

GRIFFIN



ClearBoost™
Antenna Case for iPhone™

Books of Mac get Axio Packs (okay, Hardsleeves)



By **Jeremy Horwitz**

Editor-in-Chief, iLounge

Published: Tuesday, December 12, 2006

Category: Backstage

Now that iLounge is a multi-MacBook family - Dennis, Larry, and I all use MacBook Pros, and our significant others are either MacBook or smaller PowerBook users - we're always on the lookout for better MacBook cases. Over the past couple of months, I've been actively using and loving Speck's SeeThru, [previously featured on Backstage](#), but I still think that there are times when its added plasticity thickness detracts a bit from the MacBook Pro's 1" profile. I've been trying to decide between keeping SeeThru on, or switching to a case/bag that's either dedicated to the Pro, or has space for it alongside some other items.

[digg this](#)
[submit a news tip](#)

Recent Entries

[What S-GOLD3 Could Really Mean For the Next iPhone](#)

[About that iPhone 3G "in 60 days" thing](#)

[The Mac Guessing Game, Part 2](#)

[The Mac Guessing Game](#)

[The Tonium Pacemaker. The iPod for DJs?](#)

[More entries »](#)



Axio's Hardsleeves for MacBook and MacBook Pro (\$80) just became serious contenders. We're fans of Axio's hard shell bags and laptop cases, so we were immediately interested in seeing how the Hardsleeves measured up to the various other MacBook case options we've checked out in recent months; thankfully, the answer is a good one. From the outside, there's probably no MacBook case we'd rather be carrying than one of these: we checked out both the metallic gray version and the matte black woven version ("embossed black"), each made from hard ABS plastic, and both are even better-looking in person than on Axio's web site, particularly the black one, the embossing from which you can see in detail below. Another version ("gloss white" / "pearl white") isn't currently listed on Axio's site, but appears to be in the offing as well.





The cases are simply but nicely designed, splitting into two even halves with a double metal zipper system in the middle. Like Axio's hard plastic backpacks, the Hardsleeves feel bulletproof from the outside, and give a greater sense than neoprene or even the SeeThru cases that your MacBook or Pro is safe from harm. (As the owner of a Zero Halliburton briefcase, the metallic Hardsleeve is the closest I've seen to a MacBook-sized alternative, which is great.) Sculpted EVA foam form-fits the shape of either computer, allowing you to access all of the ports when the case is opened on a flat surface - we've been working with a MacBook and a MacBook Pro on the cases for the last day, and finding both to be very convenient.



Both of the cases come with the same two pack-ins - a set of four rubber feet that can be applied to limit scratches or dirt on whichever side you determine will be the "bottom half," and a card with the word "instructions" on top. It should have been singular: the instruction, represented graphically, is to place the feet on each of the case's bottom corners. Shocker. It's nice that you have the option to put these on or leave them off, because the cases look really nice without them - you get to decide whether you're willing to take the risk that they'll scuff.



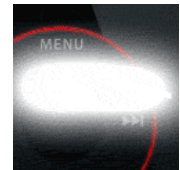
We have only two reservations about the Hardsleeves. First is the padding, which while perfectly safe for travel purposes has slightly different issues in the MacBook and MacBook Pro versions of the case. In the MacBook version, the padding is cut to a thickness that allows the computer's DVD drive and ports to be entirely accessible when the case and computer are open, which is close to ideal, but rather than make the 13.3" MacBook's case smaller, it's the same size as the 15.4" MacBook Pro's case, only with extra left and right padding. By comparison, the MacBook Pro's version has less padding - the correct amount - on its left and right sides, but its DVD drive is blocked. Because of the shape of each case's internal molding, neither version guarantees that your MagSafe port - or any of the other ports - will remain fully accessible when the computer's lid is closed, a fact which will bug some users more than others.

IVYSKIN
Hard Screen/ Touch-Thru

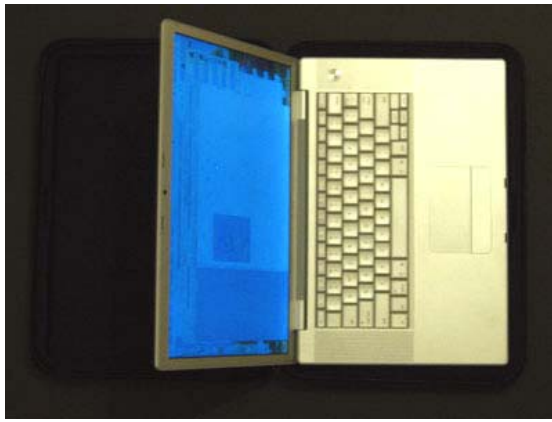
Xylo T2
[Click Here!](#)

matias armor

aluminum case for iPhone®



Rebuild empty iTunes library from iPod



The other issue is equally small: besides their omission of pockets - arguably a necessity because of their thin-ish profiles, but a challenge for wall power-dependent users - the Hardsleeves don't include any straps, or loops for straps, so that they can be carried without being hand-held or placed inside of another bag. If they did, we'd be taking them everywhere, and even though they don't, we still anticipate that they'll be getting a lot of use over the next few months, thanks to their great looks and resilience.

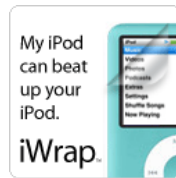
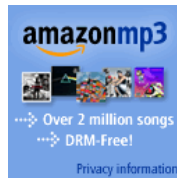
 **DIGG THIS!**

[The Official Timbuk2 Site](#)

Durable Laptop & Messenger Bags. Order At The Official Timbuk2 Site!

Timbuk2.com

 **Ads by Google**



[Take Your TV With You](#)

watch Media Center TV on Zune, iPod, Pocket PC, PSP, etc Go Mobile!

www.MyTVToGo.com

Ads by Google



**ezView
Leather Case**

for
Touch
Classic
Nano
iPhone

and more

The case that goes to eleven...

Thank you for your support. Shop in the [loungeStore](#)

1 I just got Speck's SeeThru, and it's perfect for me. I have a laptop bag, and putting the Macbook in a case inside a case like this Axio Pack is too much hassle. I couldn't do without my power cord and other stuff and just go with the Axio Pack.

The SeeThru shell doesn't really add that much to the bulk, and I can print out pictures and put them between the shell and the lid of the comp to decorate my Macbook. Cherry red goodness.

See ya
Steve

Posted by **Stephen Worth** on December 15, 2006 at 5:48 PM (PDT)

2 I was wondering if it would be possible to keep the clear case (from Speck's see thru) on my macbook while fitting it inside the axio hardsleeve?

If the mold in the Hardsleeve is to tight, could it be carved (with a very sharp knife)?

Thanks for the insights
Ian (I am protection obsessed and would like to enjoy both these products)

Posted by **Ian** on January 20, 2007 at 1:35 PM (PDT)

Name:

Email:

Remember my personal information

Subscribe to this discussion. We'll update you whenever new comments are added.