

DESKTOP PC | £1,349 from PCSpecialist www.snipca.com/58538

PCSpecialist Zircon Nano

Small systems go

This small desktop PC from British PC builder PCSpecialist is proof that you can have a powerhouse machine without a massive case and garish RGB lighting. It squeezes impressive amounts of computing and gaming prowess into an unobtrusive mini-tower, with a front fascia roughly the same size as an A4 sheet. It's 443mm deep, so it still consumes plenty of desk (or floor) space, but it's a fairly stylish unit.

“More than fast enough to run office and creative programs, and even a little gaming”

Slide off the side panel and the AMD Radeon 9060XT graphics card dominates the interior, but it only takes a couple of minutes and a Phillips screwdriver to remove it, at which point you have full access to the Nano's other components.

The main limiting factor is the Gigabyte mini-ITX motherboard, which has no free PCIe slots and both memory slots are

already occupied, meaning you can't upgrade the RAM without losing the existing modules. The single M.2 socket is also filled, so any internal storage upgrade will involve replacing it or fitting slower SATA SSDs.

You could, of course, use an external SSD, but only one of the five USB-A ports at the rear supports the faster 10GB/s USB 3.2 Gen 2 standard, while three are the slower USB 2.0. Neither of the two USB-C ports – one front, one rear – goes above 5GB/s.

Still, while upgradability isn't the Nano's strong suit, there's little wrong with its current performance. We're still in the throes of a cost-of-RAM crisis, so PCSpecialist has had to make some tricky decisions to keep the price reasonable – opting for a mid-range AMD Ryzen 5 9600X processor and 16GB of DDR5 RAM, and generally it's made the right calls.

Its results in our benchmarks and 3D-rendering tests were decent rather than jaw dropping, and we found the write speeds on the SSD were average at best. Yet it's more than fast enough to run mainstream office and creative programs, or even a little programming or gaming.

4K gaming is out of its league, but you can get smooth and very playable frame rates at 1080p and 1440p resolutions in titles like Cyberpunk 2077, even with the game's challenging ray-tracing graphics options turned on.

SPECIFICATIONS

Six-core Ryzen 5 9600X processor • 16GB DDR5 RAM • 8GB AMD Radeon 9060XT graphics • 1TB SSD • 1x USB 3.2 Gen 2 port • 3x USB 3.2 Gen 1 port • 3x USB 2.0 ports • 2x USB-C ports • 2x HDMI 2.1 port • 1x DisplayPort 2.1 port • Gigabit Ethernet port • 3x 3.5mm audio jacks • 750W power supply • Windows 11 Home • 306x194x433mm (HxWxD) • Three-year warranty (two-years parts and labour only) www.snipca.com/58538



The Radeon 9060XT card has 8GB rather than 16GB of RAM, so turning up the settings to maximum isn't always possible, but High settings should be well within reach in most games.

Be warned, this isn't a quiet PC. Three fans at the bottom and one at the rear kick up a low hum most of the time, and get louder when you're running more demanding programs, as the CPU and graphics card fans kick in as well.

You'll need to go bigger and spend more for higher levels of performance, but for most of us that won't be a necessity. The Zircon Nano is beefier than it looks. What's more, PC Specialist will honour the £1,349 asking price until May 6th, including a three-year warranty.

VERDICT Less fan noise and more upgrade options would be nice, but an excellent compact desktop PC with plenty of processing power



ALTERNATIVE

Medion Erazer Recon P45 £849 This is a chunkier PC and not as powerful, but it still offers great performance levels for the price

