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# Samsung Fascinate review (black, Verizon Wireless)

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CNET Editors' Rating  
 ★★★★★  
 Excellent

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Review Date: 9/07/10

Average User Rating  
 ★★★★★  
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**The good:** The Samsung Fascinate offers a gorgeous Super AMOLED touch screen, a 1GHz processor, and a great multimedia experience. The smartphone can be used as a mobile hot spot.

**The bad:** GPS positioning isn't always accurate. For now, you can't save apps to an SD card or voice dial over Bluetooth. Search is locked to Bing.

**The bottom line:** Sleek and powerful, the Samsung Fascinate is another strong addition to Verizon's Android lineup. Its user interface won't appeal to everyone, particularly seasoned Android users, but it's a good smartphone for the masses.

**QUICK SPECIFICATIONS**

Service provider	Verizon Wireless
Cellular technology	CDMA2000 1X
Combined with	With digital camera / digital player
Weight	4.1 oz
Sensor resolution	5 megapixels
Diagonal screen size	4 in

[Full Product Specifications](#)

**EDITORS' TOP PICKS**



 By Bonnie Cha



Apple iPhone 5 (AT&T, Sprint, Verizon)  
★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S III (S3) (T-Mobile, AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, U.S. Cellular)  
Starting at \$49.99  
★★★★★



HTC One X (AT&T)  
Starting at \$99.99  
★★★★★



LG Optimus 4X HD (Unlocked)  
★★★★★

MSRP: \$209.99

LOW PRICE: \$187.99

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**Editors' note:** Portions of the User interface and Features sections were taken from our reviews of the other [Samsung Galaxy S models](#), since the devices share a common UI and similar core features. This review has also been updated with information about Bing.



Photo gallery: [Samsung Fascinate \(Verizon Wireless\)](#)

As Samsung's [Galaxy S devices](#) have hit T-Mobile, AT&T, and Sprint, [Verizon Wireless](#) customers have had to stand idly by waiting for their turn at the company's new Android phones. That time has finally come. The Samsung Fascinate will be available online starting September 8 and in stores September 9 for \$199.99 with a two-year contract and after a \$100 mail-in rebate. Like the others, the Fascinate offers a gorgeous Super AMOLED touch screen, a great multimedia experience, and smooth performance. It's a great addition to Verizon's lineup to be sure, but where does it fit in the carrier's already strong portfolio of Android devices?

It is certainly always good to have variety, but we also think the Fascinate is well suited for the consumer who is just getting into Android and smartphones. Samsung's custom TouchWiz interface offers an easy-to-understand presentation of menus that makes the transition from feature phone to smartphone a little easier. By the same token, we know TouchWiz isn't going to appeal to everyone, particularly Android purists and business users who might want something a little more polished and less bubbly, and for them, we'd recommend the [Motorola Droid X](#) or the [HTC Droid Incredible](#). Still, if it's more a general all-purpose smartphone you're after, the Samsung Fascinate is a fun one to use.

### Design

Out of all of the Galaxy S devices, the Samsung Fascinate most closely resembles the [Vibrant](#). The handset features a clean and attractive slate design with rounded corners, and it is slim and light at 4.92 inches tall by 2.53 inches wide by 0.39 inch thick and 4.1 ounces. Though we dubbed the Vibrant as the sexiest of the series, in some ways the Fascinate is better. For one, it does away with the bump on the back, giving the phone a more streamlined design, but more importantly, it feels more solid. Admittedly, we prefer the higher-quality build of the Motorola Droid X, but we're also thankful that the Fascinate doesn't feel as plasticky or as slick as the Vibrant.

Bonnie Cha is chief correspondent for Crave, covering every kind of tech toy imaginable (with a special obsession for robots and Star Wars-related stuff). When she's not scoping out stories, you can find her checking out live music or surfing in the chilly waters of Northern California.

