REBELL 1880 Elo; **MM4** 1960 Elo;

LYON/VANCOUVER 68000 2180 Elo;

LYON/VANCOUVER 68020 2230 Elo.



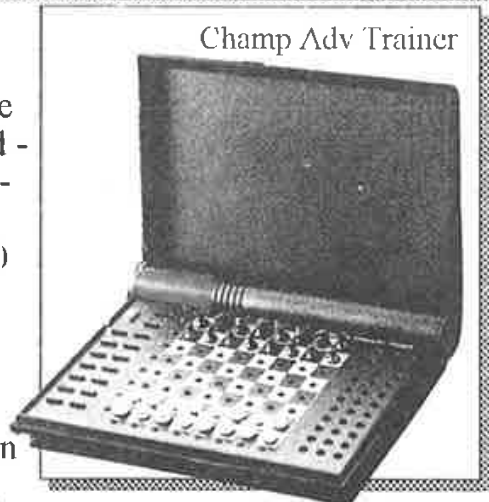
KASPAROV models

POCKET PLUS TRAINER

Portable - peg sensory - 16 levels - saves game - 2 move take back - simple position evaluation - nicely designed - electronic coach warning system and other training features - includes 100 page book *'Easy Steps to Winning Chess'* - batteries only - 6"x4" - board size 3"x3" - 1200 Elo - £39.

CHAMPION ADVANCED TRAINER (Morsch).

Portable - peg sensory - 64 levels - saves game - 34 ply take back - simple position evaluation - very nice design - special electronic training and coaching features incl. study 8 master games and 64 selected positions! - plus 190 page book *'A Step-by-Step Program to Chess Mastery'* - batteries only - board size 3½"x3½" - 1960 Elo - £79.



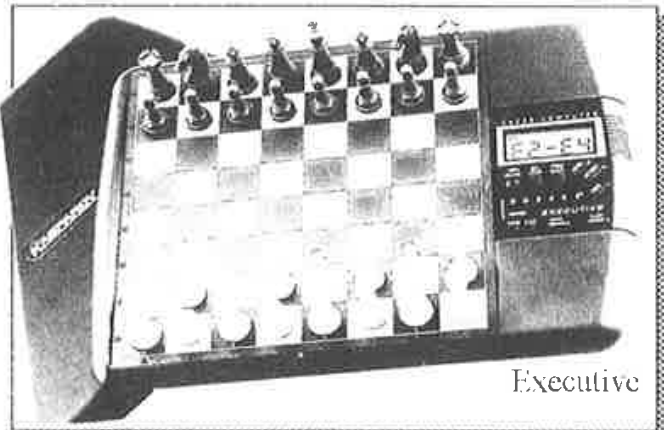
Champ Adv Trainer

TRAVEL CHAMPION (Morsch)

Portable - peg sensory - 64 levels - saves game - 30 ply take back - display - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - selectable playing and opening book styles - storage compartment for pieces - clip on perspex lid - it might be last year's model but TC is still, deservedly, very popular - batteries only - 7½"x4½" with 3½" board size - 1960 Elo - £99.

EXECUTIVE (Morsch)

Table-top press sensory - 64 levels - saves game - 30 ply take back - display - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - selectable playing styles - opening book styles - neat, slim design with clip on lid cover - mains or battery - 11"x9" - 1960 Elo - £99.



Executive

GK-2000 (Morsch)

Table-top press sensory - 64 levels - saves game - 30 ply take back - display - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - selectable playing and opening book styles - good design with storage compartment for pieces - mains or battery - 16"x11" - 1960 Elo - £139.

TRAVEL CHAMPION 2100

(Morsch)

Portable - large peg sensory - 64 levels - saves game - selectable playing styles

Travel Champion 2100

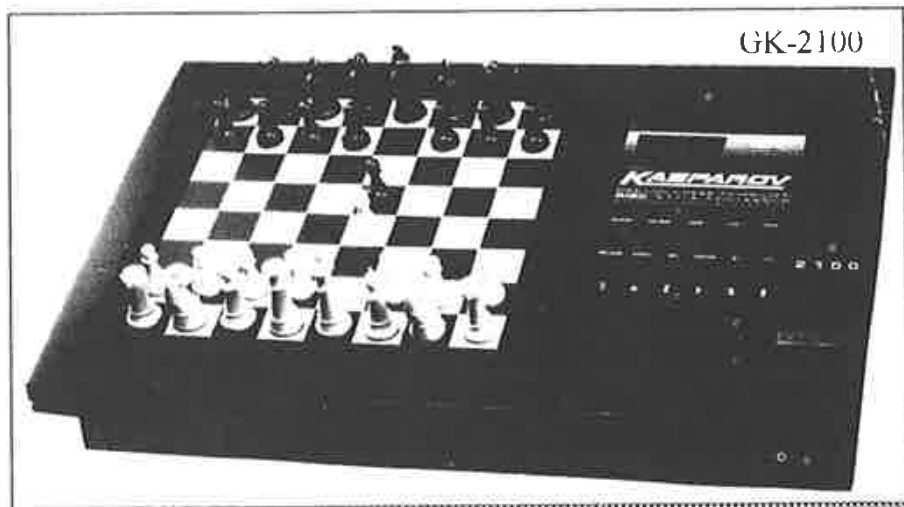


- display - position evaluation - clocks - recommended line of play - 50 ply take back - 35,000 move opening library - selectable book opening styles - electronic coaching features - extended playing range to help beginners - hand held version of GK-2100 and President - batteries only - board size 4½"x4½"! - great to play on - the best peg sensory ever! - 2050 Elo - £139

