

## ot Dem Ol' Post-Event Blues

There were no surprises at the November 10th "Event." The Apple faithful, scads of industry "reporters," and internet listeners hung on every single word, every nuance of the master, Steve Jobs. New G3 Macs. Check. On-line store. Check. Build-to-order machines. Roger.

You mean that's it? Whoa dude! Get back out here. Where's the Apple/Oracle deal? What happened to the NCs? I was banking on that technology transfer agreement with the Romulans to get their "cloaking" techniques. You know, so we can sneak our Macs into the institutes of "higher learning" that have been bought out by Intel. I mean...where are the REAL goodies?!?

Excellent rumor outlets such as MacOS Rumors and Apple Recon had us drooling like Pavlov's dogs with prognostications almost too good to be true. In the aftermath, the real thing was a letdown to many. Compared to our expectations of a high-yield nuke lobbed squarely into the center of the Wintel camp, the mere kilotons of conventional stuff seemed more like a cap gun.

But was it really chump change? Consider this: Many analysts credit Apple's warp-factor 7 dive to market share hell to Apple's near-supernatural ability to get their marketing estimates 180 degrees out of phase. They overproduced Performas while hordes of adrenaline-crazed, high-end performance addicts stormed the gates in vain attempts to buy top-of-the-line boxes. Over-produce systems with little mark-up, under-produce those with large profit margins. Performas were heaped onto ever-growing mountains of light beige in dusty warehouses until fire-sale prices coaxed timid buyers out of dark corners.

Rabid packs of snarling hyenas sporting "PRESS" badges ravaged Apple

with the most absurd analyses. A vicious cycle was set into motion. Sales dropped even more, based on the "Apple is dead" mantra heard throughout the media. Then the hyenas helped themselves to huge chunks of their prostrate prey. Sales drop. Feed more. Faintly disguised as reporting, a mindless ritual ensued, no questions asked.

You know the story. As a consequence, stores stocked fewer and fewer Macs. This added more fuel to the engine driving this cycle. Macs appeared in shrinking numbers. The ones you could find were frequently neglected, dusty, and disfigured with hideous desktops as though a deliberate plot were afoot to ugly them up as much as possible. Frequently, the Apples weren't even turned on — leaving the impression on the mind-numbed victims of the media that these poor critters just weren't good enough to be fired up in such close proximity to that hyper-marketed MMX machine that sat across the aisle. Like zombies, poor ignorant citizens with more money than sense queued up to second-rate machines run by third-rate operating systems hawked by fourth-rate 18 year-olds drawing a bounty for Wintel boxes sold.

s one rare, wise man in the media pointed out, build-to-order and on-line sales would have prevented the chain of events which precipitated the Apple misfortunes. As this is being written, the first made-to-order Mac has left Cupertino and arrived at its destination. It is inevitable that there will be some bugs to iron out. But, taken in perspective, it is positively, absolutely incredible that Apple has segued into these new paradigms as swiftly and trouble-free as they have.

Hmmm. O.K., the best of all worlds. New super, duper chip. Order your Mac any way you want it via the World Wide Web. Or, go support one of the class electronics firms like CompUSA who have committed to making the number one computer the number one showpiece under their roof. "Apple Boutiques." A little foppish for my tastes. But, nevertheless, it has kind of a classy ring to it. In fact, it sounds downright upscale, indeed. Sort of resembles the "Think Different" advertising campaign.

Meanwhile, business as usual for most of the industry hyena pack. Ho-hum articles were written while feasting on free goodies piped straight to their desks by Microsoft, Intel and the schools of soulless remora which feast on the scraps left dangling from the teeth of these twin giant carnivores. Let's see, hmmm, call up last year's article. Yes, yes. I can keep "troubled" and "struggling." "Slipping" is OK, too. "Sliding" will do nicely. Now cut and paste in "G3", "build-to-order", and "on-line store." Ahhhh. Done. Burrrrrp. Another atavistic feeding-frenzy over-and-done with. And damned proud of

it. Where's my Pulitzer Prize, they ask? No fuss, no muss, no use cranking up the old brain, what-so-ever.

The difference, this time, is that a number of the hyena pack are trading in their moth-eaten, shaggy fur coats for something a little more human-like. More of them are waking up. More are writing positive, or at least non-insulting, articles. Perhaps because people like you and me are calling them on their insipid approach to reporting. Maybe, by golly, because we're demanding they have some inkling of what they're writing about.

There's a lot of good news out there for Apple. There really was a lot of great news on November 10th. Revel in it! It's all a matter of perspective.

Myself,

I'm waiting to see the rest of the goodies. It's more than a hunch that Apple is not yet showing all their cards.

Ahhh. Let me see now. Oh yes! <http://www.store.apple.com/>. What do you want to build today?

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