### TOP RATED AT&T CELL PHONES

- HTC One X - gray (AT&T)  
Price: ~~\$99.99~~ - \$99.99  
★★★★★
- Nokia Lumia 900 - cyan blue (AT&T)  
Price: ~~\$0.99~~ - \$19.99  
★★★★★
- Samsung Galaxy Note - carbon blue (AT&T)  
Price: ~~\$149.99~~ - \$199.99  
★★★★★
- LG Nitro HD (AT&T)  
Price: ~~\$0.01~~ - \$49.99  
★★★★★
- Samsung Focus S (AT&T)  
Price: ~~\$99.99~~ - \$375.00  
★★★★★

[Stay put](#)







### The Samsung Fascinate features a similar design to the Vibrant.

On the front of the device, you'll find the same 4-inch Super AMOLED touch screen that graces the rest of the Galaxy S series, and like the others, the Fascinate's display is gorgeous. The screen's sharpness and pinch-to-zoom support make it easy to read text, and it also displays deep and rich colors, such that the multimedia experience is particularly wonderful. Also great is the fact that you can see the screen even in bright sunlight.

The touch screen is quite responsive, always registering our taps and smoothly moving through home screens and lists. Both the built-in accelerometer and proximity sensor worked well. The Fascinate offers two methods of input: Swype or the stock Android keyboard. The latter is easy to use, even in portrait mode, but once you experience how quickly you can compose messages using Swype, it might be hard to switch back to anything else.



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### On back, you'll find the phone's 5-megapixel camera and flash.

Below the screen, there are four touch-sensitive shortcut keys: menu, home, back, and search. If you're not already aware, a long press of the home button will bring up a task manager presenting you with shortcuts to the last six apps you used for easier multitasking. On the left side, you'll find a volume rocker, whereas the right side features the power/lock button. The top of the device houses the 3.5mm headphone jack and a Micro-USB port. The camera and flash are located on back, but there's no dedicated camera key, so you'll have

to use the onscreen button to take pictures.

Verizon packages the Samsung Fascinate with an AC adapter, a USB cable, a 16GB microSD card, and reference material. There will also be a number of additional accessories for the Fascinate available at launch, including a desktop cradle (\$29.99), a vehicle mount (\$39.99), and extended battery with back cover (\$49.99).

### User interface

Like the rest of the Galaxy S series, the Fascinate runs on Android 2.1 with Samsung's TouchWiz 3.0 interface. The latter is definitely improved from previous versions, with some enhanced functionality and a more polished look.

To start, there are new widgets, including one called Feeds & Updates and another called Buddies Now. Feeds & Updates streams updates from Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, and you can choose to display content from one, two, or all three of the social-networking sites, as well as set the refresh rate, ranging from 30 minutes to once a day. Buddies Now is like a favorites list and allows you to immediately call or text those contacts, as well as comment on any of their updates. There are a number of other Samsung widgets, as well as Android widgets and other shortcuts, all of which can be added to one of seven home screens.

The home screens can also be personalized with live wallpapers, and on each screen you get a pull-down notification tray on top, which now includes wireless manager and profile functions, and the toolbar along the bottom with quick-launch buttons to the phone app, contacts, messages, and applications. Pressing the latter takes you to a nice grid view of all your apps; they're spread out over several pages, which you can swipe from side to side to get to. We much prefer this layout over the standard Android one, where you have to scroll up and down. It feels more natural and easier to navigate.

Admittedly, we missed some elements of the HTC Sense, such as the Leap screen, which provides a thumbnail version of all your home screen panels, but TouchWiz does a good job of making Android quite easy to use, almost to the point that it doesn't even look or feel like an Android phone. For that reason, we think the Fascinate is better suited for consumers or first-time Android users than something like the Droid X is.

Finally, for those worried about the TouchWiz interface interfering with future Android updates, Samsung has already said that the entire Galaxy S portfolio will be upgradable to Android 2.2 and that it has tweaked the UI to make it easier to adapt to future updates. However, the company also noted that without really knowing what Google has planned down the line, there may be a time where updates can't be supported because of hardware limitations or other factors.

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### EDITORS' TOP PICKS



Apple iPhone 5  
(AT&T, Sprint,  
Verizon)

★★★★★



Samsung Galaxy S  
III (S3) (T-Mobile,  
AT&T, Sprint,  
Verizon, U.S.  
Cellular)

Starting at \$49.99

★★★★★



HTC One X (AT&T)

Starting at \$99.99

★★★★★




LG Optimus 4X HD  
(Unlocked)

★★★★★

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