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## Apple iPod nano (4th Gen) - First Look

Is thin and tall the answer?

by Stuart Miles published on 10 September 2008

Short, fat and stubby is out, long and thin is in is the message from Apple when it comes to its new look iPod nano. But will this be the must have gadget under the Christmas tree? We had a brief play at the company's "Let's Rock" event in London to find out.

It seems that the design has gone full circle as Apple has moved back towards a longer, thinner, model as we saw with the 2nd generation iPod nano.

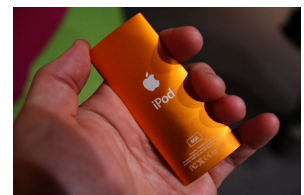
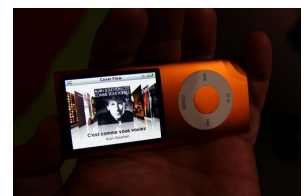
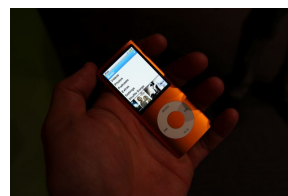
We will never know as to whether the iPod nano 3rd-gen performed badly, however what we do know is that it's out and the new model is in.

For your cash (just a little over £100 for the 8GB model) you get a bigger 2-inch screen that, like a TV from the 80s, is curved. The move, although not confirmed by Apple, seems to be to increase the viewing angle. Whether that's the case or not, it has worked and the bright crisp screen is ideal for looking at information either in landscape or portrait mode from all angles.

While the iPod nano does support video playback, you'll have to be mad to want to watch video of any length on the screen. It might be bigger than its previous incumbent, but it's no cinema experience.

With a new widescreen display, Apple has added an accelerometer, as found in the iPhone. Switching the MP3 player sideways means the screen now goes into landscape mode automatically, a nice, but logical step.

The iPod nano 4G takes advantage of this new bit of hardware in a number of ways. The first is that when you rotate the player into landscape mode images or album art switches with you. In the case of album art, that means Apple's Cover Flow interface allowing you to scroll left and right via



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the scroll wheel.

The second is taken from Sony Ericsson and its Walkman range. Shake to Shuffle, as Apple likes to call it, will allow you to shake the iPod nano to change the tunes. The system works very much like the Shake feature on the Sony Ericsson Walkman mobile phones. It's a nice idea, and one that can be disabled completely, or merely disengaged by sliding on the hold button.

Elsewhere and the iPod nano promises a 24-hour battery life for music and 4-hour battery life for video, something we were unable to test in our play, but if true will be impressive.

On the software front Apple has promised a few tweaks here and there. Thanks to the longer screen the menu system is easier to use as you get more information on your available real estate. You'll also get Apple's new Genius playlist feature allowing you to create Genius playlists on the fly.

The software basically scans your music collection and then creates playlists based on songs that sound like the song you've chosen: it's clever and simple to use.

## VERDICT

Like the iPod touch refresh announced today, the new model is an update rather than a completely new product line.

The bigger screen, the Genius mode and the thinner design will appeal to newcomers looking for a smarter looking MP3 player over Apple's current nano offering.

We are surprised that Apple opted not to include Wi-Fi to allow iTunes Store support on the move.

The new colours (nine in total) are also likely to appeal to the gifters out there in time for Christmas - we quite like the purple one [feeling ministerial eh? - Ed].

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## At a glance

### What is it?

4th Generation Apple iPod nano

### Good

Bigger screen, Genius mode, colour option

### Bad

No Wi-Fi, change in shape but not in features

### Verdict

From our brief play, it's hard not to like the new model if it's the iPod you've got to have

**Price** 109 - &pound;149

## Your score

?/10

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So it's a thumbs up? From our brief play, it's hard not to like the new model if it's the iPod you've got to have.