

Palm Pre goes on sale in US on Saturday

June 5 2009, by Chris Lefkow



A new Palm Pre smartphone is displayed at the 2009 International Consumer Electronics Show in January 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Palm Pre, the new smartphone from the US pioneer in handheld devices, goes on sale in the United States on Saturday amid generally glowing reviews and favorable comparisons to Apple's iPhone.

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The Pre was named "Best in Show" at the 2009 [Consumer Electronics Show](#) (CES) in Las Vegas in January, and most reviewers have been equally full of praise for the latest device from the Sunnyvale, California-based company.

Palm came out with some of the first personal digital assistants (PDAs) in the 1990s, but the company has been lagging behind rivals Nokia, Apple and [Research in Motion](#) (RIM), maker of the Blackberry, in recent years.

The much-anticipated touch-screen Pre is being seen as its best opportunity in years to win back a significant share of the highly competitive cell phone market.

The Pre will be available through US wireless carrier [Sprint Nextel](#) from Saturday for 199.99 dollars after a 100-dollar mail-in rebate.

Technology reviewer Edward Baig of USA Today said the Pre "stacks up well against Apple's blockbuster device, and in some ways even surpasses it."

"The first [Palm Pre](#) will certainly give the iPhone and other rivals a run for their money," he wrote.

Walt Mossberg of The Wall Street Journal called the Pre a "beautiful, innovative and versatile hand-held computer that's fully in the iPhone's class."

"Its design is much better than that of the two other main iPhone-class competitors," he said, the T-Mobile G1, which uses Google's Android software, and the Blackberry Storm from Research in Motion.

Mossberg said the biggest advantage of the Pre over the iPhone is its physical keyboard that slides out of the body of the phone. The iPhone has a virtual on-screen keyboard.

Mossberg said the success of the Pre may depend on its ability to attract third-party applications. Apple currently offers some 40,000 programs

for the iPhone through its App Store.

The Pre presently offers only about a dozen applications, but its Palm webOS mobile platform is open to outside software developers and Internet titans such as Yahoo!, [Google](#), Facebook and Amazon are among its partners.

At CES in Las Vegas, Palm chief executive Ed Colligan said the phone was "built with developers in mind" and promised that "there will be hundreds of thousand of applications on the platform very quickly."

David Pogue of The New York Times described the Pre as an "elegant, joyous, multitouch smartphone" -- the "iPhone remixed."

Pogue praised the Pre's webOS operating system which allows the phone to run multiple programs at once, giving users, as with a desktop computer, the option to switch between programs without returning to a central home screen.

Both Mossberg and Pogue complained, however, about the relatively short battery life of the phone -- only five hours of talk time.

Other features of the Pre include a Web browser, Wi-Fi, integrated GPS, stereo Bluetooth, a three-megapixel camera, video playback and eight gigabytes of internal storage space.

The Pre is going on sale two days ahead of Apple's WorldWide Developers Conference, when Apple is expected to roll out updates for the [iPhone](#).

Palm's shares gained 9.21 percent in New York on Thursday to 13.64 dollars.

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