

Apple set to unveil improved computer

By Mary A.C. Fallon

(Boca Raton News, Sept. 12, 1986)

SAN JOSE, Calif. - Apple Computer Inc. of Cupertino, Calif., on Monday will introduce the Apple IIGS personal computer, which will have a basic system price between \$1,600 and \$1,900 depending on its components.

According to a company statement scheduled to be released Monday but obtained Wednesday by the San Jose Mercury News, the new IIGS will be three times as fast and have twice as much memory as the IIE, the workhorse of the Apple II line. The new computer will be available in computer stores in limited quantities Sept. 27.

The new computer will have a jazzier appearance than its predecessors in the Apple II line: The color has been changed from khaki to platinum, and the housing has been redesigned to look less boxy. To entice early buyers, a limited number of the new computers will be signed by Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, who created the first Apple II computer.

The IIGS - the "GS" stands for graphics and sound - can simulate some musical instruments, has a human-like voice and high-resolution color. Some industry analysts who have seen the new computer say it will churn up as much excitement in the home and educational market as the IBM personal computer did in the business market.

"I expect demand will be phenomenal," said Richard Matlack, president of InfoCorp, a Cupertino market researcher. "It is one of those products that will get people's attention and get the market re-stimulated."

The basic central processing unit of the IIGS will cost \$999. That price includes a detached keyboard, numeric key pad, a mouse, manuals and training disks. Apple is also introducing a monochrome monitor and two color monitors priced up to \$499. In addition, there are new disk drives - a 3½-inch disk drive costing \$399, a 5¼-inch disk drive costing \$299 and a 20-megabyte hard disk costing \$1,299.

The IIGS, which will be made in Singapore, will top the 9-year-old Apple II product line. Sales for Apple's leading home and education computer, the IIE, have sagged this year. During Apple's last fiscal quarter, sales of Apple's business computer, the Macintosh, surpassed the IIE for the first time.

Market researchers are optimistic that the IIGS's color and sound will draw customers to computer retail stores, especially as Christmas nears.

"Apple is approaching the home and school markets in a way they want to be approached," said Stewart Alsop, editor of the PC Letter. "Teachers need great color and great sound to make education software programs interesting."

For the IIGS screen, Apple has borrowed many features from the Macintosh, including pull-down menus and icons.

"When I am running its new software, (the IIGS) is unbelievable," said Douglas Cayne.

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