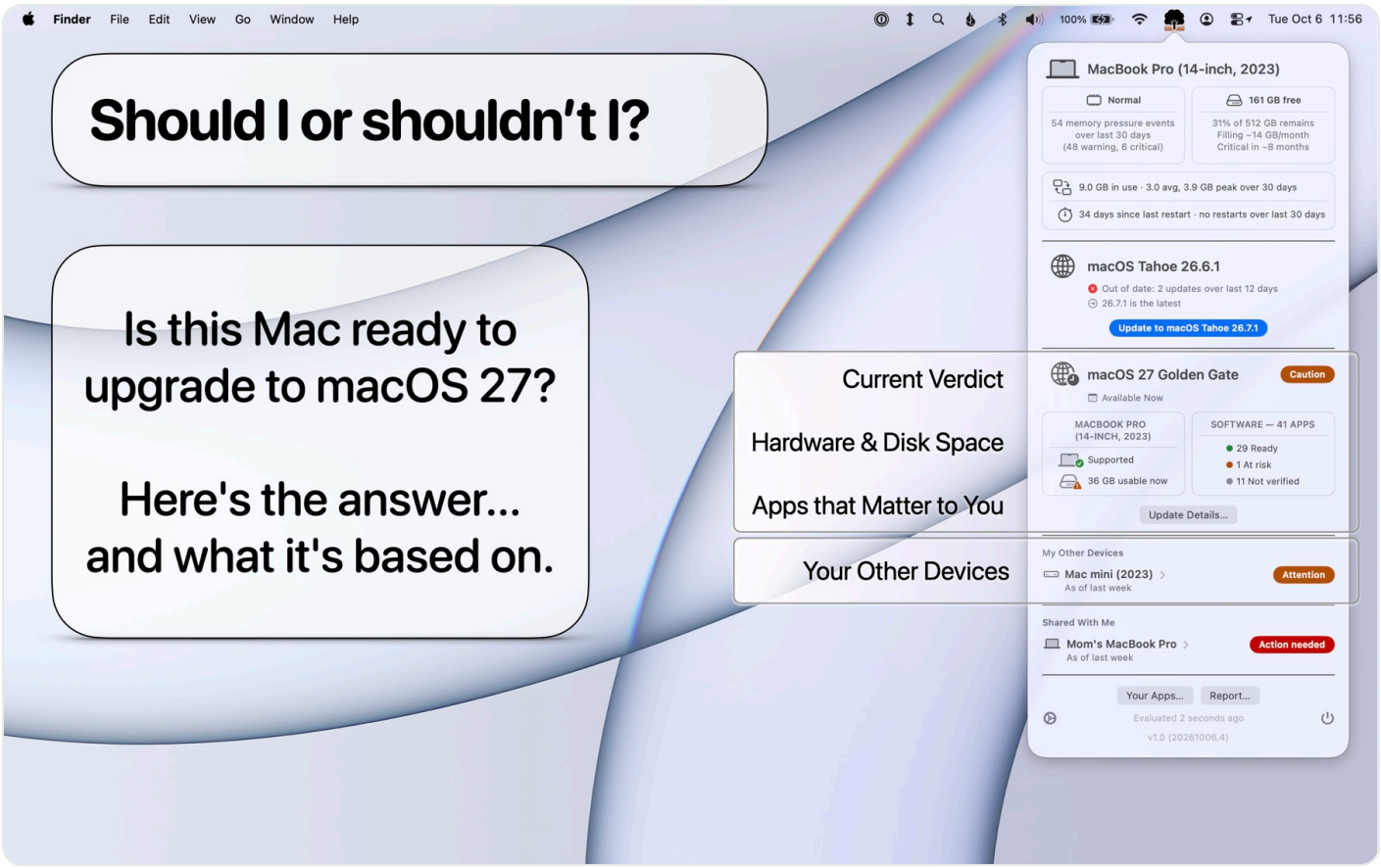


Orchard 1.0

Reviewer's Guide

November 17, 2026 · Horizon Ledge Software LLC

The question Orchard answers

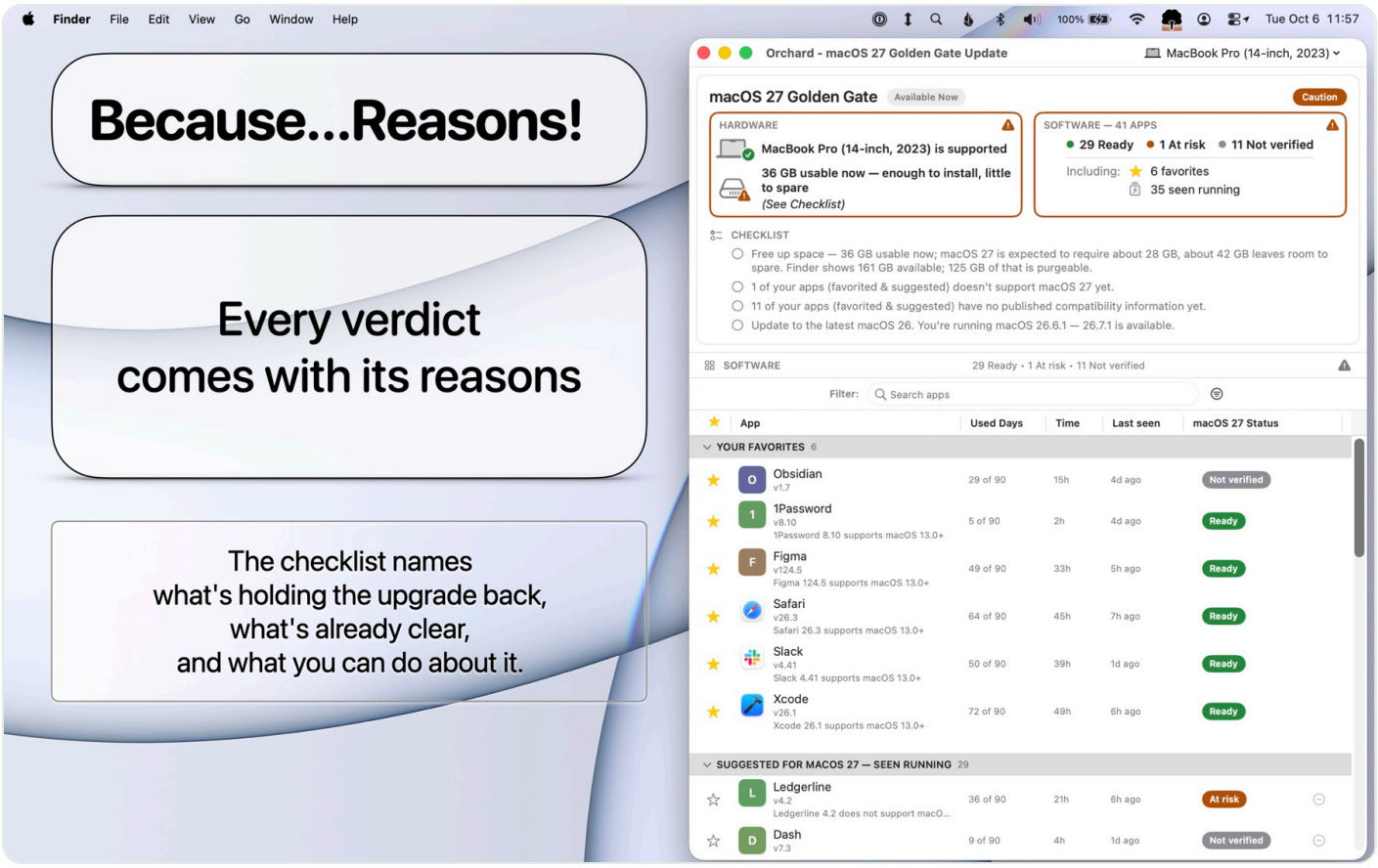


Every fall Apple ships a new macOS, and whoever looks after the family's Macs gets the same question: *should I install it?* The honest answer depends on things only that Mac knows: whether Apple supports its model on the new release, whether there's room for the installer, and whether the apps its owner relies on work yet.

Orchard is a menu bar app that keeps track of those things all year, and when a new macOS is available it gives a verdict of **Safe**, **Caution**, or **Wait**, with the supporting reasons provided. Click the tree in the menu bar to see it.

Everything Orchard measures stays on the Mac. It has no server, no account, and no analytics; "Privacy by design" below covers this in detail.

How the verdict works



The Upgrade window shows the verdict for the next macOS the Mac can run, and the reasons behind it. It weighs three things.

Hardware. Orchard reads Apple's model support from SOFA, the macOS release feed maintained by the MacAdmins community, and only weighs a release Apple supports on that model.

Install space. Orchard compares the space the installer can actually use against what the release requires. Less than that means **Wait**. Enough but with little to spare is flagged on the checklist without changing the verdict. Because Finder's "available" figure includes purgeable space the installer can't count on, the checklist shows both: for example, "Finder shows 161 GB available; 125 GB of that is purgeable."

