

### **What's more exciting - a real submersible Lotus Elise or a new iPhone?**

The iPhone hype is relentless. Unless you have been living on a desert island for the last 12 months, you must be aware of the huge amount of interest in Apple's first cell phone. Some cynics expected this to be just a flash in the pan, but they were wrong.

This brilliant product is definitely here to stay. Being a lifelong PC fan, it hurts me to admit it, but I rate the iPhone extremely highly, even in its existing non- 3G format. Why has it been such a huge success? In my opinion, it is simply down to design rather than technology. Apple started with a clean slate, an eye for cool design and with the knowledge of previous mistakes made by other manufacturers. The cool exterior design of the phone plus the design of a fabulous user interface has been the big hit. It seems to matter very little whether it has 3G data capability. I personally have access to the latest cell phone releases and I road test a cross section. Just recently I have road tested the latest Nokia and Samsung phones and find both lacking in certain areas.

When comparing notes with a friend with an iPhone, the iPhone scored higher. So, it hurts to admit, it but I would really like an iPhone myself! The desire could also be fuelled by the fact I cannot get one without having to pay "loadsamoney". An unlocked iPhone in France is selling at €690 and they are still not available in Spain. It appears Movistar will be the distributor in Spain but rumours exist that they are waiting for the 3G version to be released. However, iPhones are on the move, as you will see below.....

### **A whole iPhone family by 2009. First 3G iPhone due next month?**

Few handsets have generated such media hype and predictions about future launches and potential features as the iPhone. New research from investment bank Piper Jaffray predicts a diversification of the iPhone line into a multi-tiered family of handsets that will generate combined sales of 45 million units next year.

Piper Jaffray analyst Gene Munster accepts that many view his 2009 iPhone shipment estimate as outrageously aggressive. "However, we are maintaining our estimate based on several factors," he said. "First, we expect Apple to introduce a 3G iPhone model with additional features in the next 3-6 months. We also expect Apple to offer an entire family of iPhones by January 2009 at the latest including lower priced models that decrease the average selling price."



Munster expects the introduction of a model by next year that will be priced between US\$200 and US\$300, addressing a more price sensitive market. He expects the iPhone average selling price to drop from US\$489 in 2007 to US\$365 in 2008 to US\$314 in 2009.

Looking at the latest predictions for a 3G iPhone, Bank of America analyst, Scott Craig, claims that there will be a significant production run of a 3G iPhones beginning in June after an initial small build in May. He added that he now expects production volume to be much higher than his previous estimates. He said Apple planned to build more than 3 million high-speed iPhones in May followed by more than 8 million in the third quarter of the year.

### **Multi-carrier 3G iPhone launch rumours in Australia**

Australia's blogging community is awash with speculation that Apple is planning to launch a multi-carrier, contract-free 3G version of the iPhone in the country in June. The source, an Australian Mac user website, claims the launch is timed to coincide with Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC) and the opening of a new flagship Apple store in Sydney.

No version of the iPhone has been released yet in Australia. The source claims that as Telstra is the only Australian operator with an EDGE network - the network the current iPhone uses - Apple has little bargaining power to negotiate an exclusive arrangement with an operator in the way it has in other countries. Instead, it is suggested Apple will launch the new 3G version of the iPhone that is able to work with all Australian 3G network operators.

This multi-carrier approach also means that Apple would have no reason to lock users into lengthy contracts. The source adds that as there are relatively few Apple and operator-branded stores in Australia, Apple will instead allow the device to be sold via resellers in the same way it sells other products such as iPods.

The source claims that Apple Australia has already informed select Australian resellers of its plans. However, it has allegedly given each reseller a different launch date in the same week so it can spot the culprit if launch details are leaked.

### **Nokia previews touch-screen "iPhone killer"**

Nokia has taken the wraps off a new handset codenamed "Tube" widely believed to be the Finnish vendor's response to Apple's iconic iPhone.

The handset was unveiled at this month's Evans Data Developer Relations Conference in Redwood City, California. It is Nokia's first product to use an iPhone-style touch-screen and early reports suggest the device will also support both Java and Flash - two technologies that are currently unsupported on the iPhone. Other capabilities will include the ability to upload photos.

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Nokia has given no indication of when the device may ship, but industry watchers believe Nokia may try to launch the device before Apple launches the much-anticipated 3G version of the iPhone, which is reportedly scheduled for launch within months.

Speaking at the conference, Tom Libretto, vice president of Forum Nokia, made light of the news that Apple had shipped as many as 6 million iPhones to date, noting that - as the world's largest handset vendor - Nokia manages such volumes in a single weekend.

Separately, analyst firm MultiMedia Intelligence has forecast that the success of the iPhone has sparked high demand for touch-screen phones. It says shipments of touch-screen phones will reach 178 million by 2011.

### **My childhood fantasy is for real!**

As regular readers will know, I am a lifelong James Bond fan. I still remember the thrill of watching the Lotus Esprit plunge into the sea in "The Spy Who Loved Me" - I was completely enthralled, and writhed in my seat with each swerve of the car as, miraculously, the wheels folded in and it turned into a fully armed personal submarine. How cool was that? James, aka Roger Moore, then drove up the beach, wound the window down and threw out a fish. Utterly corny, but great fun.

Well it's been a long time coming, but at last you can have one if you want one. Rinspeed, who are famous for producing functional motor vehicles that only previously existed in the overactive imagination of teenage boys, have unveiled the world's first submersible car at the Geneva Motor Show. The Rinspeed sQuba differs from military wet vehicles in that it doesn't float or drive along the river bed in as much as it actually "flies" underwater. Frank Rinderknecht, chief at Rinspeed says he has spent three decades (since being inspired by the James Bond movie) trying to work out how to build a car that can fly underwater. Staying true to the movie, Rinspeed also used a Lotus to base their project upon, but opted for the Elise rather than the Esprit.

Running such a vehicle on a combustion engine was impractical, so the sQuba relies on electric motors for propulsion and manoeuvrability. One of the three motors drives the wheels on land, whilst the others are reserved for the propellers underwater. Power for the motors is supplied by rechargeable Lithium-Ion batteries. The main motors are supplemented by two Seabob jet drives located just behind the front wheel arches. Their rotating nozzles were manufactured using Carbon Nano Tubes to make them rigid and light enough to be effective.

Rather than tackle the issue of constructing a car that was both watertight and pressure resistant, Rinspeed opted to make it a wet ride. Two tonnes of weight would need to have been added to make

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it “dry”, so this car is an underwater cabriolet. This “open-style” allows for a speedy exit should thing go seriously wrong down under.

To submerge the car it is simply driven into the water, whereupon it will begin to float, by cracking the door and allowing water in, the car then sinks below the surface – to the horrified look of the on-lookers. Fortunately the driver turns into a diver with all the facilities on hand including integrated scuba tanks.

To cap it all, it has rotating number plates, zero emissions, salt-water resistant interior and the ability to drive it using a sophisticated laser sensor array.

This is a toy for those who have everything, but still feel the world is not enough...

For more information look at the builders web site:

[www.rinspeed.com](http://www.rinspeed.com)

Following on from last month, I have been sent an email address for the bizarre Aqua Villa which I encountered at the Dubai International Boat Show. Check out [www.thefloatvilla.com](http://www.thefloatvilla.com).

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