Review: Apple’s M6 MacBook Pro is good, but it’s missing all the exciting stuff

I’ve written more than once about the weird positioning of Apple’s entry-level 14-inch MacBook Pro, which has always occupied an uncomfortable perch between the MacBook Air and the higher-end MacBook Pros. The best versions of this laptop, like last year’s M5 refresh, come with the same basic design and external features of the higher-end MacBook Pros, just with a more modest processor and a lower ceiling for specs like RAM and storage.

The lesser versions stick with older designs or other compromises, reserving Apple’s most updated designs and screen technologies for the more expensive high-end models. Recall the 13-inch M1 and M2 MacBook Pros, which stuck with Apple’s 2016-era MacBook Pro designs for *everything*, up to and including the now-abandoned Touch Bar. (If you’re someone at Apple maintaining Touch Bar support into the 2030s for the sake of these two laptop models, I’d like to hear from you. Not for a story! I’d just like to know how you are.)

This year’s entry-level MacBook Pro mostly falls into that latter category. It *does* get an Apple M6 chip, and the M6 is great—rumors suggest the M6 won’t get Pro, Max, or Ultra configurations, so there are some fringe benefits here that you *can’t* get in the top-tier MacBook Pros. But it uses the same MacBook Pro design Apple has been using since 2021. There’s no touchscreen, no OLED panel, no Dynamic Island, no half-pound weight reduction, no glowing Apple logo on the lid.

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