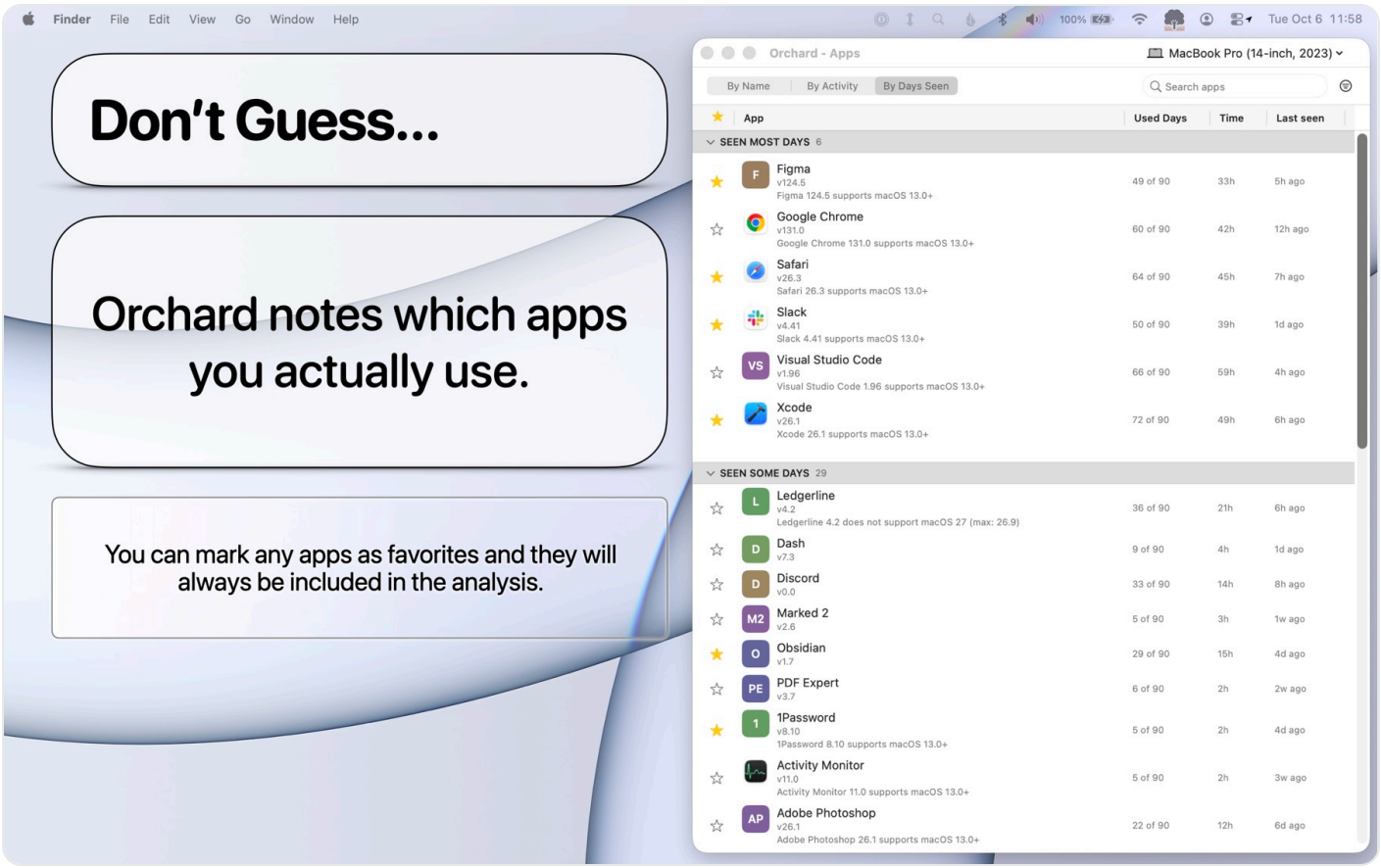
Apps. The apps that count are the user's favorites plus every app Orchard has seen running in the last 90 days, minus any the user excludes.

- A favorite that won't work on the new release means **Wait**.
- A suggested app that won't work means **Caution**.
- An app with no published compatibility information is marked **Not verified**. If nothing else is blocking, any Not verified app means **Wait**: Orchard won't say Safe until every app it counts is covered.

Safe means a supported Mac, room to install, and every counted app known to work.

A Mac that's already on the newest macOS has no upgrade question. Its Upgrade window says so, and Orchard checks its apps against the release it's running instead.

Your apps



The Apps window lists the apps on the Mac, sorted by name, by activity, or by days seen, over the last 90 days.

