

Apple's biggest announcements from its iPad event: brighter screen, faster chips and the Pencil Pro

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In this June 16, 2020 file photo, the sun is reflected on Apple's Fifth Avenue store in New York. Apple will reports earnings on Thursday May 2, 2024.
Credit: AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, File

Apple on Tuesday unveiled its next generation of iPad Pros and Airs—models that will boast faster processors, new sizes and a new display system as part of the company's first update to its tablet lineup in more than a year.

The showcase at Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, California, comes after the company disclosed its steepest quarterly decline in iPhone sales since the pandemic's outset, deepening a slump that's increasing the pressure on the trendsetting company to spruce up its products. Apple is expected to make a much bigger splash next month during an annual conference devoted to the latest version of its operating systems for iPhones, iPads and Mac computers—software that analysts expect to be packed with more artificial intelligence technology.

Both lines of new iPads add bells and whistles but have adjusted prices to match. The iPad Pro sports a new thinner design, a new M4 processor for added processing power, slightly upgraded storage and incorporates dual OLED panels for a brighter, crisper display. Prices have been hiked to match its new offerings, with the 11-inch model going for \$999 and the 13-inch model fetching \$1,299.

The new iPad Air has the faster M2 chip, boasts a new design, more base storage, a new 13-inch display option and a recentered camera. It will also support use of the new Apple Pencil Pro, which was a function previously exclusive to the Pro models. The 11-inch display will sell for \$599 while the new 13-inch model will fetch \$799.

However Apple did announce a price reduction for its 10th generation iPad, which will now retail for \$349, down from \$449.

Apple is trying to juice demand for iPads after its sales of the tablets plunged 17% from last year during the January-March period. After its 2010 debut helped redefine the tablet market, the iPad has become a

minor contributor to Apple's success. It currently accounts for just 6% of the company's sales.

"The enhancements were both needed and predictable, in a maintenance sort of way, and may help stanch some of the revenue loss in that product line," Forrester Research analyst Dipanjan Chatterjee said of the new iPads. "But it's nothing to get terribly excited about."

All the new models will be available in stores starting May 15, with preorders beginning Tuesday.

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