GK-2100 (Morsch)

Table-top press sensory - 64 levels - saves game - selectable playing styles - display - position evaluation - clocks - recommended line of play - 50 ply take back - 35,000 move opening library - selectable book opening styles - electronic coaching features - extended playing

range to help beginners - good design with storage compartment for pieces - mains or battery - 16"x11" - 2050 Elo - £169



PRESIDENT (Morsch)

Wood auto sensory - wood, felted pieces - 64 levels - saves game - selectable playing styles - display - position evaluation - clocks - recommended line of play - 50 ply take back - 35,000 move opening library - selectable book opening styles - electronic coaching features - a lovely board to play on, remarkable value and quality with strength - mains or battery - 14"x14" - 2050 Elo - £299.



RENAISSANCE

Beautiful and large wood, auto sensory - wood, felted pieces - 2" squares - 3½" king - LEDs on all four corners of every square - 32 levels - pull out LCD chessboard with display - position evaluation - chess clocks - recommended line of play - 50 game memory - take back and full game replay - luxurious play on this patented 'blitz board' - upgrade modules available - mains or battery - 20"x20" - 1700 Elo - £399.

RENAISSANCE with BRUTE FORCE (Morsch)

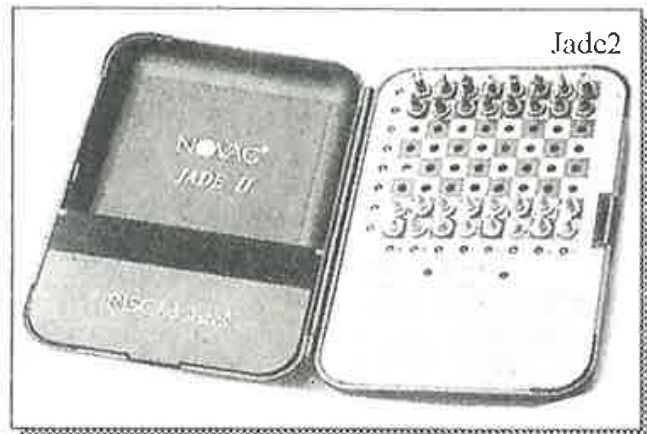
Our top-recommended H8 RISC-type Upgrade module in the beautiful RENAISSANCE - the board and feature details as above - add 32 extra levels for play, analysis etc all at 2100 Elo strength - £579 complete.



NOVAG models

JADE2 (Kittinger).

Portable - peg sensory - 56 levels - saves game - 74 move take back - twin display - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - mains or battery - a well-designed and compact 4"x6" - board 3" square may be slightly small for some fingers and eyes. but good strength/price value - H8 processor - 2050 Elo - £99.



Jade2

ZIRCON2 (Kittinger).

Table-top press sensory - JADE2 program - 56 levels - saves game - 74 move take back - twin display - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - mains or battery - attractive 'clean' board - 11"x11" - H8 processor - 2050 Elo - £139.

SAPPHIRE (Kittinger).

Portable - keypad entry - 6" square playing board with magnetic disc pieces - unlimited levels - 64 game storage - full take back - 36,000 position opening library - 4-digit display with scrolling option - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - mains or battery - the strongest portable so far! - 26MHz H8 processor - small hash table system - tricky playing style - vinyl carry bag - 2175 Elo - £199.



Sapphire

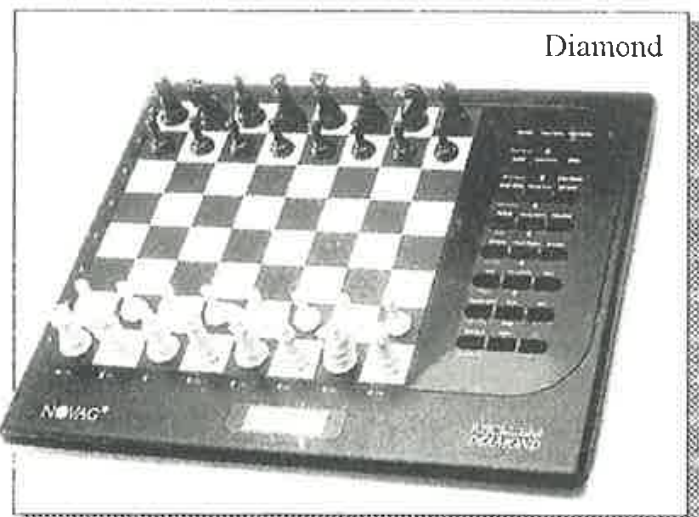
■The keyboard design of the SAPHIRE is unique for 1800+ Elo computers. I note here my ratings for it's pre-decessors should a reader get the chance to buy one second-hand!

