

In three words **Heavy. Weight. Champion.**

SCAN 3XS OC-1000

This heavyweight gaming rig offers power and performance in a back-breakingly enormous form factor. Compact it ain't...

£2,529

Web Supplier: www.scan.co.uk

Pros Barnstorming performance in games and applications thanks to a hand-picked selection of top-end hardware

Cons Bank-busting price tag and not everybody is going to need a Blu-ray/HD-DVD drive

Scan is one of the most recognisable and trusted names on the market, an established IT outfit that has strong relationships with all the major hardware manufacturers and a reputation for putting together top quality systems with outstanding after-sales service.

It is one of the larger firms, but the Bolton-based company remains family-owned and focused on customer satisfaction. Most importantly for us, Scan is known for being on the cutting edge and is usually the first to introduce new parts into its 3XS range. The 3XS PCs run the gamut from basic entry-level, to builds like the

OC-1000, a high-end PC packing the latest hardware and some clever innovations.

Its chassis is eye-catching, to say the least. The OC-1000 is based around a CoolerMaster Cosmos 1000,

? FAQ

Will the overclocked CPU have a shorter life?

» Newer Q6600 processors are renowned for their overclocking ability and Scan's efficient water-cooling system ensures the CPU temperature stays within acceptable limits, so you don't have to worry about anything melting after a heavy gaming session.

Can I customise the specification?

» Scan builds its systems on demand and is more than happy to add or remove any parts. Order online and you can use the web customiser to select each and every component, or give the company a call if there is something extra you require.

the newest case in CoolerMaster's extensive line-up. It's an enormous chrome behemoth, the two handles and black fins giving it a unique and unusual appearance. The front door has CoolerMaster's excellent hinge system, first seen on the CM Stacker, which allows anyone to quickly and painlessly swap the door to open from left or right and remove it completely.

The Cosmos is full of nice touches like this. Its side panels are released by flicking up a single latch and re-attached by pushing it into place until it clicks and locks. Hard disks are mounted on removable caddies that can be slid out with the help of folding handles, and the 5.25" expansion bays use a tool-less button system. The OC-1000 is not short on hard disks and you get two optical drives, but that still leaves two hard disk caddies and three 5.25" bays free for any extras. You're not likely to be delving inside the OC-1000 the moment you get it, but it's nice to know that when the time comes it is very easy to access and maintain, and there is masses of space inside. One downside to this enclosure is its weight; aside from the aluminium door the Cosmos is constructed from steel, making it incredibly heavy and awkward. The handles help a great deal but it's not something you'll want to drag to a LAN party.

The fins at the top of the case are an exhaust port for two 120mm fans inside; there's another exhaust in the rear plus an intake on the floor of the chassis. Scan has used quality Zalman fans throughout to keep the noise down and the Cosmos comes with soundproofing as standard, but when you take into account the twin graphics cards and power supply it doesn't qualify as silent, though it's not unbearably loud. The OC-1000 does kick out some heat when going full pelt so you'll have to be careful not to jam it the corner of a room or otherwise block the airflow, but this is excusable considering the components inside. The choice of a sub-£200 Intel Q6600 quad-core processor may seem disappointing in a system that costs the best part of £3,000, but this CPU is an outstanding overclocker and Scan has boosted it from the stock 2.4GHz to 3GHz, the same clock speed as a top-of-the-range QX6800 costing three times as much. Naturally, this generates a considerable amount of heat but in our tests the

Optical drives are secured with a tool-less system, click the buttons to release a drive. Two of the five are occupied

The 8800 cards use dual-slot cooling solutions and pump heat out the rear. A soundcard and Wi-Fi card occupy a PCI and PCIe slot

The four hard disks are secreted away in these caddies. They slide out the bays with zero effort – just remove the screws and pop out the handles

TOTAL PC Gaming
EDITOR'S CHOICE

» **Also consider** Not convinced? There are other options out there; here are two...



Kobalt Apache VI

PRICE: £1,900
PROCESSOR: Intel Core 2 Quad Q6600
RAM: 2GB OCZ Reaper DDR3
GRAPHICS: NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GTX
HARD DISK: 150GB WD Raptor, 500GB WD Caviar
Reviewed in issue 1, this gaming system is fast with a solid build quality, and the price is great considering how well it performs. Cheaper than the Scan, but not as quick.
WEB: www.kobaltcomputers.co.uk



Alienware Area-51 ALX

PRICE: £2,998
PROCESSOR: Intel Core 2 Quad QX6850
RAM: 2GB Extreme Performance 800MHz
GRAPHICS: 2x 768MB NVIDIA 8800 GTX
HARD DISK: 500GB
Next to the OC-1000 this looks very poor value for money. Sure you're paying a premium for the name, but a little alien head isn't going to help you win at *Unreal Tournament III*.
WEB: www.alienware.com

“High-end components, top-notch performance”

system remained constantly stable, largely due to the excellent self-contained water-cooling unit. Accompanying the overclocked CPU is 2GB of high speed Corsair TwinX DDR2 RAM and a pair of XFX 8800 Ultra graphics cards, sat on an Asus Striker Extreme motherboard. The NVIDIA 8800 Ultra is the most powerful GPU on the market, these XFX models have a GPU clock of 612MHz and GDDR3 VRAM operating at 2160MHz. It should hardly come as a surprise that the OC-1000 was a top performer.



