It's **all** in!

Words **Aisa Valenzuela**

Laptops have gotten smaller and smaller, and we've seen them undergo the evolution of the netbook. But for the longest time, the desktop remained pretty much the same—monitor, CPU tower, keyboard, mouse, AVR/UPS. That is, until Apple came out with the first iMac in 1998. It took a while for other manufacturers to follow this form factor. But when they did, the number of all-in-one desktops rose.

At the very least, these desktops have the monitor and CPU combined in one package, but most have speakers and webcams integrated into the main body, as well as full wireless connectivity for the keyboard, mouse, and other peripherals. No more wires snaking around the back of the computer, and no more need for a bulky computer table.

Suddenly, the desktop is cool again.

Lenovo IdeaCentre A600

Beauty and brains. It's hard not to gawk at the IdeaCentre A600's 21.5-inch frameless HD panel, but this baby also packs power under the hood: a powerful processor, astounding graphics, and large memories. The sleek, angular design measures only one inch at its slimmest point. Despite its sleek appearance, the A600 has ports aplenty all cleverly integrated into the A600's body. It also comes with an HDTV tuner, optional Blu-ray player, and an integrated speaker system with Dolby Home Theatre audio certification. What makes this product unique is an optional remote control that can be used several ways: as a VoIP handset, an air mouse, and a Wii-like motion game controller.
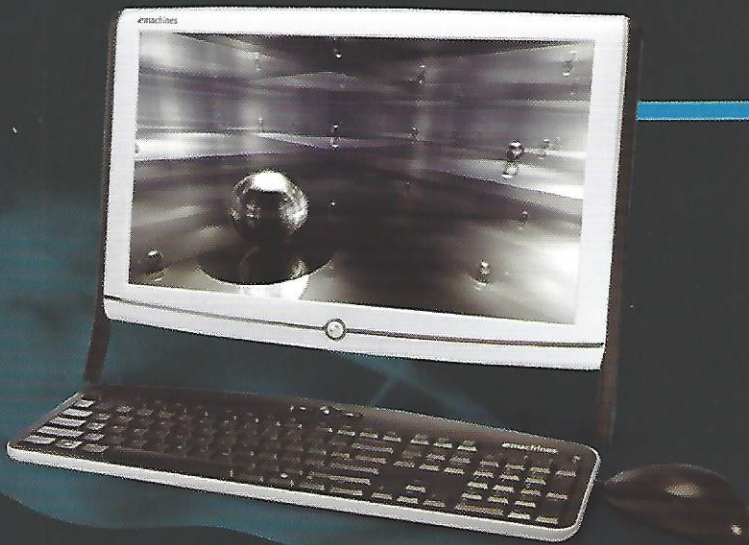
HP TouchSmart IQ816

HP made a splash in the all-in-one desktop department by being the first to offer multi-touch capability. With a mammoth 25.5-inch flat-panel LCD display, the IQ816 can also be wall-mounted to show off its stylish, glossy black finish. Designed for home use (e.g. mounted on the kitchen wall or bathroom wall, if you so wish), it also doubles as an HDTV with a built-in TV tuner. You can record both standard and high-definition TV on the IQ816. Another thing that separates HP from its peers is the ambient light feature that lets you adjust color and brightness to set a mood. You can also adjust the ambient light to point down to whatever you desire (e.g. your keyboard).

Gateway ZX2300W

If its counterparts seem to be going for the sleek and sexy look, Gateway's ZX2300W seems to be aiming for wholesome and clean. Make no mistake about it, however—this desktop is ready to play. The comparatively bulky rear has a purpose: that is, to house high-end 2.2-channel audio system speakers including dual 3-inch rear subwoofers. The side-mounted audio control allows for easy-access volume adjustment. To up the cool factor, a retractable keyboard stows neatly under 18.5-inch HD LCD monitor in order to further conserve desk space.

Acer eMachines EZ1600

Its specs may not be up to par with the more powerful all-in-ones, but in terms of looks, the EZ1600 is no slouch. With a bright 18.5-inch display, it sports a classy, black-and-white, almost Art Deco design. It packs in a punch with a built-in DVD writer that pops out of the right side of the body; the left side holds a card reader, two USB sockets, headphone and microphone jacks, and buttons for adjusting the brightness of the screen.

Sony VAIO JS

The VAIO JS' simple and clean lines blend well with contemporary interior décor while its compact styling makes it easy to fit in almost any room. With a gorgeous 20-inch high-resolution LCD and a large-capacity hard disk, you'd think the VAIO would take up precious desk space. But it's completely the opposite. With a depth of just 15.7cm, the all-in-one leaves a modest footprint on your desk. The unique 'loop' design lets you store the keyboard beneath the display when not in use. All visible clutter has been eliminated thanks to a clean and ingeniously designed system where the frequently accessed ports are hidden from sight without compromising ease of accessibility.

Apple iMac

The granddaddy of all all-in-ones is still looking pretty sharp. Entering the field with 20- and 24-inch glossy widescreen models, the iMac still sets the standard for function and design. Apple prides itself on the quality of its workmanship, and when it says seamless, it means seamless. The wall-mountable iMac is made from a single sheet of anodized aluminum so you won't see any seams or screws. There is a single compartment on the bottom that provides easy access to the memory slots. The built-in iSight camera and microphone are integrated neatly. It also doesn't have a disc tray; CDs and DVDs slide right into the slot-loading SuperDrive. It comes with a trés chic keyboard that's only a few centimeters thick. Combine the system's good looks with a list of impressive specs and the iMac is out to prove that its contemporaries have a lot to live up to.