

## A Puny Performa Chapter

### IN THIS CHAPTER:

- The baffling history of Performas
- What's different about the Performa
- All about At Ease
- How to use Apple Backup

### WHAT'S A PERFORMA?

What is a Performa? At one time, you could have said it's "a Macintosh sold only through consumer stores such as Sears (and not computer stores)." But then Apple began selling them through computer stores, too.

OK, so then you might have said, "It's a Macintosh with specialized system software that makes it easier to use." But then Apple made the special Performa features standard across *all* Macs (in System 7.5).

At this point, you might have defined a Performa as "a Mac that comes with free software already on the hard drive, such as ClarisWorks, Quicken, America Online, and clip art." But then Apple introduced products such as the "Quadra 605 bundle" and the PowerBook 190 and 1400 series — you guessed it, non-Performas with that same software pre-installed.

So, finally you might have mentioned the last remaining defining characteristic of the Performa line: "A Performa is a Mac sold with everything — even a monitor — in one box, for one price."

Until Apple introduced the Performa 6220 and 6400, which are sold without monitors.

That's why this is a *puny* Performa chapter — because there are scarcely any differences left between Performa models and those described in the bulk of this book.

In the early days, Performa models essentially corresponded to mainstream Mac models. In other words, Performa 6115 = Power Macintosh 6100; Performa 6200 = LC 6200; and so on. Today, not every Performa has its standard Mac equivalent, nor does every Mac match up with a corresponding Performa. For example, there is no Performa version of the Power Mac 5400 or 5260. Conversely, the Performa 6290 and the 6300- and 6400-series models exist *only* as Performas — Apple doesn't make non-Performa versions of those machines.

So, what's left to define Performas?

- They still *generally* come complete with monitor, and nearly all models include a Global Village fax modem (either as an internal card or as an external Teleport unit).
- Today, all Performas include a generous helping of commercial software (*good* software, too): Quicken, ClarisWorks, America Online, a handful of CD-ROMs, and many others. They also come with Megaphone, the software that lets the Mac be an answering machine and speakerphone, plus the Apple Internet Connection Kit, which is certainly the easiest way on Earth to sign up for an Internet account.
- Every Performa comes with a CD-ROM disc that holds all system software (and the included commercial software), finally ending the cries of “Cheapskate Apple!” that rang out in the days when Performas included no system-software backup at all. However, the installer provided doesn't offer a “custom install” option; it lets you install only a complete System folder (or a complete hard drive-full).
- The Performa system-software CD doesn't let you do a “clean reinstall” using the ⌘-Shift-K trick described in Chapter 33. You must use the “hide the Finder” method (also described in that chapter).
- The very latest, such as the 6400 models, include an elaborately produced multimedia tutorial. An overly energetic woman in her 20s jumps around on your screen, actually walking around in there like a four-inch pixie escaped from a screen saver, pointing out various elements on the screen and jumping around on the Launcher window. Subsequent tutorials walk you through the various special Performa features — the answering machine, CD-ROM, and so on.

Incidentally: For information about specific Performa models, see Chapters 12 and 13. This chapter covers the Performa as Concept.

## CASE HISTORY

### PERFORMA STORES

Neither one of your cheerful authors actually owns a Performa. Yet, we needed to take screen shots of the Performa screen in order to illustrate this chapter. Off we ventured, floppy disk in hand, to our nearest Performa-selling office-supply store.

Now, Apple is perfectly aware that the worker whose normal job is selling three-ring binders and electric hole-punches is not, right off the bat, necessarily good at selling computers. This might be the reason why Macs have hitherto been sold at computer stores, where there are supposedly some knowledgeable people. You can ask questions. You can call up when something goes wrong.

Therefore, Apple has made sure that the Performa buyer is going to be okay with his or her purchase. First of all, because there's no salesperson to call up with questions, Apple provides Performa owners with a toll-free telephone hot line, staffed by smart people who can answer Mac questions. Second, because the office-supply store is not about to do Mac *repairs*, Apple gives Performa owners a second toll-free number — this one to summon a technician to come *to your house* (or wherever the Performa happens to be) and fix the thing, for free, on the spot.