RUBY 1950 Elo

SUPER VIP 1750 Elo

DIAMOND (Kittinger).

Table-top press sensory SAPHIRE program - unlimited levels - 64 game storage - full take back - 36,000 position opening library - 4-digit display with scrolling option - position evaluation - recommended line of play - clocks - 26MHz H8 processor - mains only - small hash table system - 2175 Elo - £249



Diamond

SUPER SYSTEM DISTRIBUTOR

For use with Sapphire and Diamond for connecting them to a PC. This enables the programmable opening book to be used and adds various game analysis features with printouts. £29

TV INTERFACE

For use with Sapphire and Diamond to enable connection to a TV for large and colour screen display of board etc. £49

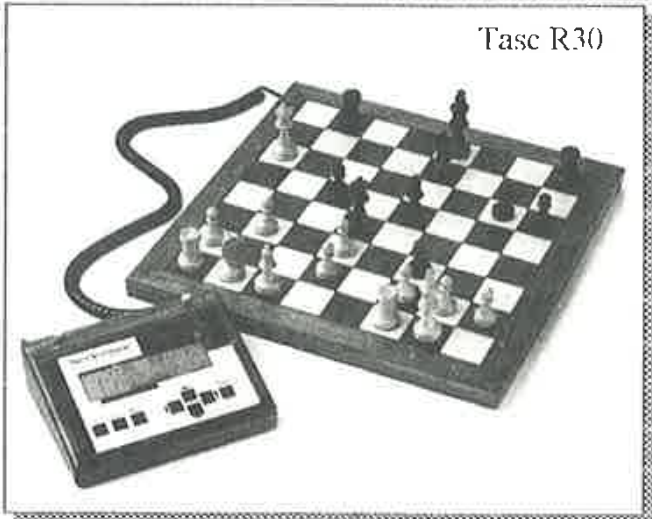
The TASC R30

9

TASC R30-1995 version

Wood auto sensory, with piece recognition - a really beautiful board and easy to use in every way - wood felted pieces - unlimited levels - saves game - select from 5 playing styles - big screen display housed in separate unit - position evaluations - clocks - display of board position - recommended line of play - full take-back and replay - 200,000 move opening book - mains only - 16"x16" main board - RISC processor at 30MHz - recently upgraded and now 2430 Elo - **£1249**.

TASC R30-1993 version rates at 2386 Elo.



FIDELITY CHESSTER (voice model)

LITTLE CHESSTER

Table-top press sensory - a FUN voice model for all ages with 345 phrases to coach, teach... and amuse - don't blunder a piece while anyone else is within listening distance! - 32 levels from beginner up to decent hobby standard - mains or battery - 10"x9½" - ideal also for blind players who will hear the computer moves given in algebraic notation! - 1400 Elo - **£79**.

CHESSTER, The Par Excellence program with Chesster voice - 1875 Elo - was **£149** but not easy to find new anymore.



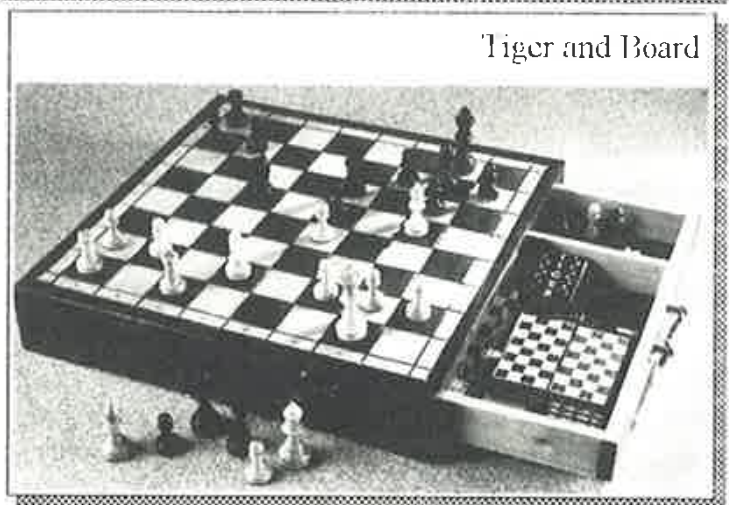
TIGER computer with wood board

TIGER

Portable key-in - the Fidelity Travel-master 'converted' to an easy-to-use calculator style! - 64 levels - game save - display - position evaluations - clocks - recommended line of play - program almost identical to Travel Champion - 1965 Elo

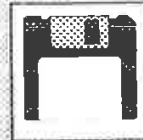
■ The TIGER, which can be used on its own as a portable with disc pieces provided, is supplied with a quality wood BOARD as shown, making this a multi-purpose combination.

Board and pieces are made in a rich wood 15½"x15½" - pieces are felted (3" king) - board contains drawer which can house the Tiger computer and pieces. Use the board for your own games, or when playing against the computer! Board and Tiger complete **£99**.



