

Toshiba Launches First Centrino Pro Laptops

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Two new Tecra business laptops are Toshiba's first to avail themselves of Intel's new mobile platform.

Toshiba has launched its first laptops featuring Intel's new mobile platform, formerly dubbed "Santa Rosa" and now called either "Centrino Duo" or "Centrino Pro." The Tecra A9 (\$1,160, street) combines many of the same features as its smaller sister notebook, the M9 (\$1,800, street). Both systems offer Intel's Centrino Pro chipset, which amalgamates the Mobile Intel 965 chipset, Intel Wi-Fi, and Intel Active Management Technology to run with Intel's Core 2 Duo processors. The notebooks feature draft-802.11n wireless technology, which offers boosted connection speeds and wireless range over 802.11g. Each laptop can be configured to run either Windows Vista Business or Vista Ultimate.

The A9, with a 15.4-inch widescreen display, handles graphics using Intel's integrated Graphics Media Accelerator x3100. The M9, incorporating a 14.1-inch widescreen display, offers a choice between the Intel Graphics Media Accelerator x3100 and the Nvidia Quadro NVS 130M discrete graphics chipset with up to 383MB of graphics memory.

Both the A9 and M9 include Toshiba's new 3D accelerometer, a mechanism surrounding the hard drive which, upon detecting acceleration from any direction, removes the hard-drive head from between the HDD platters to minimize impact on the OS. Toshiba also

claims the laptops' protective casing can protect against damage from up to one meter drops.

One nice feature on the A9 is the Sleep and Charge USB port, which allows users to charge compatible cell phones or MP3 players whether the notebook is on or off. Toshiba has updated its spill-resistant keyboard, now protecting not only against water, but soda, coffee, and beer as well.

The Tecra A9 and M9 are available with either a one- or three-year standard, limited warranty, with an optional upgrade of up to four years of extended coverage.

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