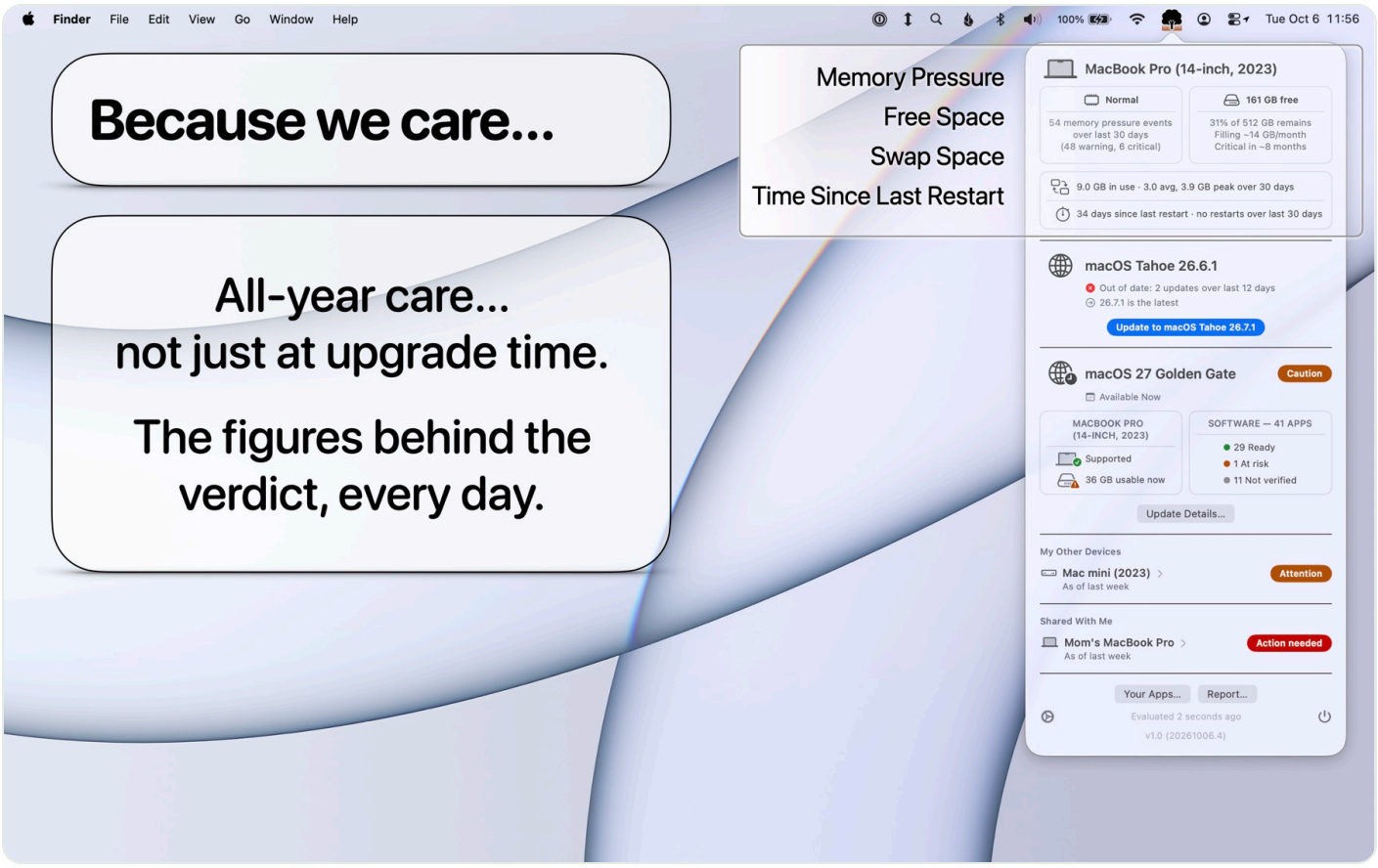
- **Used Days** is the number of days an app was seen running or in use, out of the days the Mac was actually on, so a Mac that sat closed for a week isn't penalized.
- **Time** is time the app spent in front, not time it sat open in the background.
- **Last seen** is when Orchard last saw it running.

Orchard sees apps through macOS's own launch, quit and activation notifications, and a check of what's running every 30 minutes.

Favorites are starred, and carry the most weight in the verdict. In the Upgrade window, a suggested app that isn't a favorite can be **excluded** from that release's verdict with the minus button beside it. Exclusions are kept per macOS release.

"Not verified" isn't a dead end. Click the pill to ask for an app, or a whole section, to be checked. Orchard opens a draft in the user's own mail app with the app details filled in, and nothing is sent until the user sends it. Compatibility rules are curated from what developers publish and served as a feed Orchard checks every few hours.