PC SOFTWARE

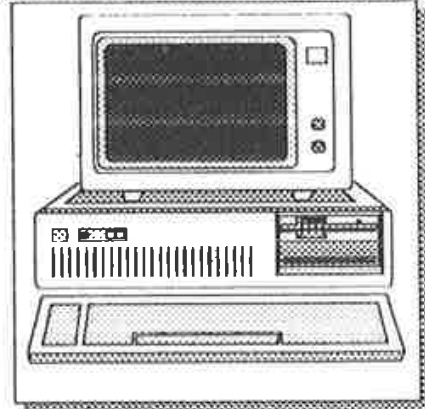
Chess playing Programs



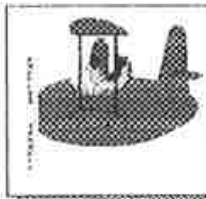
Comparing chess computer programs is NOT an easy task -

- 1 there are so many.
- 2 they tend to get almost annual upgrades so that what is always intended to be 'latest' information sometimes doesn't last long!

- 3 just as each of us has our own favourite players and preferences for playing styles (e.g. Tal or Petrosian, Kasparov or Karpov), we can also have strong opinions on the various programs and their styles. Some will prefer the very sound and solid feel of the knowledgeable Genius program; others the combative and sometimes very tricky play of HIARCS, M Chess Pro or, perhaps, W Chess; still others would go for the very fast tactical abilities of Fritz or the all-round looks and character of Rebel.



All of the **software** in this review is for IBM compatible PC's, the minimum requirement is a 386. The gradings in the text for the **chess programs** is based on a 486 DX2-PC at 66MHz, and these are estimated in some cases where we know a new program is imminent, but haven't had playing time with it as yet. The software reviewed is for serious use! - meaning that the main quality is not related to flashy graphics or a 3D board etc., though all of the programs have good, clear and easy to see chess boards and analysis detail. The first criterion has been maximising strength and ensuring that the specific features required by strong and serious chess players have been provided running under easy to use menu and feature systems.



Our favourite programs!

After discussing our favourite programs the article concludes with two **CHARTS**, one showing the ratings on 486/66 and Pentium/90 machines for each program in its current version, the other comparing the difference the various PCs make to a rating!

GENIUS by Richard Lang. Current: v3. due out: v4.0. Acknowledged as the one the rest have to catch and beat (a Genius version has topped every PC Rating List in our Magazine for the past 2 years). V4 will be Win3.1 and Win95 compatible: have on-line help; multiple, moveable and re-sizeable windows for boards, analysis etc; choice of piece sets; user can add personal game comments; ChessBase and PGN files fully supported. There is no available news on the opening book size or rating expectations. Expect 2475. **£89**.

HIARCS by Mark Uniacke. Current: v3. due out: v4.0. Acclaimed for its enjoyable and human-like style of play. V4 will use high res. VGA and Super VGA graphics; PIF and Icon file provided for Windows; EPD and PGN file support; new 100,000 opening book; new analysis features incl. automatic 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc best moves evaluated simultaneously on request. I do most of the opening book for HIARCS (so am biased!)... but this means I get to test 'latest versions'! Expect 40-50 Elo improvement to 2460. **£89**.

M CHESS PRO by Marty Hirsch. Current: v4. due out: v5.0. Another with a very competitive playing style (v4 occasionally too much so!) and a very large opening book

(approx. 250,000 positions) in which the Tournament book is heavily geared for play against other programs. The good results at Aegon and in the 1995 WMCC suggest Marty might have made more progress this year. Expect around 2450-2460. **£89.**

REBEL by Ed Schroder. Current v7.0 has a positive feel and style, running 25% faster than Rebel6 due to program pruning work. Feature improvements include: VESA support graphics (for more speed!); PGN, ChessBase and NICBase file support; 5 playing styles; 100,000 position opening book; can convert and use Genius, MChess Pro and Fritz books; extra 'specialist' books available; user can add own comments to games; runs under Win3.1 and Win95; no installation limitations. REBEL6 stands at 2406; there are few results in for v7 so our current 2424 grading could easily change. **£89.**

FRITZ by Franz Morsch. Current: v3.0. A brilliant tactical program. Fritz is frequently the fastest to sort out the most complicated combinations and find any deadly tactical chances which are present in a position. Chess knowledge and endgame play have been greatly improved since v1, but the incredible speed through the plys still doesn't always make up for occasional positional faults. Fritz is 'no. 1' for adding notes and variations, game storage, game and quality diagram printing. The programmer tells us that the version which beat Deep Blue, Star Socrates (and the rest!) to the WCC title was 'virtually identical' to Fritz3 with a changed opening book, so there is no news as yet of a Fritz4. 2370 Elo (but it feels and plays a lot more if you let it get into an open game!). **£79.**

W CHESS by Dave Kittinger. Current: v1.03 or 1.06. A strong tactical program, full of tricks and subtleties. Has had some good results against humans, notably in a pre-launch version in the Harvard Cup against American G.M.'s, but has fared slightly less well since, it is said due to a 'somewhat primitive evaluator', 2386 Elo. **£79.**

