



LOVE (LY) NEW RELEASES





16e



Adding to the iPhone lineup, Apple have just launched the successor to the iPhone SE: the iPhone 16e.

The new budget iPhone features the latest Apple A18 silicon, providing lightning fast performance with 6-CPU cores and 4-GPU cores as well as a 16-core Neural Engine. This equates to a phone that can handle the latest Apple Intelligence features and AAA gaming titles with hardware-accelerated ray tracing. The 16e also introduces a new Apple C1 modem for improved power efficiency and stable 5G connectivity. Speaking of battery life, Apple are stating that iPhone 16e lasts 6 hours longer than iPhone 11 and up to 12 hours longer than than any generation of iPhone SE. Charging is possible via either USB-C or wireless charging but the iPhone 16e does lack the newer MagSafe iPhone capabilities.

The new phone is larger than the phone it replaces, with a 6.1-inch Super Retina XDR OLED display. Yes it has the older notch design, and not a new Dynamic Island but 16e closes the book on Touch ID for iPhone, with the TrueDepth camera system built-in to the

notch enabling Face ID for unlocking, purchases, signing into apps etc.

The 16e gains the Action Button for access to a variety of functions. Map the button to open the camera or torch; switch to silent, recognise a song with Shazam; or take a voice memo. It also unlocks a new Visual Intelligence feature adding to the Apple Intelligence experience. A press of the Action button can summarise and copy text, or even translate text.

The phone's camera system has not been neglected, as it comes with the 48MP Fusion camera system with an integrated 2x telephoto. The front-facing TrueDepth autofocus camera enables sharper close-up shots and the new HDR system produces more lifelike skin tones with bright highlights, accurate and rich mid tones; and deep shadows. 16e can also shoot 4K 60 with Spatial Audio.

The new iPhone 16e will be available in two colours: Black and White in 128GB, 256GB, and 512GB storage capacities starting at £599.00/AU999.00. It can be pre-ordered now, launching on the 28th February.

Samsung's Unpacked 2025 event update was somewhat overshadowed by CES last month, so with Apple launching a new iPhone, now seems like a good time to look at Samsung's latest flagship rival to the iPhone.

Galaxy S25 Ultra (the flagship model in the range) features the most powerful chip in a Galaxy phone to date, powered by the Snapdragon 8 Elite for Galaxy, with unique customisations to the chip design by Samsung's direct collaboration with Qualcomm. Samsung are boasting a 40% uplift in NPU performance, 37% in CPU and 30% in GPU, compared to the previous generation. Display efficiency has been improved with the on chip ProScaler boosting image scaling quality by 40%. This in turn improved power efficiency when combined with Samsung's Digital Natural Image Engine (DNIE). The chip is also equipped with Vulkan Engine and onboard ray-tracing, improving gaming performance. Despite the performance gains, the chip is kept cool with architectural changes and a 40% increase in the size of the phone's vapour chamber.

The new phone is Samsung's lightest and thinnest to date and Samsung have rounded the edges, making it more comfortable than the previous model with its sharper edges. The design incorporates both titanium and recycled

aluminium as well as Corning's Gorilla Armour 2 protecting the 6.9-inch QHD OLED display. Corning suggests their new Gorilla Armour 2 is stronger than glass. It offers advanced drop protection and has an anti-reflective surface treatment.

AI has been fully integrated into Galaxy Ultra 25 and One UI 7. Continued work with Google places AI at the core of Android, with multimodal capable AI agents enabling Galaxy 25 to interpret text, speech, images and videos. Circle to search has been improved. It is faster and more helpful than before and can quickly recognise phone numbers, emails and URLs. The side button activates Gemini, performing actions seamlessly across Samsung and Google apps, as well as third party apps like Spotify.

A new 50MP Ultrawide sensor is a big upgrade on the previous generations 12MP. Samsung are boasting a main wide camera 200MP, but I'm inclined to take this one with a pinch of salt. Anybody remember 1600Hz televisions? A number of new features have been added to the camera system. 'Audio Eraser' removes unwanted background noise from videos. For a more DLSR-like experience, a new 'Virtual Aperture' provides depth of field control, and 'Galaxy Log' allows for Raw video recording and colour grading in post.