This being said, we must echo the sentiments of many appliance-store Mac buyers: Yikes! On the day we went questing for screen shots, we approached the three Performas on display. All three were mouseless. We're not sure what kind of thug would steal a mouse, but, in any case, the clerk we asked shrugged and didn't know anything about it.

So we went to a second Performa dealership. We saw two Performas on display — each had a mouse. But the clerk-person went ballistic on us when he heard what we were up to. He eyed the blank floppy disk in my hand. "I'm afraid I can't let you do that," he said, putting his hand in front of the floppy-disk drive.

We assured him that we were fully competent Mac users and guaranteed him we wouldn't harm the machine. We finally offered him \$20. He took it gingerly, waved us toward the machines, and muttered another warning not to mess things up.

But our problems were just beginning. We couldn't take our screen shot on the first Mac because its System software was deeply troubled. (The *three* complete System Folders we counted may have been responsible.) We finally took our screen shot on the other Performa. We even cleaned out some superfluous junk (A/ROSE, DAL, Caps Lock) from its System Folder as our way of saying thanks for the use of the machine.

We felt sorry for the poor little machines — manhandled by the public and misunderstood by the sales staff. But it was, nonetheless, a thrill to see a real Mac in mainstream America, nestled among the pencil sharpeners and staples.

## The three original Performa features

Until 1994, when Performas and other Macs began to resemble each other more and more, the specialized “p” versions of Performa system software (see Chapter 6) offered three unique Performa features:

- One-click launching of programs from the Launcher window
- Auto-filing of new documents into a Documents folder on the Desktop
- Automatic hiding of background programs — even the Finder

Today, of course, these features are available on any Mac. For details on these features, see “Launcher” and “General Controls” in Chapter 4.

Figure 15-1

The Performa's General Controls control panel — before System 7.5 — had a different Desktop pattern control than the one found on other Macs.

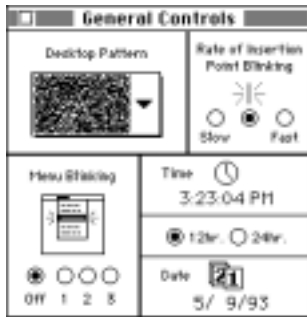


Figure 15-2

The original Performa patterns, represented here in shades of gray.

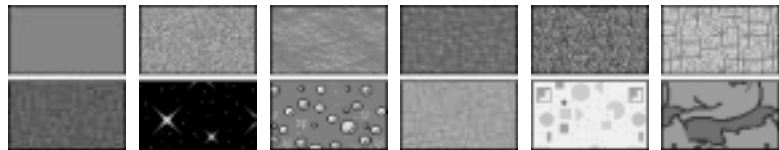
## Historical Performa principles

In addition to those Big Three features, Performas had a few other distinctive features.

### *The General Controls control panel*

For a reason that's no doubt tied in to Apple's user studies, the non-System 7.5 Performa's General Controls control panel (see Figure 15-1) doesn't let you edit your Desktop pattern. If you like making the backdrop to your Macintosh environment a teeming mass of little letter *J*s, as your friendly author Joe did before System 7.5, you're out of luck.

At least the patterns you do get are in a handy pop-up menu. Furthermore, using ResEdit, you *can* edit the Performa patterns, as shown in Figure 15-2. (Hint: Open the General Controls control panel and double-click the *ppt#* icon.)



### *The old Performa Control Panel*

Every Performa model made between October 1993 and the release of System 7.5 (the 550, 475, 476, 460, 466, and 467, for example) came with a unique feature: the Performa control panel.

**TRUE FACT****THE MAC/PERFORMA EQUIVALENCE TABLE**

Exactly how much Mac meat have you got there in that Performa? Here it is: the ultimate Performa-to-Mainstream-Mac Equivalence Table.

