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Asus Nova P22, the Mac Mini Born in the Wrong Family

The Taiwanese company's first desktop success

Asustek is a well-known company when it comes to notebook systems or to computer hardware, but somehow, the success failed to set in its desktop PC offerings. Well, things are about to change with the advent of the small-form factor Nova P22.The Asus Nova P22 model is a little bulkier than the Apple Mac Mini model, but that's how all the Windows-based Mac Mini competitors are. It is only 6 centimeter tall, which is almost the same size with Apple's Mini creation. The system is much more flexible and can be placed both horizontally and vertically, thanks to a bundled metal stand.Under the shiny, Mac-like hood, the system features an Intel Core 2 Duo E6320 1.86 GHz, 1066 MHz FSB, Chipset - Intel 946GZ ICH7, 1 GB DDR2 667, Slim Slot-loading 16X DVD (Super-multi) Optical Drive, Ethernet (10/100/1000 Mbps), USB 2.0 x 4, DVI-I Out, 5.1 Channel Digital Audio Optical In. Data is stored on an 160 GB conventional hard disk drive with SATA-II connectivity.The small form factor computer is quite a challenge for the Mac Mini, and it even performs better in some areas, such as the wireless network performance. Should the default hardware not be enough, you can always rip the cover off the unit and perform some "unorthodox" post-purchase upgrading on your own. The cover can be detached by removing the four screws hiding beneath the warranty stickers. No, the stickers are not strategically placed, they just happen to be there - kidding. Removing the cover means warranty violation, and although I am sure that this should be regarded as an unacceptable warranty policy, I'll have to live with it. Although the $899 from Asustek is pretty appealing, you could get yet another Mac Mini killer from Hewlett-Packard for just another $50. HP's new Pavilion SlimLine S3330f comes with upgraded CPU, a regular 3D graphics card as well as a Blu-ray/HD DVD combo drive.

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