

Product Information

Produced by: Sonnet Technologies

Web: <<http://www.sonnettech.com/>>

Price: \$400-\$600 (depending upon configuration)

System Requirements

Power Mac 4400, 5400, 5500, 6400, 6500, 7220; Performa 54XX, 6360, 64XX; 20th Anniversary Mac; Power Computing PowerBase; and Motorola StarMax 3000, 4000, 5000, 5500.

Recently Sonnet Technologies introduced a new line of G3 upgrades for a variety of Macs which, until now, had been deemed "non-upgradeable", insofar as G3 upgrades were concerned. Sonnet's new cards fit snugly into the Mac's L2 cache slot.

There are three configurations for the upgrade: The first card runs at 250 MHz with a 512k backside cache, the second runs at 300 MHz with a 512k backside cache, and the third runs at 300 MHz with a 1MB backside cache. The price for the upgrade is fairly reasonable, running between \$400 for the slowest and \$600 for the 300 MHz. card. Installation is quick and easy; once I opened the box and absorbed the simple directions, it took three minutes to actually install the chip and another two to install the software. A simple reboot was all that was necessary to see the dramatic results.

Immediately after installing the chip I could see the improvements. Startup is smoother and faster, windows open up instantaneously, and in general the computer appears to be faster. Below is a graph of basic MacBench tests run on three systems, the original Performa 6360, the upgraded 6360, and a true 300 MHz. G3.

s the graph shows, not only does the upgraded 6360 feel faster, but it is faster. The improvement is astonishing and brings new life to older Macs. Considering the price, this upgrade is a solid buy. A similarly rated G3 starts at nearly a thousand dollars, and to replace an entire system would cost nearly two thousand dollars.

For those of us who wish to squeeze all possible life out of our Macs, Sonnet has truly pulled through. There is a competing chip on the market from Vimage Corporation, a new G3 upgrade vendor. They offer a similarly rated 240 MHz chip for close to the same price as Sonnet's 250 MHz. card, however, their chip has a large cooling fan, as opposed to Sonnet's heat sink, causing loss of room in the computer and the necessity of losing your left RAM slot.

In general, Sonnet's chip is well made and I have experienced no problems so far. It receives a rating of Very Nice with a little room for prices to fall.

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