

Consumers Digest

MAY/JUNE 2009



Best Buys in Central Air Conditioners

Best Buy Categories:

- [P]=Premium selection;
- [M]=Midrange selection;
- [E]=Economy selection.

Best Buys in central air conditioners were selected based on energy efficiency, noise level, features and brand reliability.

Best Buys are for a series of units.

All central air conditioner Best Buys use the environmentally friendly R-410A refrigerant, are Energy Star-rated and qualify for the stimulus package tax credit of 30 percent to a maximum of \$1,500 of the installed cost.

All central air conditioner Best Buys have on-board monitoring that can detect and display problems in the system. Peak efficiency SEER (seasonal energy-efficiency ratio) is the ratio of output in Btu and watts used.

Manufacturers do not publish MSRPs for central units. MSRPs are based on input from contractors, distributors and installers' price books. MSRPs reflect prices on a 2-ton (24,000-Btu) model.



Carrier Infinity 24ANA1

Central Air Conditioners

[P] Frigidaire/Nutone/ Tappan/Westinghouse FS4BI

MSRP: \$4,150

The FS4BI is the most efficient central unit on the market. Its inverter technology, which Nordyne applied uniquely to central air conditioners, allows this model to save energy while it delivers more-consistent cooling throughout your home than with other central units. This model also has the lowest sound reading (59 decibels) of any central unit that we could find.

Features:

- * Output: 2 to 4 tons
- * Peak efficiency SEER: 24.5
- * Warranty: 10-yr.

[M] Carrier Infinity 24ANA1

MSRP: \$3,100

You can't buy a more efficient central air conditioner than the 24ANA1 without paying \$1,000 more. Carrier air conditioners are well-known for their durability, and this unit's proven two-stage compressor should give you many years of efficient cooling.

Features:

- * Output: 2 to 5 tons
- * Peak efficiency SEER: 21.0
- * Warranty: 5-yr.; 10-yr. compressor

[E] Goodman SSX16

MSRP: \$2,400

The solidly built SSX16 is one of the lowest price central units that meets the new federal tax-credit standards. It has one of the best warranties that we could find among all central air conditioners.

Features:

- * Output: 2 to 5 tons
- * Peak efficiency SEER: 16.0
- * Warranty: 10-yr.; lifetime compressor