

Review by Callum Laing



just talk to the phone

There used to be a time in my life, not too long ago, when I felt defined by the mobile I carried. It was a point of pride that I had the latest, sexiest phone on the market. I beamed and swelled with pride as people cooed over my phone. A shallow man? Yes, yes I was.

Maybe it's because I am older - although arguably no wiser - but now I have reached a point where when I go to a restaurant I want people to talk to me, not stroke the phone I carry. Hence it is with a slight sense of relief that after a couple of weeks, I was able to pack up my **Xphone II** and return it to the nice promotions people at **O2** (www.see0.com).

For those of you of you with slightly more secure egos than mine, here is what I learnt.

The Xphone II is a sexy phone. In the olden days, people used to change the fascias of their phones to match their outfits. No more. Xphone II owners dress to look like their phones - and they look good!

But of course you can't judge a magazine by the camels on the cover, nor is it fair to judge the Xphone by looks alone. Functionally, it has everything that you would expect from a phone running the windows operating system. It is well equipped with 64 MB of ROM, 32 MB of RAM (that's about 500 photos or 45 min's of video); it has a bright screen capable of 64,000 colours, the standard camera, and all the software you would associate with a windows device. The sound quality is good, the joystick makes sense, and the ridged keypad, although small, is relatively easy to get the hang of.

Operationally, this is not for the faint-hearted. If this is the first time you have had a Windows phone then, in the words of O2 Asia's CEO Mark Billington, "you will have to unlearn what you have learnt on other phones." It is not exactly like using a PC, but you will definitely recognise many of the icons and features.

As a techie at heart, I am prone to ripping new toys from the box and slinging their user guides behind the sofa. Several days later, I was on my hands and knees hunting around for said guide and cancelling my appointments for the next few hours. However, it is definitely worth taking the time to familiarise yourself with the functionality if you really want to get your moneys worth.

Alternatively, just flash it at every opportunity you get and watch people coo over it. I think I'm beginning to miss it...

picture this

The newest member of the Treo Family, **Treo 650** from **palmOne** (www.palmOne.com/asia) is derived from the award-winning design of the Treo 600, with improved features and functionality. More than just being a powerful Palm OS organiser, this smartphone provides Bluetooth technology, allowing you to have email access using the Versamail application. Users can download mail wirelessly, view photos, HTML and manage Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint attachments. Are cameras becoming more like phones, or phones more like cameras? The Treo has a built-in camera includes 2x zoom, a mirror for self-portraits, capacity to take a picture in a low light, and the display capability of a vibrant 320 X 320 touch screen with more than 65,000 colours. - *JD*

unlucky for some

BenQ (www.benq.com) incites PC collectors' hunger with their brand-new **Joybook S52** - which incorporates the world's first 13" widescreen display. It is designed with a special curved lower edge for each key, allowing greater ease and smoothness, and cutting the frequency of typos [send me one immediately - ED]. The Intel Sonoma platform is based on new 90nm Dothan CPU with 533MHz FSB and XD Bit security. The Sonoma also features an advanced 915 Express integrated graphics chip and high audio, and provides wireless capability with a tri-mode wireless solution. - *JD*



summer stockings

Easier than personalising your play list in iTunes, just slip your **iPod** into the **iPod Sock** (www.apple.com) to protect your favourite toy. Available in six vibrant colours; green, purple, grey, blue, orange and pink, this set of knit socks provides a stylish and practical way to save your iPod from the outside world's dirt and dust. Some discerning iPod users might decide to match their socks with the iPod sock [no, they won't - will they? - Ed]. Fits all iPod models except iPod shuffle. - *JD*