Year-round health

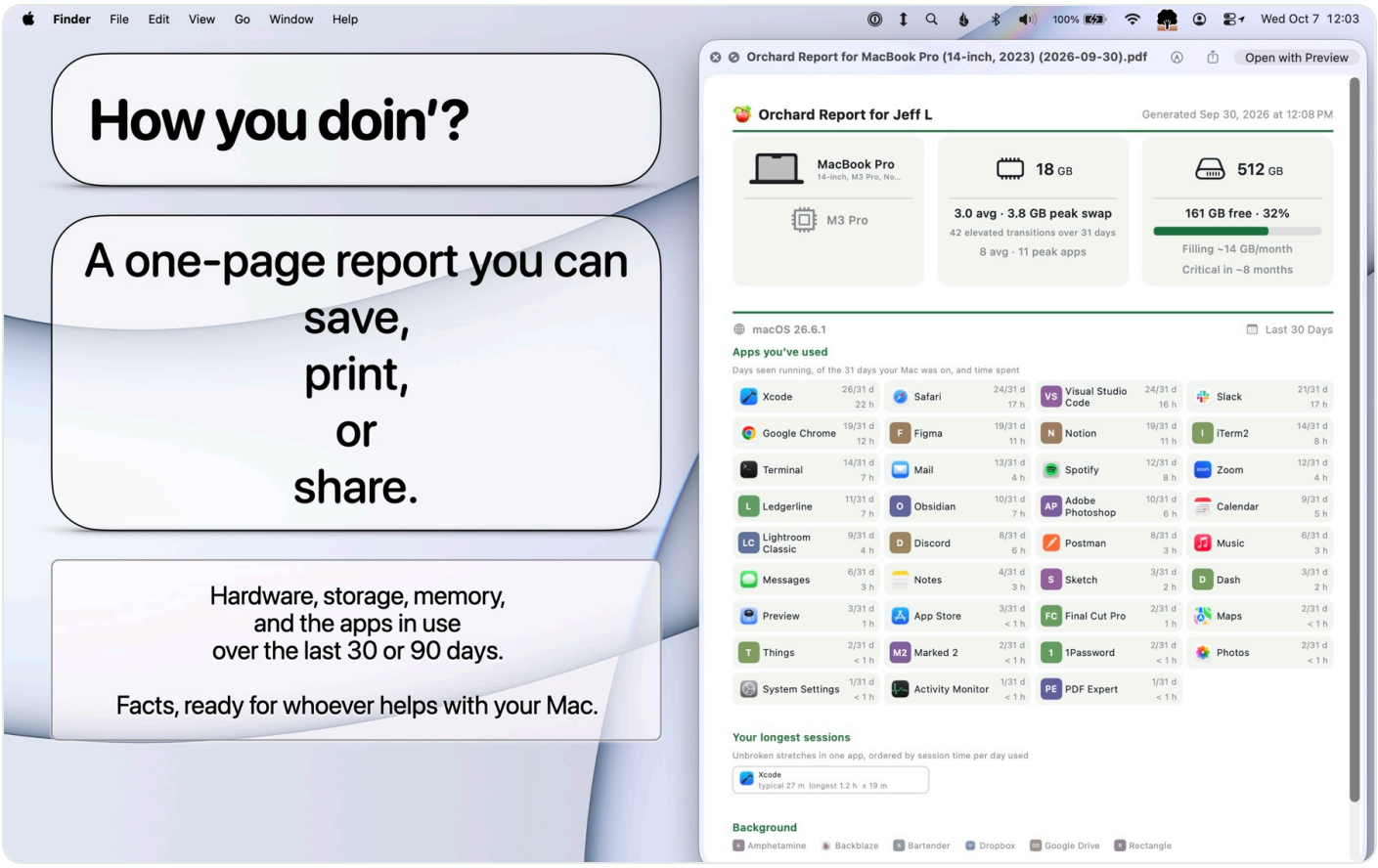


The upgrade question comes once a year. Orchard has your Mac's back all year.

- **Memory.** The current pressure level, and how many times pressure rose to warning or critical over the last 30 days, from macOS's own memory pressure notifications. Swap in use, with its daily averages and peaks.
- **Storage.** Free space, which way it has been trending over the last 30 days (for example "Filling ~14 GB/month"), and roughly when it will reach a critically low level at that rate.
- **Restarts.** Days since the last restart, and how many restarts there were over the last 30 days.
- **macOS.** Whether the current macOS is up to date, and a button to the update if it isn't.

Every figure comes from APIs a sandboxed App Store app may use, so what Orchard shows matches what the user would see in Activity Monitor or About This Mac.