CHESSICA for Windows by Franz Morsch. Current: v1.01. Advertised as 'the same' chess engine as Fritz3 in its victorious WCC campaign, but the fact that it is a Windows only program will warn aficionados that it's a little slower than Fritz3 under MS-DOS. We have insufficient results available to offer a rating as yet, but it should grade perhaps only 30-40 Elo behind Fritz itself. **£69.**

VIRTUA CHESS by M F Baudot, newly available on Disk and CD-ROM. Previously known as Ecume under which name it finished prominently in the 1993 WCC. Virtua has only just reached me so is, as yet, untested. Its result in the French Grand Prix and the recent WMCC indicate it should do well, and it has a good Blitz reputation. Offers 2D and 3D boards, and displays all of the required analysis features during play etc. However game print seems to be a simple move list without evaluations and/or analysis. Loads and Saves PGN files. On a Pentium graded 2305 in Aegon. **£69.**

TOP PC program ratings

| Program | P/90 | 486/66 |
|------------------------|------|--------|
| Genius3 | 2546 | 2457 |
| Rebel7 | 2534 | 2424 |
| Hiarcs3 | 2518 | 2411 |
| MChessPro4 | 2487 | 2414 |
| Fritz3 | 2463 | 2369 |
| W Chess | 2395 | 2386 |
| Chessmaster 4000 (Win) | | 2359 |
| Kallisto | | 2300 |
| Socrates | | 2199 |

PCs compared

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Pentium 120 | +100 |
| Pentium 90 | + 80 |
| Pentium 66 | + 60 |
| 486 DX4/100 | + 20 |
| 486DX2/66 | = |
| 486DX/50 | - 20 |
| 486DX or SX/33 | - 40 |
| 486DX or SX/25 | - 60 |
| 386DX/33 | -100 |
| 386DX/25 | -140 |
| 386SX/25 | -160 |



CHESSBASE FOR WINDOWS

During the past few years **ChessBase** has steadily developed into an outstanding DataBase system for storing, studying, comparing and... enjoying chess games. Massive databases of great games, both historical and contemporary, are included at the time of purchase, and there are constant Tournament additions on both disk and CD ROM.

The latest release, **ChessBase for Windows v1.1**, has reached a new standard for completeness and genuine ease-of-use throughout a massive range of features and operations.

Beautiful, high quality graphics ease the strain of working in front of the screen - easy to use Icons for fast swapping between activities - powerful ECO openings classification - search multiple databases simultaneously for openings, themes or material - establish standard positioning of pieces in each opening - read and generate PGN format files - merge databases - two or more board windows can be viewed side-by-side or kept in filing card fashion - moves, variations and annotations displayed in full alongside board window - send games to printer in figurine notation with commentary symbols and high quality diagrams - or save file to a Desktop Publisher and create a personalised layout!

- **Basic Package** with 215,000 games, 1,000 annotated, CD or disks **£199**.
- **Professional package** with 225,000 games, 3,500 annotated, CD or disks **£299**.
- **Mega package** with 270,000 games, 16,000 annotated, CDs or disks **£399**.

- Extras: **FRITZ** analysis module. The perfect companion (a must for most of us!?) to use within ChessBase - obtain high powered analysis and evaluation of current position as you play through or enter a game - this special **Fritz for Windows** module can show top-ranked, top two, top three etc move recommendations (it can show more, but the more alternatives you ask for in a simultaneous search the slower the program operates and I think 2 or 3 is optimum). **Fritz for Windows** analysis module **£44.99**.

BOOKUP

BOOKUP™ 

Whilst BOOKUP can be used as a DataBase for games storage, it is not really intended to be a competitor to ChessBase as its main purpose is for the close study and learning of openings. 'Books' (on disk) are available for training and studying of specific openings, and the play-frequency of all theory moves are shown alongside the board position. Each disk-book has copious notes discussing main line theory, strategical concepts, traps etc. In addition users can create and build their own books or load-in PGN files of games in specific openings. At every point the owner can add his own notes and ideas, so personalising the whole process.

All Files can be exported to HIARCS and GENIUS in EPD format - not that it's how it is done that matters - but either of these very strong programs can prepare overnight, at any chosen time control, their valuable analysis and evaluations for the specified positions, and the results can be imported back into the BOOKUP file to create a permanent record.

And now to back-solving which is a particularly priceless part of BOOKUP! For complete games with a 1-0, 1/2-1/2, 0-1 scores (e.g from a PGN file) or from positions

evaluated by HIARCS or GENIUS. BOOKUP can 'back-solve' the end evaluations to value each line at the start of its variation, thus enabling the user to assess which lines are winning/equal/losing for either side! Therefore which lines are best for playing and which are worth further research seeking possible improvements. TN's etc for use in actual play. The results of all this research can be kept on file as part of the 'book' as well as being sent to a printer for output in ECO-type format.

BookUp £99 (includes the Scheveningen Sicilian disk-book free).