Performa	Equivalent Mac	Processor
Performa 200	Classic II	68030, 16 MHz
Performa 400, 405, 410, 430	LC II	68030, 16 MHz
Performa 450	LC III	68030, 25 MHz
Performa 460, 466, 467	LC III	68030, 33 MHz
Performa 475, 476	LC 475	68LC040, 25 MHz
Performa 520	LC 520	68030, 33 MHz
Performa 550, 560	LC 550	68030, 33 MHz
Performa 575, 577, 578	LC 575 CD	68LC040, 33 MHz
Performa 600	Ilvx	68030, 32 MHz
Performa 630*	LC 630	68LC040, 66 MHz
Performa 640DOS	LC 630 DOS	68LC040, 66 MHz
Performa 5200**	Macintosh 5200/75 LC	PowerPC 603
Performa 5300CD	Power Mac 5300/100 LC	PowerPC603e, 100 MHz
Performa 6110†	Power Mac 6100/60	PowerPC 601
Performa 6200††	Power Mac 6200/75	PowerPC 603
Performa 6290	N/A	PowerPC603e, 100 MHz
Performa 6320	N/A	PowerPC 603e, 120 Mhz
Performa 6400/180	N/A	PowerPC 603e, 180 MHz
Performa 6400/200	N/A	PowerPC603e, 200 MHz

\* ...and the Performa 635, 636, 637, and 638.

\*\* ...and the Performa 5210, 5215, and 5220.

†...and the Performa 6112, 6115, 6117, and 6118.

††...and the Performa 6214CD, 6216, 6218, 6220, and 6230.

*Note:* Almost all Performas also come with keyboard, monitor, fax/modem, and about ten commercial software programs pre-installed; today, all Performa models have a CD-ROM drive.

This control panel was responsible for several of the features originally created by the first Launcher (Finder hiding, Launcher opening, Documents folder-handling). But unlike the old Launcher, the Performa control panel let you turn these features off individually (see Figure 15-3).

**Figure 15-3**  
The Performa control panel gives you feature-by-feature control over your Mac's Performa-like behavior.



In fact, the Performa control panel introduced a pair of additional features: System Folder Protection and Applications Folder Protection. These options simply prevent anyone from dragging icons out of the System Folder or Applications folder. If you try, you get a strange message about not having “enough access privileges” to move those icons. (Only the “root level” items — loose in the folder — are protected; you’re still free to drag individual control panels out of the Control Panels folder, for example.)

This feature, too, wound up incorporated into System 7.5’s General Controls panel — although the bizarre and misleading message about “not enough access privileges” wasn’t rewritten until System 7.5.3.

## AT EASE

At Ease is a Finder-hiding gadget designed for those in control (a parent, a teacher, a service-bureau owner). It protects the Mac from those who are *out* of control (a kid, a student, a customer).

At Ease comes free with the Performa, or can be purchased from Apple or a mail-order place. It has certain aspects in common with the Launcher, in that it creates a palette of jumbo icons that one click, not two, will open. But At Ease fills up the entire screen. Control Panels, the Trash can, and your disk icons are all hidden from view, making it impossible for accidental renaming, deleting, or setting changes to occur without the grown-up’s knowledge.

In its place, you see something like Figure 15-4. When you launch a program, the At Ease window itself disappears, only to reappear when you quit that program.

In current versions of At Ease, each student/child/customer can have his/her/its own selection of icons installed on these screens. When the Mac starts up, it presents a list of all such setups (the list might say Timmy, Mom, Dad, Sissie, and so on), and you double-click to tell the program which configuration to use.

You can even set up a “restricted Finder” environment for certain users, in which the regular world of movable icons, folders, and menus is available — but only designated ones. You, the administrator, decide which folders and files are visible and usable, using the At Ease Setup program.



Figure 15-4  
What you see instead of the Finder  
when you're in At Ease.

### *At Ease and the death of your hard drive*

The manual makes a big deal about the specific way to remove At Ease. It tells you that you must open the At Ease control panel and *click the Off button* before removing At Ease. It specifically warns you *not* to drag the At Ease files to the Trash. The manual doesn't, however, specify exactly what will happen if you *don't* remove At Ease in the officially sanctioned manner.

Well, basically, you *trash your hard drive*.