The Orchard Report

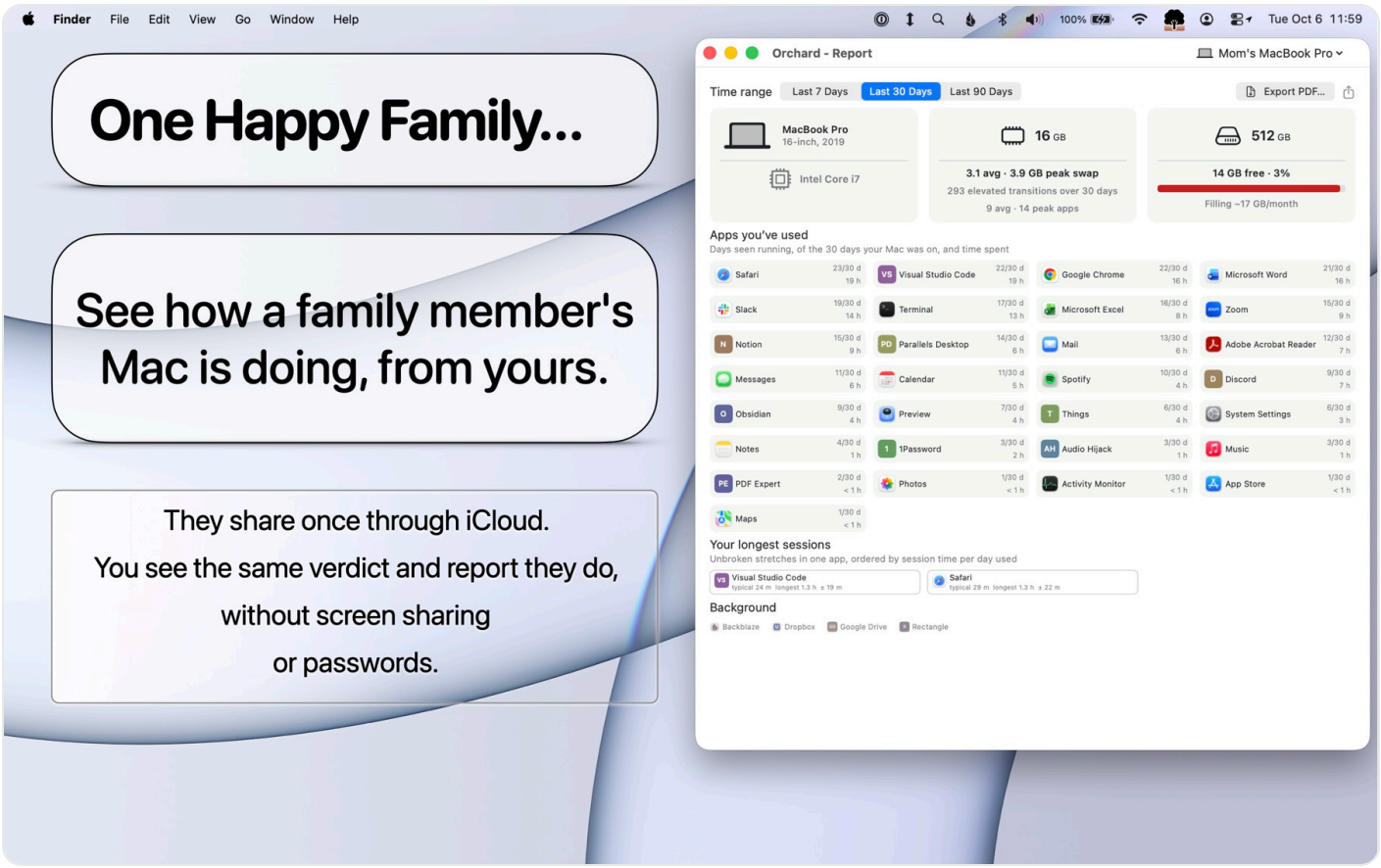


The Report puts a Mac's hardware, memory, storage and app use on one page, for the last 7, 30 or 90 days: the apps used and how often, the longest unbroken sessions, and the background apps that keep running. It exports as a US Letter PDF, or goes straight to the share sheet.

It carries no verdict, on purpose. It's a record of how the Mac is actually used, meant to be printed and handed to a Genius at an Apple Retail Store, sent to a helper, or used when shopping for a new Mac, so that conversation starts from facts rather than guesses.

A sample Report is in the press kit.

