

TOP 10 PRINTERS

TOP 100

TEST Center

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IN THE PAST YEAR the price of monochrome laser printers has plunged, as our latest chart reflects: On average, the small-office models cost nearly one-third less than their counterparts did a year ago. And all ten printers ranked here are

new to the chart. Each of our current Best Buys—the \$199 Brother HL-5140 for small offices and the \$925 OKI B6300n for workgroups—offers an aesthetically pleasing yet functional chassis and delivers notably crisp text output.

	SMALL-OFFICE LASER	Street price (8/27/04)	Overall rating	Speed for plain text/full-page graphics (ppm)	Print quality for text/graphics	Comments ¹
1	Best Buy Brother HL-5140 find.pcworld.com/44152	\$199	91	12.8/7.9	Very good/ Good	FEATURES: Rated 21 ppm. Standard 16MB of RAM, 2400-by-600-dpi maximum resolution. ² 250 sheets input, 150 output; optional ethernet. SUMMARY: The compact, smartly designed HL-5140 offers an impressive combination of fine performance and abundant features at an attractive price. Output quality was top-notch, with sharp text and line art. (★★★★★)
2	Samsung ML-2250 find.pcworld.com/44162	\$225	86	12.6/8.0	Very good/ Fair	FEATURES: Rated 22 ppm. Standard 16MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, 300 sheets input, 150 output; optional ethernet, 802.11b. SUMMARY: Unit produced high-quality text, but banding marred its graphics. Model has a single toner and print drum cartridge, which could save high-volume users money in the long run. (★★★★★)
3	OKI B4350 find.pcworld.com/44160	\$349	84	16.0/11.0	Good/ Good	FEATURES: Rated 23 ppm. Standard 16MB of RAM, 1200-by-600-dpi maximum resolution, 250 sheets input, 150 output; optional ethernet. SUMMARY: This streamlined model was the fastest small-office laser on both our text and our graphics tests. Its relatively steep price prevents it from rising higher on the chart, however. (★★★★★)
4	Dell Laser Printer 1700 find.pcworld.com/44148	\$199	83	7.4/3.6	Good/ Very good	FEATURES: Rated 25 ppm. Standard 16MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, 250 sheets input, 150 output; optional ethernet. SUMMARY: Model was slow to print—especially when generating the first page. Its graphics output was the best we've seen, though, and an optional 550-sheet second paper tray is a bargain at only \$100. (★★★★★)
5	Konica Minolta PagePro 1350W find.pcworld.com/44154	\$180	77	10.0/6.0	Very good/ Poor	FEATURES: Rated 21 ppm. Standard 8MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, 150 sheets input, 100 output; USB 1.1 port, no ethernet option. SUMMARY: This Windows-only model economizes by relying on your PC's processor for image processing. Its text output impressed, but its graphics output was too dark and exhibited banding. (★★★★★)
	WORKGROUP LASER	Street price (8/27/04)	Overall rating	Speed for plain text/full-page graphics (ppm)	Print quality for text/graphics	Comments ¹
1	Best Buy OKI B6300n find.pcworld.com/44184	\$925	90	18.6/11.4	Very good/ Fair	FEATURES: Rated 35 ppm. Standard 128MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, 700 sheets input, 500 output; optional serial port. SUMMARY: The fastest printer on the chart for graphics and the second-fastest for text, the OKI B6300n produced precise text output, but banding and moiré interference patterns tarnished its grayscale graphics. (★★★★★)
2	Brother HL-6050DN find.pcworld.com/44164	\$650	84	11.6/6.5	Outstanding/ Fair	FEATURES: Rated 25 ppm. Standard 32MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, ² 600 sheets input, 250 output; duplexer. SUMMARY: The HL-6050DN's print speeds were comparatively sluggish, but its sharp, dark text looked great. No PostScript printing, but this model is otherwise a good deal for a laser printer with duplexing. (★★★★★)
3	Xerox Phaser 4500/N find.pcworld.com/44188	\$1200	77	15.9/8.5	Fair/ Fair	FEATURES: Rated 36 ppm. Standard 64MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, 700 sheets input, 500 output. SUMMARY: This unit was a breeze to install on our network, and its relatively zippy print speeds for both text and graphics should satisfy most workgroups. Print quality was mediocre, however, lacking the detail we expected. (★★★★★)
4	Samsung ML-2551N find.pcworld.com/44166	\$600	76	10.5/4.1	Good/ Good	FEATURES: Rated 25 ppm. Standard 32MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, 600 sheets input, 350 output; duplexer, optional 802.11b. SUMMARY: Nicely priced for a dual-sided printer, this model yielded consistently good print quality on text and graphics. Its speeds, however, are the slowest here, and installation on our network was a pain. (★★★★★)
5	HP LaserJet 4250n find.pcworld.com/44168	\$1249	75	18.8/8.0	Fair/ Fair	FEATURES: Rated 45 ppm. Standard 64MB of RAM, 1200-by-1200-dpi maximum resolution, 600 sheets input, 250 output; USB 2.0 and ethernet ports. SUMMARY: The versatile 4250n provides fast performance and lots of upgrade options. But we saw dithering dot patterns on graphics output, as well as some blotchiness, ghosting, and bleeding on text. (★★★★★)

FOOTNOTES: ¹ All models include parallel and USB 2.0 ports, unless otherwise noted. Workgroup lasers also include ethernet. ² The maximum true resolution is lower. **CHART NOTES:** See find.pcworld.com/44372 for details on how we test and for a breakdown of the weightings that go into the overall rating. See find.pcworld.com/10860 for details on PC World's Star Ratings.