Opening Books and Tutorials (e.g. How to Play against the Sicilian, The Samisch Seminar, The Smith-Morra, The Classical Ruy, 100 Essential Endings) **£19.95** each.

Viewer for Windows (a viewer for 'reading' the disk-books but without the specialised BookUp features) **£25**.

PC AUTO BOARDS

Play your chess on a beautiful wood auto-sensory BOARD whilst still harnessing the full power and features of your PC and chess SOFTWARE.

A **PC BOARD** can be connected to the serial port of any IBM PC. Game moves are then made on the auto-sensory PC Board. The advantages of playing, preparing etc on a 'proper' board are obvious - not just for the sheer pleasure of it, but also reducing eye-strain and, for club/tournament players, avoiding swapping from the screen used during preparation to a board in real play.

Tasc SMARTBOARD

The board is exactly the same as that of the R30 (see photo on page 9), so users get piece recognition as well as an auto-sensory system. 16"x16" board **£399**.

■ Tasc's own database system (TASCBASE) can be purchased at the same time as the SMARTBOARD with a small saving. **TascBASE 16 bit** £100 becomes **£69**. **TascBASE 32 bit** £135 becomes **£100**. Both include the strong KING analysis program.

Mephisto/Kasparov AUTO BOARD

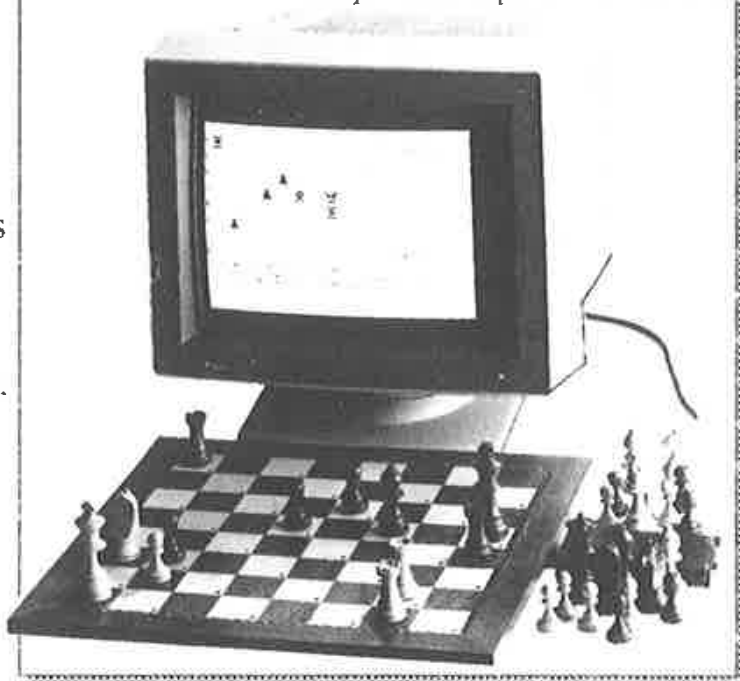
Pictured above right, this also is a real beauty. 15" x 15" board. **£299**

Chess 232 BOARD

A cheaper quality wood veneer board, but still fully auto-sensory with wood felted pieces. Size 16"x16" **£229**

■ Please tell us **which PC playing program/s** you will be using with your PC Board so that we can advise which Board you will need to ensure compatibility (Genius, HIARCS, Rebel, MChess Pro, Fritz, Chessica, W Chess, and Kallisto are all catered for by at least one of the boards and the range is being constantly extended)

Mephisto/Kasparov PC Board



GRADING Chess players and COMPUTERS!

What a GRADING is!

The British Chess Federation (BCF hereafter) measures a regular player's ability by comparing their results against other rated players in official Tournaments and Matches. An average but regular Club player will have a grade of perhaps 130 or 140 BCF.

To complicate matters the rest of Europe and most other countries use the Elo scale (invented by Professor Arpad Elo, and also used to grade table tennis players incidentally). There is a simple mathematical formula to convert a BCF Grade to Elo, and vice versa:

$(\text{BCF} \times 8) + 600 = \text{Elo}$. Thus 175 BCF = $(175 \times 8) + 600 = 2000$ Elo.

$(\text{Elo} - 600) / 8 = \text{BCF}$. Thus 2000 Elo = $(2000 - 600) / 8 = 175$ BCF.

There is one more complication! In America they use a calculation method very similar to the Elo system, but all their internal gradings come out 120 higher than Elo!

We show a Guide in which we classify different playing standards with a range of Gradings for each Rating System ►

Who will win? - by how much!?

The BCF system is particularly easy to follow

when we try to forecast the likely result of, say, a 10 game Match between 2 players. Our next Chart shows these expectancies ►

After such a Match has been played, if the result is different to that expected, the respective players' BCF Gradings will be adjusted up or down accordingly.