Sharing with a helper

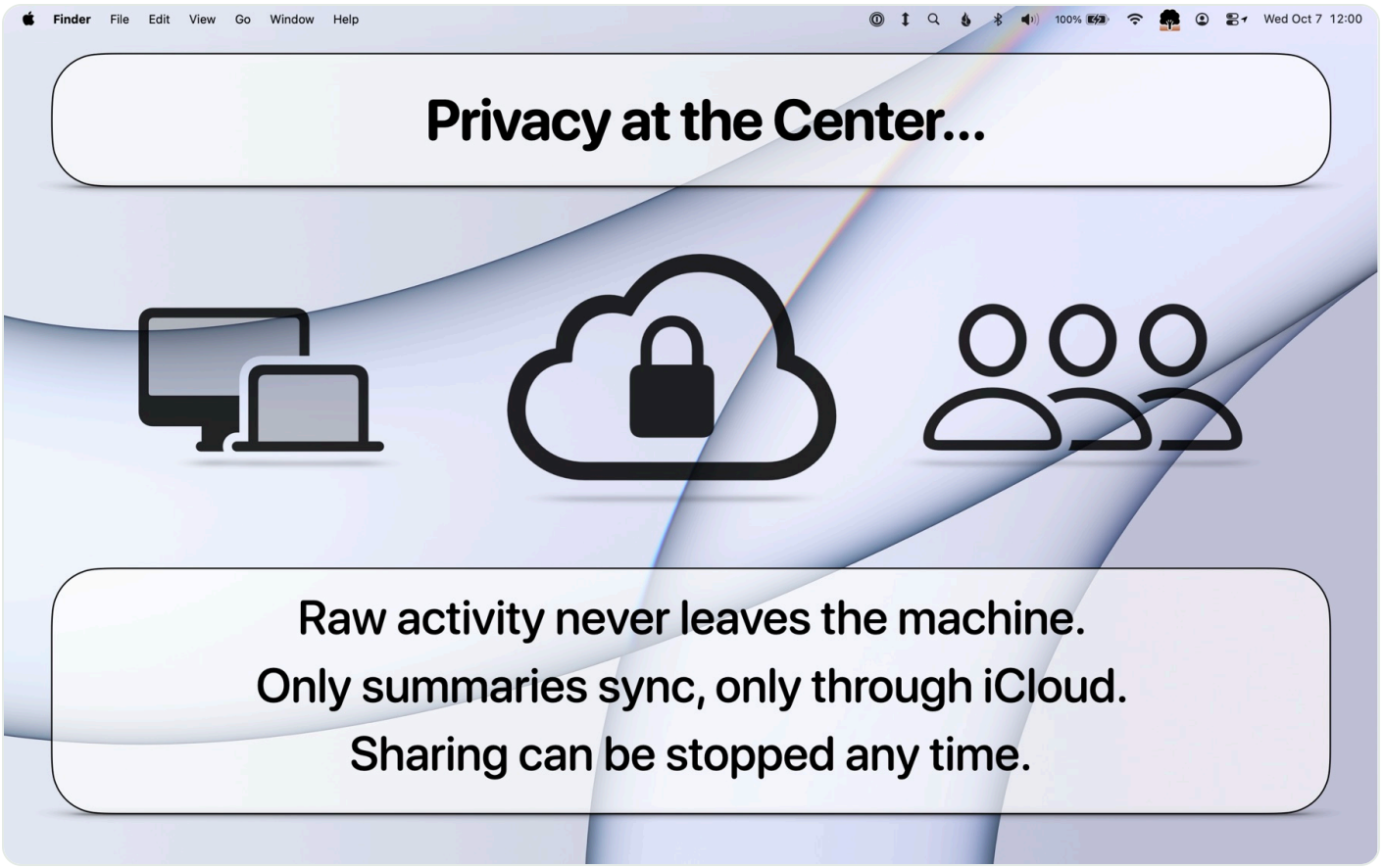


The person who helps with a Mac can see its health from Orchard on their own Mac, without screen sharing or passwords.

1. **The owner invites.** In Settings › Sharing, click **Share…**, enter the helper's iCloud email address, and click **Create Link**. Orchard then drafts an invitation in Messages or Mail for the owner to send.
2. **The helper accepts.** Opening the link on their Mac in Orchard, signed in to the invited iCloud account, adds the shared Mac to their popover under **Shared With Me**. Viewing a shared Mac needs an Individual or Pro plan.
3. **The owner stays in control. Manage Sharing…** removes a single helper, and **Revoke All Access…** stops sharing entirely.

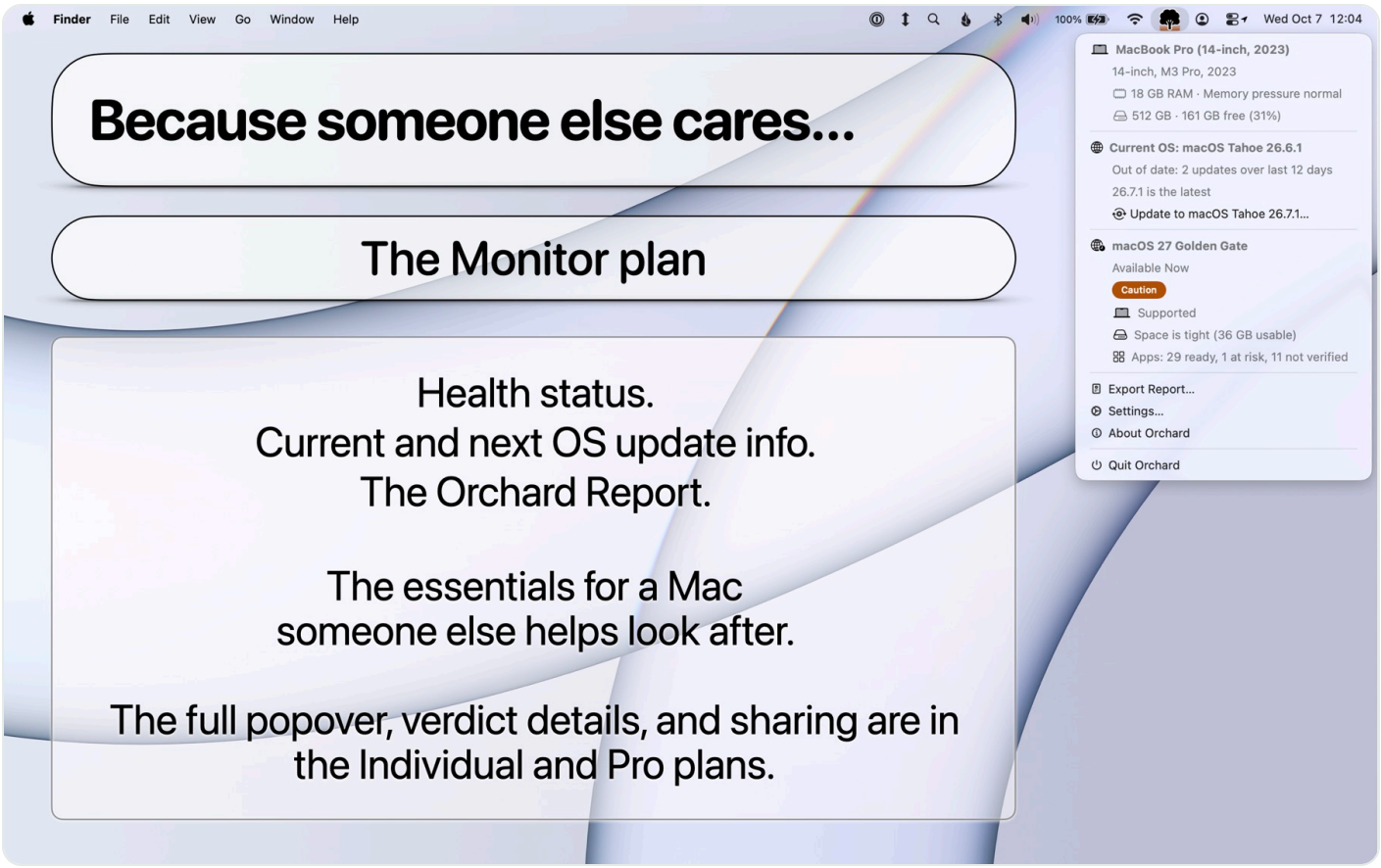
The share is invite-only and read-only: a helper can look but can't change anything. They see the Mac's model, memory, storage, macOS version, verdicts and daily usage summaries, and, unless the owner turns off **Share App Names**, the apps on it and how much each is used. Share App Names is on for a newly set-up Mac.

