Equity III Competes As a Low-Priced Clone

This is a slow IBM AT clone. We would recommend it for users who have disk-intensive applications such as the management of large databases and who are expecting the dramatic performance increase attributed to AT-level microprocessors.

The Equity III's documentation is not as good as the IBM's, but it is still acceptable. The Equity III does not come with a manual, and the software that is included is not as comprehensive as that included with the IBM AT.

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**Alps P-2000 Is Rugged But at $995**

By Tony Lima

Review Board

Does the world really need another 9-pin dot-matrix printer? Especially one priced at $995? Yes, we thought not, but after spending a few weeks with the Alps P-2000, we think you could do worse than take a good look at this printer. In a very short time, this device has a lot of features, and it is quiet — in fact, so quiet that we were baffled by the printer. This gives some hope that a printer in a library would need to be used.

**FEATURES:** The Alps P-2000 comes ready to go and, like other models of the heavy-duty printer user, its features include a built-in tractor feed, four modes of operation, a reverse repeat feature for overlaying high-density sections, print for two-page or four-page cartridges, and a semi-parallel port arrangement that actually works.

Let's look at these features one at a time, having a built-in tractor feed is a bonus. We've had trouble feeding some very heavy paper, and none of them do a good job of holding the paper correctly. The Alps printer is easy to use, but we can't say we've seen.

The adjustable tractor feed is 136 inches long and capable of handling 8.5-inch-wide computer paper. It operates in both full- and half- page mode, which makes possible the precise positioning of characters, and for such things as superscripts and subscripts.

The P-2000 also uses the reverse-feed feature on a second line, output. Each line is printed twice, with a slight extra carriage roll between overwriting. This gives a printer print quality from a more price point.

The P-2000 offers both standard Epson ESC/P-2 printer commands and ASCII graphics set at the top of a DIP (dual inline package) configuration switch. In IBM mode, graphics are printed correctly, except for the double-line character, which the P-2000 prints as a single line. The ESC/P-2 graphics are sent to either a user-defined character set.

The P-2000 includes a separate interface cartridge. One selection cartridge sets you the printer with an IBM PC, XT, AT, or compatible, while the other sets the printer with the Apple Macintosh, Apple III, and Apple II family. (Alps has not yet tested this interface cartridge with the Macintosh.) You can specify which cartridge you want when you buy your printer; buying an extra one costs $27.5.

The IBM cartridge we tested included both a serial and parallel port. Each part of the cartridge included a standard Centronics-Type Interface, while the serial port has a standard 25-pin D-subminiature design. The printer is to be able to connect to an IBM XT through a serial port and a parallel port at the same time. The parallel port uses a standard Centronics-Type Interface, while the serial port has a standard 25-pin D-subminiature design. It is impossible to look a printer by looking at a serial or a parallel port. You select the parallel or parallel option by setting DIP switches in the interface cartridge.

**PERFORMANCE:** If you're going to spend nearly $1,000 on a dot-matrix...