

SOFTWARE

PER ASPERA AD ASTRA

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My MacBook Air suddenly died after 3 days of inactivity. The reasons was probably an unattended maintenance job that filled up the 80 GB HD. At least the system became unresponsive while transferring some pictures from a camera to a picture harddisk. And after a hard reset, it let not boot me anymore. This is when the nightmare started...

An already ordered 128 GB SSD did not fit the special requirements of the 1st generation MBA (that need an 1.8" ZIF 4 PATA drive with <5mm height). There seems to be only one product on market by Photofast. Unfortunately a 128 GB HD was not available for the next 4 weeks, while the 256 GB comes at an excessive price tag of 800€. Even then it took me 2 weeks to get it that into my laptop...

But wait, the story continues. The post-crash [Carbon Copy Clone](#) #1 was useless as it just mirrored the defective hard disk. A forensic tool showed a severely destroyed filevault account that could not be recovered. Unfortunately, also a 10 week old clone #2 did not boot as it always tried to repair my filevault user account (which failed for unknown reasons, maybe the partition was not large enough?). Boot attempt #3 on a wireless net also failed – I could see all WLANs in the neighborhood but not my own WLAN for whatever reasons. Boot attempt #4 with a new Super Drive and a brandnew OS 10.5 disk failed too – I could partition the new SSD but could not install the system (probably [because of some built in Apple hardware checks](#)). Finally, boot attempt #5 with the Super Drive and the original MBA OSX disks succeeded to get the MBA reinstalled while Time Machine could restore (nearly) all data and settings except printer and WLAN connections.

The MBA is now much faster (as described also in other user reviews like [1](#), [2](#)). Here are the Xbench data

Name	Score	Detail
▼ Results	60.41	
▼ System Info		
Xbench Version	1.3	
System Version	10.5.8 (9L31a)	
Physical RAM	2048 MB	
Model	MacBookAir1,1	
Drive Type	GMonster-18ZIF V4 256GB GMonster-18	
► CPU Test	100.10	
► Thread Test	136.09	
► Memory Test	136.78	
► Quartz Graphics Test	119.18	
► OpenGL Graphics Test	15.71	
► User Interface Test	116.35	
▼ Disk Test	94.51	
▼ Sequential	85.49	
Uncached Write	84.90	52.12 MB/sec [4K blocks]
Uncached Write	96.29	54.48 MB/sec [256K blocks]
Uncached Read	54.40	15.92 MB/sec [4K blocks]
Uncached Read	160.25	80.54 MB/sec [256K blocks]
▼ Random	105.66	
Uncached Write	95.06	10.06 MB/sec [4K blocks]
Uncached Write	42.54	13.62 MB/sec [256K blocks]
Uncached Read	990.26	7.02 MB/sec [4K blocks]
Uncached Read	354.36	65.75 MB/sec [256K blocks]

which is minimally slower than in the Hardwareluxx review. In daily practice these figures translates in about double speed, eg. about 50% loading times. The SSD also saves me some 10% power or so, is much more silent (and protected against future head crashes ;-)Â Maybe it will need some tweaks with [sleep modus 3](#), maybe [always hibernating](#) and [disabling the motion sensor](#) but that's it for now.

My recommendations

- do not buy a MBA rev.A as it cannot be repaired (or at least at expensive costs and time)
- use rugged harddisks and do daily backups with TM and monthly backups with CCC on sufficient large partitions (2fold hard disk size)
- if you run into trouble, go directly to my boot attempt #5!

Finally, my thanks go to AS from [Maxxxware who sold me](#) the SSD and [JW from SBS who set it up](#) properly.