Power switches, 4x USB sockets, audio connectors and FireWire/E-SATA ports adorn the top of the case

*** Standout feature**



Water great idea

» Sat atop the processor is an entirely self-contained water cooling kit, with the pump and reservoir integrated and a radiator over the rear exhaust fan. Quieter and more efficient than high-end air coolers, but cheaper and easier than standard water-cooling.

even at 1920x1200 resolution it scored 14,077 in 3D Mark 06 and maintained a silky-smooth frame rate in the demanding *Lost Planet*. Our only concern with the 8800 Ultra SLI setup is that NVIDIA's Vista drivers are still a work in progress, so switching to Windows XP is very likely to provide a boost in frame rate. You won't be able to take advantage of DirectX 10, but at this point it's only a subtle difference. As the drivers mature SLI in Vista will improve, so you can expect increasingly higher FPS, but Scan can install Windows XP on request. You could always dual-boot to get the best of both worlds since storage space isn't an issue, not with four 500GB Samsung hard disks. Two drives are using RAID 0 for speed, the other two configured with RAID 1 mirroring. Usually we're not keen on RAID 0 because you'll lose everything if one drive falls over, in this case RAID 1 offers a highly reliable backup solution. Two of the 5.25" expansion bays are occupied with LG drives, but uniquely one is a Blu-ray/HD-DVD combo, a world first. It's also the only

system we've seen yet that doesn't have either a Creative sound card or on-board audio, instead there's an excellent Auzentech X-Fi Prelude with full EAX support. Clearly it's an amazing gaming PC, but combine the OC-1000 with a HDTV and it'd make one heck of a media centre.

It's obvious that a not-insignificant amount of care has gone into the construction. As anybody who has built their own system can attest cable management is a hellish nightmare, but everything inside the OC-1000 is neatly clipped and tucked out of sight to assist airflow, and all components

are securely attached. It's also nice to see that the system was packaged in two boxes and cushioned in an epic amount of bubble wrap.

We'd be surprised, but this is exactly the kind of thing we've come to expect from Scan and the 3XS range. High-end components, top-notch performance, and outstanding attention to detail. Admittedly some of its more extravagant touches – like the BD/HD drive and second 8800 Ultra – may not be for everyone and that price tag is imposing, but you're guaranteed of getting a lot for the money.

Matt Powell

Tech specs

» **£2,710 buys you...**

PROCESSOR: Intel Core 2 Quad Q6600 3GHz
MEMORY: 2GB Corsair TwinX DDR2 PC6400
HARD DISK: 4x 500GB Samsung SpinPoint SATA 2
GRAPHICS: 2x XFX 8800 Ultra 768MB
OPTICAL DRIVE: LG Blu-ray/HD-DVD, LG DVD RW
PORTS: 8x USB, 2x IEEE 1394, 2x eSATA, 2x Ethernet, stereo audio in/out
EXPANSION: 2x RAM, 1x IDE, 2x 3.5" internal, 2x 5.25 external

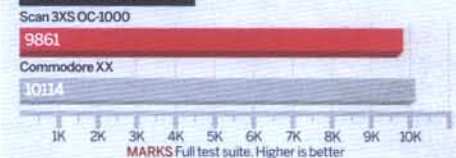
Benchmarks

Compared against Commodore XX (Intel QX6800, 2GB RAM, 2x NVIDIA 8800 GTX)

» **3D Mark 06**



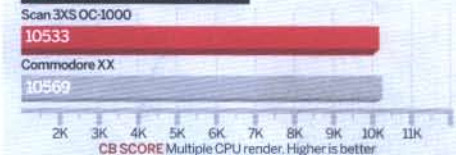
» **PCMark 05**



» **SuperPrime 0.6**



» **CineBench R10**



» **Auto Gordian Knot 2.40**



Verdict

- » **Performance** There's little that this system can't handle, be it games or demanding applications **9**
- » **Design** The case is heavy and may not be to your taste, but the PC has been carefully built and is extremely sturdy **9**
- » **Features** Masses of storage, twin graphics cards, high-def movie playback, dedicated soundcard... this has it all **10**
- » **Value** It's not just the top-of-the-range specifications but the attention to detail that make this a brilliant PC **9**
- » **Overall** The OC-1000 is a screamingly fast package of the latest hardware that's expertly built and configured. An excellent performer that won't disappoint. **9**

» **In-game performance playtested**

» **Lost Planet**
1280 x 1024, 4x AA, 16x AF, high



» **Company Of Heroes**
1280 x 1024, AA, AF, high

