

# California Computer Care

News,  
Views,  
Tips and  
Cool Techniques  
for CCC Members

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We  
speak  
Geek,  
so you  
don't  
have to.

# Power Mac G5...

So cool; it's hot!

The new Power Mac G5s are a marvel of cutting-edge engineering. I expect you to say, "I've heard *THAT* one before." Of course you have. Occasionally, the hype is justified. This is an occasion!

I've had a G5 for three months, and it has lived up to every promise. (My G5 is the Dual 2 Gigahertz model.) What promises were these?

**Fast!** Yes, indeed. My measurements show that it runs about three times faster than the Dual 450 MHz G4 that it replaced. In independent tests, the G5 equalled or beat even the most expensive desktop computers, of any brand, in existence (often at less than half the cost of equipment). **Caveat:** Most computer processes take fractions of a second to occur, changing that to a fraction of a fraction is unnoticeable to a human being. This means that for everyday functions, the speed improvement is not as dramatic as it sounds. Darn!

**Easy to set up.** Well, it's a Mac, after all. Even so, adding RAM, a second hard drive and a USB PCI card was easier than in any other computer that I've seen. All parts are beautifully machined; they fit together perfectly. I've seen computer insides that were beautiful to a technician, but the G5 is just plain pretty inside. **Caveat:** It's easy to add goodies, but don't expect to transfer them from your old Mac. Much of the G5's speed enhancement comes from using the latest RAM, hard drive and PCI card technologies, so nothing you have works in here.

**Ports.** The G5s have every imaginable port for plugging in accessories: 4-USB ports (3 in fast 2.0 style), 1-10/100/1000 Ethernet, 1-Firewire 800, 2-Firewire 400, 1-56K modem, 1-analog audio out, 1-analog audio in, 1-optical audio out, 1-optical audio in,



1-headphone, 1-Airport antenna, 1-Bluetooth antenna. The headphone, a USB and a Firewire port are mounted on the front panel for easy connection. Wow! **Caveat:** No SCSI, and don't even think about it!

**Quiet.** The previous G4 models roared like jet planes at times. Even when idle, many folks were bothered by their constant fan noise. The G5 is unusually quiet, rising to a low whoosh when heavily stressed.

**Big.** They didn't promise that it would be big, but it sure is. Huge is more like it. The G5 is over 20" tall, 3" taller than the G4.

**Gorgeous.** It's a matter of taste, but I think the aluminum case is beautiful to behold. Aluminum is also very durable, a great heat dissipater, easy to keep clean and fully recyclable when the inevitable retirement day arrives. **Caveat:** The handles, while functional, are not as comfortable as the G4's.

### So hot: it's cool.

A fact of life about fast computers is heat. Lots and lots of heat. While the G5 is much cooler than its competition, there is still a huge amount of heat to dissipate. To do so, four separate thermal zones have been built-in so that all components are cooled individually. Nine, big, low speed fans cool quietly with energy efficiency. No other computer has such an advanced system for staying cool. **Caveat:** This thing is a power hog! An iMac uses about 130 Watts of power, a G4 tower, about 500 Watts, the G5, uses an astonishing 1000!

### Conclusion.

This puppy is hot in every sense. If you need maximum computer muscle, this is it. Coupled with Mac OS X, the G5 is becoming the Geek's choice for super-computing. In fact, the *University of Virginia* bought the first 1,100, 2 Ghz, G5's to build a super-computer that is now ranked as the second fastest computer in the world. They built this monster for only \$5.2 million. By comparison the number one super computer in the world cost \$350 million to build and is only twice as fast. So, the next time somebody tells you that Macs are too expensive...

## Power Mac G5 models

They come in three flavors:

**PowerPC G5 single 1.6GHz**  
256MB SDRAM  
80GB Serial ATA hard drive  
NVIDIA GeForce FX 5200 Ultra  
\$1799.00

**PowerPC G5 dual 1.8GHz**  
512MB SDRAM  
160GB Serial ATA hard drive  
NVIDIA GeForce FX 5200 Ultra  
\$2499.00

**PowerPC G5 dual 2GHz**  
512MB SDRAM  
160GB Serial ATA hard drive  
ATI Radeon 9600 Pro  
\$2999.00

**Avoid number 1.** Mac OS X heavily favors dual processors. The single processor 1.6GHz. is a poor performer, deficient in memory and has a small (by today's standards) hard drive.

**Number 3 is The King,** if you must have tip-top of the line and macho, chest-beating, bragging rights.

**Number 2, however** is the best value. The dual 1.8GHz. model is only a tiny fraction slower than the 2GHz. King and costs \$500.00 less.



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