

Workstations

The RAM determines the number of programs that can run simultaneously, how quickly those apps perform and how much data is readily available to them. If you work with large image files in demanding editing applications, aim for a system with 2 GB of RAM. Computers also are designed with a certain number of RAM slots that allow you to upgrade over time.

STORAGE

When considering hard-drive capacity, think about the future. Image files keep getting bigger, so look for at least 80 GB on a notebook and 250 GB for a desktop. Desktops with empty bays for additional hard drives are a plus. You always can expand your storage with external drives, but internal drives are faster.

PORTS

Any computer you buy today comes with multiple USB ports. The more ports you have, the more devices you can leave connected, such as a printer or a card reader, and still have open ports for other uses. FireWire is another high-speed way of connecting devices such as a digital video camera and an external hard drive. Some computers offer built-in card readers, freeing up a USB port.

Wireless networking is standard on most laptops and is an optional feature on many desktops as well. Going wireless allows you to transmit large amounts of data quickly by connecting to a wireless network for cable-free Internet and file sharing.



If you're looking for a hand-built machine crafted specifically with a photographer's needs in mind, the **Cerise Quad-Core Workstation** is nothing short of a multimedia workhorse. Configurable with up to four 500 GB hard drives, this powerful PC comes with no added software or fancy extras. Instead, simple, quiet operation is a major focus with the hard drives residing in a separate chamber so they won't heat up the rest of the system when you're doing disk-intensive work. The spacious silver case, which has a door that hides the optical drive bays, has several vents for cooling, and there's plenty of room for expansion. An Eight-Core workstation is also available.

Base Configuration

Processor: 2.4 GHz Intel Core 2 Quad
Memory: 1 GB
Video Card: NVIDIA GeForce 8400GS (256 MB)
Hard Drive: 500 GB, 7200 RPM (2)
Optical Drive: CD/DVD
Ports: FireWire (2), USB (6)
Networking: 10/100/1000 Gigabit Ethernet
Estimated Street Price: \$2,499