Privacy by design



- **The detail stays on the Mac.** Every app launch and quit, every memory pressure reading, the running-app checks and the disk samples stay in a local database and are never uploaded. Raw data is kept for 90 days.
- **Only summaries sync, and only through the user's own iCloud.** Daily rollups, the Mac's summary and its verdicts sync privately with CloudKit to the user's other Macs and to any helper they invite. There is no Horizon Ledge server anywhere in that path.
- **Helpers see summaries, never contents.** No files, no screen, nothing inside any app.
- **No account, and nothing else watching.** There's no sign-up or sign-in, and Orchard contains no analytics, advertising or crash-reporting SDKs. Its only other network traffic is the SOFA release feeds, Orchard's own compatibility feeds at theorchard.app, and the App Store purchase through RevenueCat.
- **Sandboxed, App Store only.** Orchard can't see more than the user can see for themselves.

Plans



Orchard requires one of these auto-renewing subscriptions, purchased in the app.

Individual

$29.99 a year

Founding-member rate for the first 500 annual subscribers, kept for as long as you stay subscribed.

The full app for your own Macs, including the Apps, Upgrade, and Report windows, plus viewing up to 10 Macs other people share with you.

Pro

$99.99 a year

Everything in Individual, with room to view up to 100 shared Macs.

Monitor

$14.99 a year

For a Mac someone else helps look after. Your Mac's status, including its upgrade verdict, appears in a menu, and you can share your Mac with your helper and export the Orchard Report.

Individual and Pro include a 30-day free trial for eligible new subscribers.

The Monitor plan is for the Mac someone else looks after. Instead of the popover it shows a menu with the Mac's status, its current macOS, the verdict for the next one, and its helpers, plus **Connect a Helper...** and **Export Report...**. A Monitor Mac can share itself with a helper, but can't view other people's Macs.

For reviewers

Try everything without a purchase. Demo Mode shows the full app on the Individual plan with sample data: this Mac, a second Mac of the user’s, and a family member’s Mac shared with them. Quit Orchard, then run this in Terminal:

```
open -a Orchard --args --orchard-demo
```

Demo Mode uses its own separate database, so real data isn’t touched. Quit and re-launch Orchard to exit demo mode.

For the real thing, Individual and Pro come with a 30-day free trial, and review access is available from press@theorchard.app.

What to try first: click the tree in the menu bar; open **Update Details…** for the checklist; star an app in the Apps window and watch the verdict respond; export a Report; open the shared Mac under Shared With Me.

Why does it say Wait so often?

Usually because some apps are Not verified. Orchard won't call an upgrade Safe on a guess, so until developers publish support for macOS 27, apps without an entry hold the verdict at Wait. The checklist names them, and each one can be sent for checking.

Does Orchard upgrade macOS?

No. It advises; the update itself goes through System Settings as usual.

Where does the compatibility information come from?

From what each app's developer has published, curated into a feed Orchard checks every few hours. Built-in Apple apps count as ready.

Does Orchard need iCloud?

No. Signed out of iCloud, everything on the Mac works; only syncing and sharing need it.

What's coming next?

An iOS app for the helper side, planned for early 2027.

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