

GADGETS MAGAZINE

THE PHILIPPINES' FIRST TECH LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

RICH ASUNCION is wearing a Piña Maria Clara wrap from KulturaFilipina

NVIDIA FOR GAMERS ON A BUDGET

THE WONDERFUL WORLD WITH NOKIA

REDISCOVERING VINYL

REVIEWED
Asus Rampage III Extreme
AudioTechnica ATH-CK550
carNAVI Pro BT
HTC Wildfire
Philips SHL-1600
Samsung Champ C3303
Samsung Shark 3 S3550
Toshiba Satellite A665
Western Digital WDTV Mini

ASUS RAMPAGE III EXTREME
Push Gaming Bounce

SAMSUNG CHAMP C3303
For the Win

CANON PIXMA M...
Brings Sexy

DESIGN TRANSCENDING TIMELESS

GADGETSLAB

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WON'T BURN YOUR WALLET

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CARNAVI PRO BT

GPS NAVIGATION DEVICE

By John Rivera

GPS navigation devices aren't exactly new, in fact they have enjoyed a presence in the local market by way of wire and parallel imports. Of course, these devices were far from wireless—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 wireless 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 thickest either. It has a 4.3-inch touch TFT LED 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 music are stored in the 32GB card that goes in the unit, whose slot is located at the top right side.

Powering the Pro BT is an ARM Atol BT GPS processor running at 400 MHz, with 512MB 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 this 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 in 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, a service you or the other

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

WHAT'S HOT

- Fully up to date 2010 2009 maps
- Easy to use and professional UI
- Multiple modes of connectivity (GPRS, BT, USB)

WHAT'S NEW

- Street names disappear on the screen when you zoom

BUY METER

82

The carNAVI Pro BT is an excellent BT3 navigation device, and it's a gadget for sensibly priced people who always want to get lost.

HTC WILDFIRE

SMARTPHONE

By John Rivera

While there is no doubt that HTC has managed to make the Android operating system to new heights, its premium price point has always been a significant stumbling block to mass market penetration. The Wildfire is HTC's recent effort to penetrate the lucrative mid-range market, and still stay in the bells and whistles you'd expect from the "Asian-based" mobile phone maker, but with a gender PRP \$17,500 SRP.

The Wildfire looks like a cross between the HTC built Google Nexus One and Desire. It inherited the curved spine, looks and the optical track pad of the Desire while retaining touch-sensitive controls of the Nexus One. The styling is sleek and minimalist, and if you're not a fan of the white and silver number that was sent to us for review, the Wildfire is available in three other colors—red, black and gray. The display is a 3.2-inch capacitive touch screen affair with 240 x 320 QVGA resolution.

Unsurprisingly, HTC has opted to equip the Wildfire with an MSM 7225 326 MHz processor to bring the unit's price down. That also means some of the more CPU-intensive applications and games might not run as smoothly as you'd expect. Speaking of Android, the Wildfire is equipped with 2.1 Eclair version of Google's OS, and while there's no official word on a 2.2 upgrade, it's more than likely it'll receive an update in the near future. As is the norm with HTC devices, the Wildfire is equipped with the Sense UI laid out on top of the OS, which gives users additional home screens and widgets. Another HTC feature that excited users will appreciate is Friend Stream, it's basically a social network aggregator and allows you to track Facebook, Twitter and Flickr updates quickly and easily.

Connecting to the web is quick and easy, and the Wildfire sports both WiFi and 3G connectivity, so you'll always be able to connect online whenever you want. One feature that I particularly like on Android 2.1 equipped smartphones is how they handle your contacts, especially ones in Facebook. Even if you don't have their phone numbers, you can still call your friends if they posted their contact number in their Facebook profile. You can now also recommend Android apps to your friends from the Wildfire which makes finding apps easier.

Of course HTC had to cut back on some of the features to meet the price. The Wildfire uses a regular LCD screen as opposed to an AMOLED one on the Desire and Legend, and the difference really shows. Reading the screen of the Wildfire is a bit of a challenge under direct sunlight, although it's not much of an issue while indoors. As mentioned before, applications that are graphically taxing noticeably drag with the Wildfire, due mainly to its slower CPU.

In the end though, the Wildfire is what many people have been looking for—a sensibly priced smartphone with trimmings HTC is known for.

“The Wildfire is what many people have been looking for—a sensibly priced smartphone with trimmings HTC is known for.”

SPECIFICATIONS

- Operating system: Android 2.1 Eclair
- CPU: Qualcomm MSM7225 326 MHz processor
- LCD: 3.2" x 3.2" inch TFT capacitive touchscreen
- MEMORY: 512MB RAM + 512MB internal
- BATTERY: 1400 mAh
- CAMERA: 2.0MP
- VIDEO: 176MP, 30FPS, 30FPS, 30FPS

WHAT'S HOT

- Sense UI
- Android 2.1 Eclair
- Facebook and Twitter integration
- Ability to recommend apps to your friends directly

WHAT'S NEW

- 4.3 inch screen
- Display is best to read under direct sunlight

BUY METER

85

While not exactly what you'd call a budget smartphone, the HTC Wildfire delivers about the same performance and maintenance of its pricier brethren.