GRADING GUIDE

| BCF | PLAYER CLASSIFICATION | Elo | USCF |
|---------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 25-45 | Beginner | 800-960 | 920-1080 |
| 50-70 | Occasional player | 1000-1160 | 1120-1280 |
| 75-95 | Good Hobby player | 1200-1360 | 1320-1480 |
| 100-120 | Advanced/Club player | 1400-1560 | 1520-1680 |
| 125-170 | Club Team player | 1600-1960 | 1720-2080 |
| 175-205 | County Team player | 2000-2240 | 2120-2360 |
| 210+ | Master | 2280+ | (2400+) |
| 225+ | International Master | 2400+ | (2520+) |
| 245+ | Grandmaster | 2550+ | (2670+) |
| 275 | World Champ: Gary Kasparov | 2800 | (2920) |

| GAP between the 2 Players | Likely Score in a 10 game Match |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 10 BCF | 6-4 |
| 20 BCF | 7-3 |
| 30 BCF | 8-2 |
| 40 BCF | 9-1 |
| 50+ BCF | 10-0 |

Computer Gradings

The gradings shown for the Computers in this Guide are all taken from the List in our regular Magazine, and represent each program's results at accepted and popular time control settings from Game in 60 mins to 40 moves in 2 hours. Our team not only do and organise many Computer vs Computer Matches, we also enter Computers into official Tournaments with live human players (!), and collate all these and other results from around the world to maintain a COMPUTER RATING LIST of reliability and accuracy.

Fast Chess!

Although the standard of the chess moves played usually drops a little at fast chess, the Computers nearly always get higher gradings! Why? We believe that the Computers are less prone both to blunders through time pressure, and mental exhaustion through playing many consecutive games compared with their human opponents. The ratings we give in our Magazine are for 'Tournament' chess, but a Computer playing against humans in an Active Tournament (Game in 30 mins) or a Blitz Tournament (Game in 5 or 10 mins) should grade higher as shown ▶

| Tournament Chess | Normal Rating |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Speed/Active Chess (G/30) | +10 BCF/+80 Elo |
| Blitz Chess (G/5 or G/10) | +20 BCF/+160 Elo |

MEET the PROGRAMMERS Who programs what, for whom?

M F Baudot & Jean Christophe Weill (France). PC program VIRTUA chess. *3rd-^a WMCC 1995.*

Don Dailey/Larry Kaufman (US). PC programs REX and SOCRATES. *1st ACM Tourn. 1993. 1st ^a Harvard Cup 1994.*

Chrilly Donniger (Austria). PC program NIMZO; also the CHESS232 PC Board and AUTO232 system. *3rd-^a WMCC 1993. 3rd-^a WMCC 1995.*

Marty Hirsch (USA). PC programs M CHESS and M CHESS PRO. *3rd ^a Harvard Cup 1994. 3rd ^a Aegon 1995. 1st ^a WMCC 1995.*

Feng Hsing Hsu. Main-frame program DEEP THOUGHT/DEEP BLUE.

Julio Kaplan. Kasparov SIMULTANO and many Saitek models, e.g TURBOSTAR.

Dave Kittinger (USA). All Novag models for many years, incl current JADE2, ZIRCON2, SAPPHIRE and DIAMOND. PC program W CHESS. *1st ^a Harvard Cup 1994. 1st ^a Uniform Platform 1994. 5th ^a Aegon 1995.*

Johan de Koning (Holland). Saitek RISC 2500, Mephisto MONTREUX, Tasc R30. PC program THE KING. *1st ^a Aegon 1993. 1st ^a Welser 1993. 2nd ^a WMCC 1993. 2nd ^a Harvard Cup 1994. 6th-^a WMCC 1995.*

Richard Lang (England). Mephisto MONTREAL, BERLIN/BERLIN PRO, VANCOUVER, GENIUS. PC programs PSION and GENIUS. *World Champion 1st or 1st ^a every WMCC 1985-1995! Also famed for 1½-½ victory over Gary Kasparov in Intel Active Tournament, London 1994.*

Franz Morsch (Holland). Kasparov GK2000/2100, TRAVEL CHAMPION and PRESIDENT, Kasparov BRUTE FORCE. PC programs QUEST and FRITZ. *1st ^a WCC 1995. 6-^a WMCC 1995. Shot to fame in 1994 when FRITZ tied 1-^a with Garry Kasparov in major International Blitz Tournament.*

Ed Schroder (Holland). Mephisto MM5, POLGAR, MILANO, NIGEL SHORT, RISC 1MB. PC programs GIDEON and REBELL. *1st ^a WCC 1992. 3rd ^a Welser 1993.*

Dan & Kathie Spracklen (USA). Most Fidelity models incl MACH2/3/4. Kasparov SPARC. *World Champions 1980-1984. 2nd ^a Aegon 1993.*

John Stanbeck. PC program ZARKOV.

