

LG OPTIMUS ONE AND OPTIMUS CHIC SMARTPHONE



LG is going full steam on its Android releases with the Optimus One and Optimus Chic leading the way. Both mobiles will ship with Froyo (2.2) the latest version of Google's mobile OS. The devices also enable professionals to easily sync with Outlook Calendar for improved productivity, while offering portable Wi-Fi hot spots to easily share a single 3G connection. The devices are optimized for popular Google Mobile Services, including Google Voice Search, Google Voice Actions, Google Goggles, Google Shopper and Google Maps with Navigation, and also offer access to Android Market with more than 80,000 applications. The Optimus One is equipped with a 3.2-inch HVGA capacitive display, camera with face tracking and smile shot and a long-lasting 1500mAh capacity battery. The Optimus Chic, meanwhile, is equipped with a 3.2-inch capacitive TFT touchscreen, 600MHz processor and Wi-Fi connectivity.



CarNAVi PRO BT GPS NAVIGATION DEVICE



The GUI is pleasant enough and you're able to jump into the different menus and features with a simple touch of the screen.

NEO BASIC B3375 NETBOOK



ALMOST everyone needs a notebook these days but not everyone can afford it. NEO prides itself in offering customers with products that provide excellent value for money, and the Basic B3375 is no exception. It has all the things that people need—Intel Atom N455 processor, 2GB DDR3 memory, HDD 320GB and Windows 7 Starter Edition. The Basic B3375 is great for students and mobile workers on a tight budget.

ASUS EAH5550 SILENT VIDEO CARD

MAKING a home-theater PC is a slightly different affair compared with gaming PCs. Home theater PCs need to be small, unobtrusive and silent. Nothing kills the mood more than a loud, whirring machine while you're watching the latest flick in town. The Asus EAH5550 Silent brings everything you'd ever want for a home-theater PC in one package—small footprint, fanless silent design and phenomenal HD performance through HDMI 1.3.



BY JOHN NIEVES

GPS navigation devices aren't exactly new; in fact they have enjoyed a presence in the local market by way of gray and parallel imports. Of course, these devices were far from reliable—not because of their design, but because of the data available to them. More specifically, the maps weren't that accurate, as there was no official support from the respective manufacturers. It's a different story nowadays, as there are now GPS navigation gadgets that have extremely accurate maps and local support and you'd be hard-pressed to get lost with these things in your car. CarNAVi is the latest manufacturer to jump into the domestic GPS navigation scene, and if their top-of-the-line Pro BT is any indication, they're set to give their competitors a run for their money.

The Pro BT is what you'd expect from a navigation device—it's not the thinnest or most elegant device out there, but it's not the flimsiest either. It has a 4.3-inch touch TFT LCD screen that's easy enough to use. There's a 3.5mm jack on the right side, along with a mini-USB port that serves as both data and charging port. All data, maps and media are stored in the SD card that goes in the unit, whose slot is located at the right side.

Powering the Pro BT is an SIR Atlas II GPS processor running at 400 MHz, with 64MB of memory. The operating system is a modified Windows CE. The GUI is pleasant enough and you're able to jump into the different menus and features with a simple touch of the screen.

Like other solutions in the market, you'll be able to set your destination in different ways, mainly through points of interests (POI), address search and city search. You will have to tell the unit in

what city the location you're looking for though, potentially slowing down searches when you're in a hurry. One thing that pleasantly surprised me is the large number of POIs in the system. Of course, a product like the Pro BT is only as good as the quality of its maps, and I'm happy to say that it didn't disappoint. The maps are pretty accurate and up to date, and CarNAVi assures me that they have maps of the whole country in some way or the other.

The Pro BT uses an internal GPS antenna and acquires a signal in less than two minutes. It has

The only minor nitpick I have with the Pro BT is that street names disappear on the screen momentarily when you turn which, while disconcerting, isn't really something to be worried about.

WHAT'S HOT

- Picks up signal in less than 2 minutes.
- Easy to use and understand GUI.
- Updated maps of the country, plenty of POIs.
- 3D-rendered maps

WHAT'S NOT

- Street names momentarily disappear on the screen when you take a turn.



BOTTOM LINE

The CarNAVi Pro BT is an excellent GPS navigation device, and is a godsend for navigationally challenged people who always seem to get lost.

voice prompts which tells you when to take a turn, how far you are to your destination, etc. One thing I liked about the display is that the environment is rendered in 3D, so you'll be able to see if you'll be passing under a tunnel or going over it. The display also dims automatically depending on the time of the day and when you go into a tunnel.

AUDIO-TECHNICA ATH-CK550 IN-EAR MONITORS

BY DINDIN MORENO



IT has always been written that the earphones that come with your newly purchased personal media players are crap. Most people who buy brand-new media players, more often than not purchase separate earphones. There are a lot of available earphones out there, and almost every one of them are different from each other. With that in mind, let's take a closer look at the Audio Technica ATH-CK550.

The ATH-CK550 is definitely an upgrade from the earphones that came with your media player. These are IEMs or in-ear monitors that have silicone fittings that fit comfortably into your ear canal. Compared with the stock white earbuds of the iPod, the sound of the bass is definitely improved and clear. It also doesn't distort even when the volume is set to maximum. One thing I noticed about the ATH-CK550, though, is that the speaker drivers need a significant amount of signal to give out optimum performance. Details are lost when listening on low volume.

The size of these earphones are fairly large compared with the others, but these are so light, you won't be able to notice that you're wearing them. During my initial testing, the bass sounded quite hard and punchy, but not discomforting. With almost all earphones, you have to conduct a burn-in period of about 100 hours in order for the drivers to vibrate more freely. Maybe after this period, the bass will sound smoother and more "airy."

The advantage of in-ear monitors is that they isolate outside noise so that you can hear the music from your player clearly. Bass and highs are more defined than when listening to the same music through open-type earphones. One disadvantage is that if you get immersed in your music, the outside world will become oblivious to you. So make sure to look right and left when crossing the street while wearing any type of IEMs. Another use for these types of earphones is that if you're tired of listening

to your music, and you want it to be peaceful and quiet, you can turn off your player and notice the volume of noise decrease dramatically. It is especially useful when on a bus or an airplane—definitely a cheaper alternative than purchasing noise-canceling headphones that usually cost an arm and a leg.

The ATH-CK550 is definitely a better alternative to the stock earphones of your player. There are a lot more choices out there at this price point, but I am sure to say that these won't fail or disappoint you.

WHAT'S HOT

- Comfortable
- Light
- Excellent sound quality

WHAT'S NOT

- Details are hard to discern in low volume



BOTTOM LINE

The Audio-Technica ATH-CK550 is a nice upgrade from stock earphones that come from your digital player.

The advantage of in-ear monitors is that they isolate outside noise so that you can hear the music from your player clearly.