The Galaxy Ultra is available to buy now starting at £1,249.00/ AU\$2,149.00.





25 / +

Alongside the Ultra, there's also the 25 and 25+ models in the Galaxy S25 range.

The Galaxy S25 features a 6.2-inch OLED FHD+ display. The Galaxy S25+ features a 6.7-inch QHD+ display. Both offer a variable refresh rate of 1-120Hz like the Ultra, so other than resolution, all S25 displays are excellent with Vision Booster and, like Ultra, display image quality is improved by the built in PropScaler.

Both phones are framed in Samsung's Armour Aluminium with the displays protected by Corning Gorilla Glass Victus 2. Durability is further extended with an IP68 rating against dust and water. Like the Galaxy 25 Ultra, the 25 and 25+ have smoother and rounded edges, making the phones more

comfortable to hold.

The camera system is still advanced, despite not boasting the numbers of the Ultra. A 50MP main wide camera with 2x optical zoom, 12MP Ultrawide and 10MP Telephoto complete with 3x optical zoom.

The boost provided by the Snapdragon 8 Elite for Galaxy is even greater on S25 and S25+. NPU performance is reported to be 68% faster; CPU performance is 45% faster; and graphics performance is increased by 48% and, of course, the chip on both phones feature Vulkan optimisation and improved ray-tracing.

Battery life is improved, with both phones featuring large batteries capability with over 4,000mAh of capacity. Coupled with Samsung's mDN1e technology, Galaxy S25 series phones can watch up to 30

hours of video in just one sitting. Like their larger cousin, the smaller phones are also built with AI in mind, featuring the action button for activating Gemini, Circle to Search, as well as other AI enabled features.

S25 and S25+ come in a range of colours: Navy, IcyBlue, Shadow and Mint as well as three exclusive Samsung.com colours: BlueBlack, Coralred and Pinkgold. Storage options are also generous, starting at 128GB for the S25 (UK only). Otherwise it's 256GB for both models, and can be configured up to 512GB. Any option also comes with 12GB of RAM.

The Samsung Galaxy S25 starts at £799.00 for the 128GB option or £859.00/AU\$1,399.00 for the 256GB. The S25+ starts at £899.00/AU\$1,699.00 and is available to order now.

THE SEQUEL

Panasonic have been rather quiet on the camera front the last few years. There's been the odd release

here and there, but nothing to the level their competitors have been putting out on the market. This month sees an update to their premium high resolution full frame camera; the S1R which was launched back in 2019. Quite a while for a camera, given that everybody else has been updating models roughly every 3-4 years. It does however, seem to have been worth the wait.

The new S1R II packs in a brand new 44MP BSI CMOS sensor. Slightly smaller than the previous models 47MP, but adds phase detection autofocus, a faster readout and 8K video capabilities. Oh, and it's the first camera on the market to offer 8k Open Gate recording. This essentially means it uses the full 3:2 surface of the sensor with no 16:9 limit. All of this in a body that echoes that of the S5 II, making it far smaller than the camera it replaces. In terms of speed, the camera can reach a very respectable 40fps in 12-bit RAW when using the electronic shutter. This is with a 1.5 second pre-burst with a half press of the shutter. As Panasonic have opted for a a non-stacked

sensor, it will suffer a little more from rolling shutter than Canon's top of the range offerings, but it's certainly fast enough for many situations, according to tests. To get the most out of the camera, photographers may want to stick to 14-bit which can be shot at a still fast 9-10fps. The camera also supports a high resolution function, allowing for 177MP photos. This can even be used handheld thanks to the cameras 8.0 stop 5-axis in-body stabilisation.

Coming back to the cameras video capabilities, the S1R II is probably the hybrid camera to beat in this department. A world first for 8K recording, and its currently the only camera in its class offering 32-bit floating audio capture which negates the need to set audio levels. This however does require Panasonic's DMW-XLR2 microphone.

The price point is where the S1R II really shines. It's half the cost of the Sony A1 II, 50% cheaper than the Canon EOS R5 II and 25% cheaper than the Nikon Z8 coming in at just £2,999.99/ AU\$5,499.00. That's an amazing price, and whilst Panasonic's lens line is a little lean, it is an L-mount camera, so it has access to a wider range of lenses from both Leica and Sigma. It is available to order now!