At Ease does something rather un-kosher when it installs itself: It modifies the *boot blocks* of your hard drive (the very first instructions that get processed when the Mac is turned on) to ignore the Finder and launch At Ease instead. Of course, if you've *thrown away* At Ease, the Mac goes on a wild-goose chase, and throws up its electronic hands in frustration. It gives you a flickering system-bomb icon in an empty dialog box — and, after a while, the blinking question-mark Icon of Doom.

You can restart, hold down the Shift key, do whatever you want, and the hard drive won't come back. Sometimes, running the Disk Tools program can repair the damage. Other times, doing a clean system reinstall (see Chapter 33) does the trick.

Much better, though, to avoid the problem in the first place: *Turn off* At Ease before removing any of its components. Or, remove it using its original Installer program's Remove option. Otherwise, you're asking for trouble.

## ► PERFORMA SECRETS ■

### ***Fixing the Performa Plus monitor***

These days, Performa monitors are pretty terrific — certainly on par with non-Performa Apple monitors. But in past years, every Performa came with something called the Performa Plus monitor, which had a muddy and washed-out picture (compared with the Apple 14" color monitor). But as reader Geoff Alexander pointed out, if you aren't afraid to adjust the contrast and brightness controls, you can do much better.

Turn the brightness all the way down, and the contrast all the way up. Surprise: You get a better image than the Apple 14" color monitor. Better color rendition, too.


### ***The forgotten-At-Ease-password trick***

It could happen to you: You forget your own At Ease password. Holding down the Shift key at startup, of course, doesn't bypass At Ease. How can you get back to your Finder?

Restart the Mac from your Disk Tools disk. Now just open your hard drive's System Folder, open the Preferences folder, and throw away At Ease Preferences. Now At Ease can't remember your password, either!

Restart the Mac and you're back in business.

### ***A little At Ease surprise***

With At Ease running, hold down the Option key while choosing About At Ease from the  menu; you'll uncover a picture of the At Ease programmers.

### ***The secret CD System folder***

Ever wonder how a Performa's CD-ROM can actually start up the Mac? After all, there's no System folder on it. Look around — see for yourself!

Perhaps to discourage novices from installing incomplete pieces of the System folder, Apple went to a great deal of trouble to *hide* the CD's actual System folder. It's *not* the one whose components seem to be in the System Folder Files folder (in the Hard Disk Files folder).

The real one lurks in the Restore All Software folder, nestled among the hundreds of blank document icons called Data File 43, Data File 44, and so on. On various models, we've seen it disguised as Data File 46, 80, or 96. In all cases, some Apple programmer actually pasted a bogus custom "blank document" icon onto the System folder to make sure nobody recognizes it! (But view the window as a list, and you'll see the unmistakable folder icon return.)





**CASE HISTORY****THE TROUBLE WITH THE PERFORMA CD-ROM**

*Nobody ever said that Apple's approach to system software on the Performa was perfect. Here are reader David Converse's particular complaints, to which we add, "Yeah — what HE said!"*

First on the hit list: Apple's cursed Performa CD (for the 6000-series models, for example).

The included CD, with System software and bundled third-party programs, is an improvement over the nothing supplied with many earlier Performas. Unfortunately, it isn't a great improvement. To reinstall any software, the following steps are required: Boot from the CD (hold down the C key at startup). Run either the Restore All Software or Restore System Software program on the CD. Watch as everything is reloaded to your internal hard drive. Easy, right?

Not so fast. Pity the poor Performa user who has replaced the internal drive with a non-Apple model . . . or who has reformatted the drive with a third-party driver . . . or whose internal drive is simply full. In the first two cases, the installer won't find the hard drive at all; in the latter case, it will show error messages and end up crashing.

Furthermore, although the included booklet says you can reinstall individual programs from the CD-ROM, that isn't the case — it's all or nothing. Loading to a drive partitioned with HD SC Setup is OK, except that the installer will load to the highest partition (in terms of disk addresses) and, if that partition is too small, oh well.

Apple should get a clue. Selling machines aimed at the non-computer-savvy public with crippled backup disks is sheer foolishness.