Mark Uniacke (England). PC program HIARCS. *World Amtr Champ '92. World Software Champ '93. 1st ^a Uniform Platform 1993. 1st ^a Aegon 1995. 6-^a WMCC 1995.*

Note: WCC = World Computer Champs; WMCC = World Micro-Computer Champs

RATINGS, FEATURES and PRICES Table

(c) Eric Hallsworth, The Red House, 46 High St. Wilburton, Cambs CB6 3RA

| Pos | Computer | BCF | Elo | Price | Type |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|------|----------|----------|
| 1 | Tasc R30-1995 | 228 | 2430 | £1249 | wu |
| 2 | Mephisto Genius 68030 | 223 | 2387 | £1295 | wu |
| 3 | Tasc R30-1993 | 223 | 2386 | £1395 | wu |
| 4 | Mephisto RISC2 1MB | 218 | 2351 | £949 | wu |
| 5 | Mephisto Berlin Pro 68020 | 216 | 2332 | £595 | ps |
| 6 | Mephisto RISC1 1MB | 213 | 2310 | £699 | wu |
| 7 | Mephisto Montreux | 211 | 2294 | £449 | ps |
| 8 | Kasparov Renaissance SPARC | 211 | 2293 | £899 | w |
| 9 | Kasparov RISC 2500 | 209 | 2273 | £399 | ps |
| 10 | Mephisto Vancouver/Lyon 68020 | 204 | 2239 | £995 | wu |
| 11 | Mephisto Berlin 68000 | 199 | 2197 | £399 | ps |
| 12 | Fidelity Elite 68030-v9 | 199 | 2194 | £2999 | w |
| 13 | Mephisto Vancouver/Lyon 68000 | 198 | 2184 | £695 | wu |
| 14= | Novag Diamond | 197 | 2176 | £249 | ps |
| 14= | Novag Sapphire | 197 | 2176 | £199 | pcalc |
| 16 | Fidelity Mach4 68020-v7 | 192 | 2141 | £999 | ps |
| 17 | Kasparov Ren. Brute Force | 187 | 2097 | £579 | wu |
| 18 | Novag Diablo/Scorpio | 184 | 2074 | £599/399 | w/ps |
| 19 | Mephisto Nigel Short | 183 | 2065 | £199 | ps |
| 20= | Kasparov President | 182 | 2054 | £299 | w |
| 20= | Kasparov GK-2100 | 182 | 2054 | £169 | ps |
| 20= | Kasparov Travel Champ 2100 | 182 | 2054 | £139 | pplug |
| 23= | Novag Zircon2 | 181 | 2049 | £139 | ps |
| 23= | Novag Jade2 | 181 | 2049 | £99 | pplug |
| 25 | Fidelity Mach3 68000-v2 | 180 | 2042 | £399 | ps |
| 26 | Mephisto Polgar/MM5 | 179 | 2037 | £595/495 | wu/wu |
| 27 | Mephisto Milano | 178 | 2030 | £199 | ps |
| 28 | Novag Super Forte C/6 | 178 | 2026 | £269 | ps |
| 29 | Mephisto Mondial DallasXL | 177 | 2016 | £299 | ps |
| 30 | Mephisto Montreal 68000 | 176 | 2012 | £399 | w |
| 31 | Mephisto Academy | 175 | 2001 | £399 | w |
| 32 | Mephisto Amsterdam 68000 | 174 | 1992 | £995 | wu |
| 33= | Kasparov GK-2000 | 172 | 1982 | £149 | ps |
| 33= | Kasparov Travel Champion | 172 | 1982 | £99 | pplug |
| 35 | Mephisto Mega4 | 172 | 1981 | £249 | ps |
| 36 | Fidelity Mach2C 68000 | 171 | 1975 | £299 | ps |
| 37 | Fidelity Tiger | 170 | 1968 | £99 | pcalc-w |
| 38 | Mephisto Modena | 170 | 1966 | £159 | ps |
| 39 | Mephisto MM4 | 169 | 1959 | £449s/h | wu |
| 40 | Kasparov Advanced Trainer | 169 | 1956 | £79 | pplug |
| 41 | Mephisto College | 168 | 1948 | £179 | ps |
| 42 | Novag Emerald/Ruby | 167 | 1943 | £149/139 | ps/pcalc |
| 43 | Fidelity Club B 68000 | 161 | 1893 | £199 | ps |
| 44 | Novag Forte B | 160 | 1880 | £249 | ps |
| 45 | Mephisto Rebell | 160 | 1879 | £395s/h | wu |
| 46 | Fidelity Par Excellence/2100 | 159 | 1878 | £149 | ps |
| 47 | Novag Zircon1/Jade1 | 155 | 1847 | £139/99 | ps/pplug |
| 48 | Novag Super Constellation | 148 | 1785 | £269 | ps |

■ **BCF**: British Chess Federation grading.

■ **Elo**: the internationally popular gradings. Our **RATING LIST** ranks the computers according to their Elo gradings which are a combination of each computer's results against both human and computer opposition.

■ **Type (of Board)**:

w = wood

u = upgradeable

ps = press sensory

pcalc = portable

calculator-style

pplug = portable

plug-in style

■ **NB1**: Computers shown in **bold type** are current models. Computers in light type are listed to demonstrate how strength for price values have improved over recent years. Also buyers may be able to get one of these at a reduced second hand price, so an awareness of the rating and original price will help in the judging of good value!

■ **NB2**: Current models made in different boards (c.g. wood, press-sensory and portable) are listed separately to clarify their prices.