



## Apacer Disc Steno <<<



**A**h... the price of portability. Gadgety, yet practical portable things can generally be expensive, as is the Disc Steno from Apacer.

This device is an external CD rewriteable unit, with built-in reader supporting six types of memory card. It supports a USB 2.0 connection, and can be

used standalone when burning the contents of your memory cards.

It also comes with a rechargeable 7.4V rechargeable Li-Ion battery, making it as portable as portable gets. According to the manufacturer, the battery provides up to an hour of recording time. As a result, the Disc Steno is a great solution for digital photographers in the field, who can dump the contents of their memory card to CD without the need of a laptop.

Although there are two multifunction slots for memory cards, which accept CompactFlash (CF) Type I and II, Microdrive, Memory Stick (MS), SecureDigital (SD), MultiMedia (MMC), SmartMedia (SM) and xD (with an optional xD-to-CF adapter), these slots cannot be used simultaneously. Instead, the device supports multisection burning, writing the contents of each card you may be using into a new folder with each session.

This is how difficult it is to use as a standalone device. Insert your memory card. Insert a blank CD-ROM. Push the button.

Now, if you find that a challenge, go read *Noggin*.

Admittedly, there is no way of controlling which files should be burnt when used standalone. With 1GB CompactFlash memory becoming more affordable, this could become an issue.

We tested the device with a 64MB CompactFlash card and a 128MB SecureDigital card, both chock full of JPEGs, MP3s, Word documents and PDF files. It took only a few minutes to flawlessly duplicate the contents of each onto a single CD-R.

For PC support, the device will operate under Windows 98/SE/2000 using the supplied drivers and bundled Nero software. Windows XP is supported natively. It will also work under Mac OS X, (but not 9.1) without drivers, provided that Toast 5 Titanium is installed, although this is not supplied.

The most attractive thing about the DiscSteno, apart from its sexy design and portability is that it just works. Fast and simple. SP

### Specifications:

Capacity – 650-800MB; 2MB buffer; card support: CF Type I & II/SD/MMC/SM/MS; 24x CD-R, 10x CD-RW.

**Website:** Apacer [www.apacer.com](http://www.apacer.com)

**Supplier:** Blue Chip IT [www.bcit.com.au](http://www.bcit.com.au)

**Phone:** Blue Chip IT (02) 8745 8400

**Price:** \$559



9/10

## Shuttle SB61G2 <<<



**J**ust like brushed Aluminium was last

year's black, the mini-barebones is this year's super-trendy accessory of geekdom. It's as though every company to ever make a motherboard is shrinking the PCB and throwing it into an Aluminium shoebox. Shuttle pioneered this concept with the XPC range, and is now selling a heck of a

lot of these units as it continues to tweak its design and introduce the latest chipsets into its range.

The SB61G2 is based around Intel's newly released i865G chipset. While this chipset is slightly slower than the bleeding edge i875P, it supports the latest 800MHz FSB Pentium 4 CPUs, packs dual-channel DDR support (with only two RAM slots due to the space restrictions), and also debuts Serial ATA support for the XPC, with two SATA ports sitting next to the two Parallel ATA ones. It doesn't make use of Intel's new CSA Gigabit Ethernet technology, and instead relies on a tried and true integrated 10/100 port.

It also includes decent overclocking functions, however we recommend that the XPC be used fairly stock, as heat management can become an issue in the tight confines of the box. Unlike other manufacturers, Shuttle uses a custom-built heat

pipe to cool the CPU and keep the noise and congestion inside the box down.

As usual we recommend that you bypass the integrated graphics and head straight for a separate AGP card. Like Shuttle's nForce2 unit, the SN41G2, the SB61G2 is free from the heat problems we used to see when using AGP cards inside the XPC. Pack in a RADEON 9800 PRO (unfortunately the dual-height layout of NVIDIA's new cards precludes them from being used inside the XPC) and you have a box that can keep pace with some of the fastest desktop units around.

This is another great unit from Shuttle; however the SN41G2 is still our favourite thanks to the comprehensive features, decent integrated graphics performance and audio quality of nForce2, which makes it a great box for any occasion. If you want the finest mini-barebones system for the Pentium 4, however, the SB61G2 is the one. JG

### Specifications:

i865G chipset; audio with S/PDIF in/out; one PCI and one AGP slot; USB 2.0; IEEE 1394; SATA.

**Website:** Shuttle [www.shuttle.com](http://www.shuttle.com)

**Supplier:** SATO [www.satotech.com.au](http://www.satotech.com.au)

**Phone:** SATO (03) 9899 6333

**Price:** \$950



9/10