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PC Specialist Vortex Adonis

A quiet-running machine that packs huge amounts of power in its imposing Cooler Master case

SCORE

PRICE £1,333 (£1,599 inc VAT) from pcspecialist.co.uk/reviews

This is only the third system we've seen with Nvidia RTX 2070 graphics, but this chip already looks set to be the best choice for enthusiast gamers who don't have limitless budgets. And kudos to PC Specialist: this is a far better value offering than the Chillblast Fusion Hero Gaming PC we tested last month (see issue 291, p58), with a superior Core i7-9700K processor replacing the Core i5-9600K in that system.

In fact, following its late October launch, this is our first chance to put the i7-9700K to the test – and we like what we see. It doesn't support Hyper-Threading, but eight cores means it's still a fine performer in multithreaded tasks. That was most obvious in our own multitasking benchmark, where we ask systems to play a 4K movie while simultaneously completing a photo-editing operation and converting 4K video.

Last month, the 16-thread Ryzen 7 2700X in Scan's 3XS Gamer RTX system (*see issue 291, p59*) proved the clear leader at this, completing the task in eight minutes; the Chillblast took 25% longer. This time around, the Vortex Adonis finished in eight minutes and ten seconds.

With a faster score in our photoediting task – Intel's brute-force power comes to the fore here – the Vortex ended up being a whisker faster than the Ryzen-powered Scan overall, but only by 271 to 268. It proved a more convincing winner in Geekbench 4, with a 28,512 multicore score to the Scan's 24,825.

The two systems again proved even in *Metro: Last Light*, where the Vortex hit an average of 104fps at 1440p (Very High settings) to the Scan's 105fps. Likewise it was impossible to separate





the two in *Rise of the Tomb Raider*. Increase the resolution to 4K and the Scan held a slight advantage, but only by a frame or two. This time, you're looking at frame rates of around 5ofps in both games. As always, you can get a boost from overclocking – we found the Vortex was stable at 5GHz thanks to the ever-efficient Corsair H100x watercooling system – but our verdict remains the same as before: choose the RTX 2070 if you're looking for comfortable 1440p gaming, but find the extra cash for RTX 2080 graphics if 4K gaming is on your mind.

A predictable but still excellent combination of 512GB NVMe SSD and 2TB hard disk provide the storage, with PC Specialist opting for an Intel 760p M.2 SSD and Seagate Barracuda duo. They're both speedy units, with the Intel 760p hitting 2,684MB/sec and 1,546MB/sec sequential write and read speeds in the A5 SSD benchmark.

The company also makes a great choice of chassis if you like to tinker. The Cooler Master H500M is a whacking great case, but that translates into plenty of room inside. It's blissfully easy to access the two empty DIMM slots – two 8GB Corsair

Vengeance DDR 2,400MHz modules are already in place – and three PCIe x1 slots, plus two PCIe x4

ABOVE The Cooler Master case is huge, making it a breeze to access empty slots



"This contributes to a surprisingly quiet machine, with a background hum that's pleasant compared to most enthusiast PCs"

BELOW The trippy RGB colours on the front and rear fans can be programmed to your taste



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slots, also lie empty. Note you might want to use one PCIe x1 slot to add a Wi-Fi expansion card.

The fact that there's only one PCIe x16 slot, the one already occupied by the RTX 2070 graphics card, hints at this motherboard's budget origins - it's Gigabyte's cheapest Z390 board, in fact. There aren't even any USB 3.1 ports, with the company shaving a few dollars by sticking with USB 3. That will slow transfer speeds (USB 3 has a 5Gbits/sec bandwidth to USB 3.1's 10Gbits/sec), but hardly to fatal degrees. Also note that all signs indicate that Nvidia doesn't intend to support SLI on RTX 2070 cards, so that upgrade route isn't an option.

That's why it makes sense for PC Specialist to stick with a 550W power supply, and it makes an excellent choice in the quiet-running Corsair TXm series. This contributes to a surprisingly quiet machine, with a background hum that's positively pleasant compared to most enthusiast PCs. The fans ramp up during intensive tasks, but never to obnoxious levels. The two front fans, along with the strip lights inside, can be programmed to any RGB colour you desire, and due to the size of those

front-mounted fans these can make quite a visual impact (as demonstrated by the photos). ۲

Providing you have enough space in your chosen room, this is an excellent system. The

only obvious area where PC Specialist has shaved costs is the choice of motherboard, and it's also true that rivals such as Scan and Chillblast beat it for warranty cover: there's a headline three-year warranty, but only the first month is collect-andreturn cover while the final two years are labour-only (not parts). But that's reflected in the low price of this system. It's outstanding value for money and, on balance, our top enthusiast choice. **TIM DANTON**

SPECIFICATIONS

3.7GHz Intel Core i7-9700K processor • Gigabyte Z390 UD motherboard • 16GB 2,400MHz Corsair DDR4 RAM • 8GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 2070 graphics • Corsair H100x watercooling • 512GB Intel 760p M.2 PCIe SSD • 2TB hard disk • Windows 10 Home • Cooler Master Mastercase H500M chassis • Corsair 550W TXm PSU • 248 x 544 x 546mm (WDH) • 3yr warranty (1 month C&R, 1yr parts/3yr labour RTB)

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