By John Lombardi

Review Board

The Compaq Portable earned an 'A-' rating as a very portable device that offered all the power of a desktop IBM PC in a fully compatible, though somewhat bulky, package. Now, Compaq has updated its versatile notebook for spiffing up a PC AT-compatible portable computer to a whole new level, cramming the system into a smaller case.

The result is another quality portable in the Compaq line. However, this new system has a few problems that concern it as it must address future upgrades.

FEATURES: The Compaq line of portable computers has a distinct advantage in addition to the Designers line of high-performance PC and AT-compatible desktop computers, Compaq continues to offer the original Compaq Portable, a PC-compatible based on the 8088 microprocessor; the Compaq Pro, an AT-compliant portable version of both basic peripherals; and the Compaq Portable 226, an AT-compatible with an 80386 processor and a high-speed, 20-megabyte hard drive.

In many ways, the new Compaq Portable 226 appears to split the difference between the basic portable and the Portable 226. Priced between the two machines, it is essentially a copy of the 80386-based model but only offers a slower 10-megabyte hard drive and a more compact design. The 360K floppy drive used in the Portable 226 is noticeably smaller and lighter than either of its predecessors. The product literature, however, appears to be designed for those who need a standard PC-compatible portable with somewhat faster processing, but who don't want a full AT system.

The Portable 226 also comes in three models, corresponding to different combinations of disk drives and memory. The top-of-the-line Model 3, which includes 640K of memory, a 560K floppy drive, and a 10-megabyte fixed disk drive. The second Model 2, which includes 380K of memory and a 20-megabyte fixed disk drive. The third Model 1, which includes 190K of memory and a 20-megabyte fixed disk drive.

The machine is a high-quality, breadboarded, battery-powered portable. It is light and easy to use, with a large, easy-to-read keyboard and large, easy-to-read display. The display is bright and clear, providing good visibility in a variety of lighting conditions. The keyboard is comfortable and easy to type on, with good key travel and feedback for extended typing sessions, and also offers an adjustable able key click.

Compaq's Portable II comes with four expansion slots, two standard PC and two AT-compatible expansion slots. The Model 2 includes one of each kind for extension, leaving one PC and one AT slot open for such purposes as memory expansion, sound cards, or other devices. (The standard Compaq models offer two or three slots, depending on configuration.)

The computer comes with a parallel and a serial port, and upgradable BIOS.

Compaq claims its portable is the first to boast a parallel port, and it is indeed a useful feature.

In terms of performance, the Portable 226 is a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

The Portable II system is a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

In summary, the Portable 226 is a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

The Compaq Portable II weighs slightly over 10 pounds, making it a bit more portable than the standard Portable 226. However, it is a bit bulkier than the newer Portable 226, and it is also slightly more expensive.

The Compaq Portable II is designed to be a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

In summary, the Portable 226 is a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

The Compaq Portable II weighs slightly over 10 pounds, making it a bit more portable than the standard Portable 226. However, it is a bit bulkier than the newer Portable 226, and it is also slightly more expensive.

The Compaq Portable II is designed to be a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

In summary, the Portable 226 is a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

The Compaq Portable II weighs slightly over 10 pounds, making it a bit more portable than the standard Portable 226. However, it is a bit bulkier than the newer Portable 226, and it is also slightly more expensive.

The Compaq Portable II is designed to be a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

In summary, the Portable 226 is a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.

The Compaq Portable II weighs slightly over 10 pounds, making it a bit more portable than the standard Portable 226. However, it is a bit bulkier than the newer Portable 226, and it is also slightly more expensive.

The Compaq Portable II is designed to be a high-speed, 20-megabyte portable that offers a high-speed, 20-megabyte drive.
SERVICEABILITY: The Compaq Portable II, like other Compaq portables, is built with bearing and shock mounting to make the machine withstand the rough treatment inherent in portability. It's no wonder that it has a complete set of standard options, but the supplied tools are limited. For example, it is not possible to change the special Tozer screws that hold the machine together. Nevertheless, it is not a major problem. The Compaq warranty is for a standard 90 days, including parts and labor. Compaq support is supposed to be good, but there is no phone number for information. We asked and found the response to be helpful and informal. Although the response was very good, it is not satisfactory. You should be able to pick up a hard disk on a card into the Compaq Portable II, but Compaq wouldn't provide any information on the compatibility of another manufacturer's hard disk.

Registered owners receive a magazine dedicated to Compaq computers and information about enhancements and other products.

We expect, given the manufacturer's reputation, that this machine will be easy to use. The quality of service you receive will depend on the dealer you use, so the quality of your experience will be determined by the dealer you choose. The AT and the IBM PC are not as expensive as the Compaq Portable II, but the ATs are not suitable for use in a corporate environment. The Compaq Portable II is more expensive in some respects.

The result of Compaq's efforts is an interesting, full-feature portable that bridges the gap between the standard IBM PC-compatible portable and a high-performance PC-compatible portable. The price is $1,500 more than the original Compaq Portable. Many will find they can add performance to their own computers at a more cost-effective manner by using the AT. The AT is compatible with the two or three other computers that sell for $1,500 more than the Compaq Portable. The ATs come with a basic computer, and it is not necessary to make up the price. The price is the Compaq Portable II in value in the basic computer category.

The new Compaq Portable II appears to split the difference between the basic and the 286 portables.

mode for long sessions. However, in our opinion, it is not the only way and the only way. The match of the text display can be adjusted in the menu. The Compaq Portable II shifts from monochrome to graphics modes either through a software command or a Ctrl-V hotkey combination.

A similar effect changes between font and slow-speed fonts. With the help of the hand-mother than the keyboard, the keyboard is adjusted with another Ctrl-V hotkey combination. Although this works well, users need not be aware of possible conflicts with software for programs that may have other meanings for these keys combinations. The hand-mother than the keyboard is a combination of the greater-than, less-than, and plus minus, and backspace keys.

Because of the extra utilities, the inclusion of color simulations and a diagnosis. The color simulations can be adjusted in the menu. The Compaq Portable II is very good in ease of use.

SETUP: Nothing could be easier than using the SETUP program. All it takes is opening the case, turning on the computer, placing it in, and running the SETUP program. The SETUP program makes it easy to keep the machine for use. This is a plug-and-play machine that we rate excellent in setup.

Computer Dealers!

Sell the weekly's leaders follow.

Add InfoWorld to your magazine display and let your customers know in a way other computers don't. InfoWorld offers a genuine medium for the first word to micro industries every week. To start selling InfoWorld, call 1-800-227-4365 in California, call 1-800-344-4363, Ask for Mike McManus.

InfoWorld April 21, 1990 59