

Nokia 8800 Sirocco

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Hot metal

The Nokia 8800 was the ultimate luxury fashion phone, but lacked feature finesse. Its successor, the **Sirocco**, looks to redress the balance



Features

- Stainless-steel body
- Ball bearing slide mechanism
- Two-megapixel camera
- 128MB internal memory
- Exclusive Brian Eno-composed ringtones

Pros

- One of the most beautifully built handsets on the market.

Cons

- No memory card slot, which seriously limits its music and multimedia storage potential.

Also consider

The LG Prada is set to muscle in on the 8800 Sirocco's premium status. Designed by the Italian fashion house, this stylish phone sports a finger-operated touch-screen and two-megapixel camera.

DESPITE **Mobile Choice's** reticence towards the original Nokia 8800 back in issue 112, the handset still struck a chord with the executive suits. It was THE phone to aspire to and was the weapon of choice for the blue-blooded glitterati and those who happened to have a spare £600 to splash out on a phone.

Our major criticism of the 8800 was its vacuous feature line-up; it was the ultimate in style over substance. While we acknowledged its superb craftsmanship and design, its specs left us underwhelmed. Why couldn't Nokia have matched its elegant style with a handsome feature set?

Well, with the follow-up, the 8800 Sirocco (curiously named after a type of wind that blows in from the Sahara Desert), the Finnish giant has obviously seen the error of its ways and obliged with a more advanced line-up. Nokia has also tinkered with the 8800 Sirocco's design and made it even more streamlined and desirable.

Elegant

At first glance, there appears to be little difference between the two handsets, but look closely and Nokia's design refinement is exceptionally classy. The front slide fascia is more minimalist with a convenient thumb indentation for a better grip when opening the phone. The keypad and navigation and soft key area has also been refitted for the better.

The 8800 Sirocco is, of course, still swathed in its signature metallic armour, but has gained a couple of grams and a few millimetres. At 138g, its stainless steel body is a weighty proposition and you will definitely feel it in the pocket. The pay-off is that you are getting a solid, meticulously crafted, expertly built handset.

Just like the original 8800 and the recent LG Shine, its gleaming torso attracts greasy paw prints

like a sticky-fingered kid to a newly cleaned window. So practice your buffing technique, because it will be in constant demand, and Nokia kindly provides a suede cleaning cloth to help out.

Slide away

The 8800 had the best slider action in the business – spring-assisted and sturdy with a satisfying clunk – and the Sirocco keeps this feature. Nokia has added ball bearings used in high-performance cars to give the mechanism an even slicker glide. You won't be disappointed.

Unfortunately, the display quality hasn't moved on from the 208x208-pixel resolution, but it remains an adequately detailed screen and it is still guarded by scratch-resistant sapphire-coated glass.

Usability has been improved by the keypad overhaul, with more spacious buttons and joypad. The only quibble is that their spongy feel isn't in tune with the rest of the phone's tight construction. However, it doesn't affect operation, although the slight overhang from the sliding cover that blighted the original 8800 is still evident. It does hamper your

fingertips when trying to get good purchase on the last row of keys, especially those of you with chunky digits.

Ambient sounds

So what features has Nokia enhanced with the Sirocco? The most noticeable change is the camera, bumped up from a miserable 0.5 to two megapixels, while the internal memory has been doubled from 64MB to 128MB. The only other new face on the Sirocco is ambient pioneer and record producer Brian Eno. Having dumped avant-garde electronic composer and film scorer Ryuichi Sakamoto, Nokia recruited Eno to record exclusive 'Crystalline' ringtones. These are unmistakably Eno, with atmospheric and tasteful guitar and piano vignettes, that will induce wistful longing, rather than alert you to an incoming caller. They all sound undeniably pretty.

Minimal music

The lack of memory card and sufficient internal memory seriously limit the appeal of the built-in music player. And this is compounded when you see it has a capable seven-band equaliser to enhance the fidelity and stereo Bluetooth

Let's hope the WAGS don't get wind of the Sirocco.



MOBILE CHOICE

Stats

- **Size:** 107x45x17.5mm
- **Weight:** 136g
- **Display:** 262,000 colours
- **Resolution:** 208x208 pixels
- **Camera:** Two megapixels
- **Video recording/playback:** Yes/yes
- **Audio playback:** MP3, AAC, AAC+, eAAC+
- **Connectivity:** Bluetooth, USB
- **Internal memory:** 128MB
- **Memory card slot:** No
- **Java:** Yes
- **Games:** Snake II, Chess, Golf Tour, Solitaire
- **Messaging:** SMS, MMS
- **Internet browser:** WAP 2.0, XHTML
- **Email client:** POP3, IMAP4, SMTP
- **Ringtones:** Polyphonic, MP3, AAC
- **GPRS:** Yes + EDGE
- **Frequency:** Tri-band
- **Talktime:** 165 minutes
- **Standby:** 240 hours

Verdict

Nokia has added substance to the Sirocco's undoubtedly elegant style.

Trendy talker

To soften the blow of the high price tag on your bank balance, Nokia has bundled in a matching Bluetooth headset, the BH-801 (not to mention a charger and protective carrying pouch). The successor to the BH-800, which was shortlisted for a **Mobile Choice Award**, it is even more streamlined and stylish with softer curves. At 11g, it is still lightweight (despite putting on 2g) and snug in the ear, and there's an optional lughole loop to support the in-earpiece. We recommend you use this for extra stability.

The BH-801 automatically goes into pairing mode when you power up, so it's a straightforward hook-up with your Sirocco and you can adjust the call volume easily with a switch on the side. Call quality was reminiscent of the BH-800 – strong, with only minor disruption and crackle. The BH-801 is a worthy and stylish companion to your handsome Sirocco.

Stats at a glance

- **Price:** Around £70
- **Weight:** 11g
- **Size:** 48x20x10mm
- **Talktime:** 360 minutes
- **Standby:** 160 hours
- **Bluetooth support:** v.1.1, 1.2, 2.0
- **Operating range:** 10m

8.0



Nick Renshaw
nick.renshaw@nhmedia.co.uk

MOBILE CHOICE THUMBS UP

85%