

PC Specialist Inferno L2

The Inferno L2 marries a Ryzen 9 3900X to an RTX 2070 Super card – with spectacular results

SCORE ★★★★★

PRICE £1,249 (£1,499 inc VAT)
from pcspecialist.co.uk/reviews

When PC Pro invites companies to submit PCs for review, we usually suggest a likely price to aim for and see which configurations they come up with. How revealing, then, that both Chillblast (opposite) and PC Specialist have opted for an AMD Ryzen system with Nvidia graphics.

With an extra £500 to spend compared to Chillblast, PC Specialist went to town with some delicious components. The most important part is, as ever, the processor. PC Specialist supplied the AMD Ryzen 9 3900X, a 12-core part based on Zen 2 architecture, and thanks to the cooling effects of the PCS FrostFlow 240 water cooler, this powered to a phenomenal 447 in our benchmarks.

I must acknowledge the elephant in the room, though, as a non-watercooled 3950X (see p72) scored 476, with its 16 cores pushing it to 615 in the multitasking section of our tests: the Inferno L2 scored a still-excellent 532, but the gap is obvious. Fortunately, PC Specialist will upgrade the Inferno to a 3950X for an extra £250, and, when you're already paying this much, I'd suggest that's well worth considering.

Naturally, PC Specialist supports the Inferno L2 with a selection of fine components. Its 16GB of 3,000MHz DDR RAM comes courtesy of two 8GB Corsair Vengeance DIMMs, while Samsung's speedy 970 Evo Plus NVMe SSD is in place for fast data transfers. There's a further 2TB of storage,



ABOVE The three RGB fans at the front can put on a mesmerising show



“The key decision is whether to upgrade to a 3950X or not. In truth, it would probably only be for bragging rights”

LEFT The interior is neatly put together, which should make upgrades a cinch



thanks to a Seagate Barracuda hard disk.

There isn't room in the budget for a GeForce RTX 2080 card, with PC Specialist supplying an RTX 2070 Super. We've already seen (see issue 302, p64) what a tasty upgrade the RTX 2070 Super provides, and it's well-suited for gaming at 1440p: it scored 61fps in the *Hitman 2* Mumbai benchmark with Medium settings. Less demanding games are playable at 4K: it raced through *Metro: Last Light* with a 93fps average, and recorded 185fps in *Dirt: Showdown*.

One compromise is the motherboard, with PC Specialist choosing the mid-range Asus TUF X470-Plus. Its name gives away its X470 chipset – this is a 2018 board – but this remains a capable option. The Thermaltake V200 case is another mid-range, sensible choice. There's nothing extravagant here, with the most

prized feature being the tempered glass side panel, but the usual solid Thermaltake build quality is evident throughout. Naturally, PC Specialist takes full advantage with numerous RGB fans for you to control: three at the front, which shine through the plastic, and together with the subtle backlighting on the front edge of the motherboard and on the watercooler, you can create quite the light show.

It's all put together with the skill you'd expect. All wiring is carefully clipped into place, and if you decide to upgrade this system at some future point, you'll find it easy. There's an empty M.2 slot for an additional SSD, two PCIe x1 slots and one PCIe x4 slot. (One of the board's PCIe x1 slots is filled with an 802.11n Wi-Fi card.) The two empty DIMM sockets are partially blocked by the power feed to the graphics card and the two watercooling pipes, but they can be accessed without unplugging anything. Unscrewing the right-hand side of chassis gives access to two further hard disk bays.

Naturally, with all this power tucked within, you'll have to put up with a certain amount of noise. In general, it's a low hum, with six large fans to contend with: three at the front of the case, two on the rear of the watercooling unit, and a final offering at the rear. The noise jumps up a notch when the Inferno is pushed to its limit, but with so much computing capacity to spare that will rarely be an issue.

As this PC Specialist system is built to order, you can expect to wait around a fortnight before your PC arrives. Don't wait a month before you unpack it as the collect-and-return cover only lasts for one month, with a further 11 months of parts and labour cover where you will have to pay for couriering. There's a further two years of labour-only cover, too.

Another consideration is power consumption, and it's true that this machine is greedy: 344W at peak, 83W at idle. If you're doing hardcore

gaming for two hours per day, that adds up to £35 per year based on average electricity charges of 14p per kWh. Admittedly, if you're paying this much for a PC, that isn't a huge consideration.

Instead, the key decision is whether to upgrade to a 3950X or not. In truth, it would probably only be for bragging rights: the PC Specialist Inferno L2 is ludicrously fast as it stands. Would I upgrade? Almost certainly. **TIM DANTON**

SPECIFICATIONS

12-core 3.8GHz AMD Ryzen 9 3900X processor • Asus TUF X470-Plus motherboard • 16GB 3,000MHz Corsair Vengeance DDR4 RAM • 8GB Nvidia GeForce RTX 2070 Super graphics • PCS FrostFlow 240 watercooler • 512GB Samsung 970 Evo Plus M.2 PCIe SSD • 2TB Seagate Barracuda hard disk • 802.11n Wi-Fi PCIe card • Thermaltake V200 chassis • Corsair 650W TXm PSU • Windows 10 Home • 201 x 427 x 445mm (WDH) • 3yr warranty (1 month C&R, 1yr parts, 3yr labour)

