

Reviews

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PC | £679 from PC Specialist www.snipca.com/22318

PC Specialist Enigma K1

Everything for a bit less



Laptops can sell themselves on all sorts of factors; how slim, light and stylish it is may matter to you as much as what's inside it. But when it comes to a desktop tower PC, you probably just want the fastest PC you can get for your money. Recent months have seen significant new processors from Intel and the big **graphics card** makers AMD and Nvidia. That means you get more power for your Brexit-stricken pound. To prove the point, here's PC Specialist's Enigma K1, which pairs Intel's new Kaby Lake **CPU** and Nvidia's GTX **GPU** to create a machine for under £700 that's ready for graphics and games as well as everyday Windows 10 tasks.

“For a PC at this price, the Enigma K1's notably fast with generous memory”

Intel's contribution is the 3GHz i5-7400, while the graphics card is Nvidia's GeForce GTX 1050. It's about the most potent combination you're likely to see in this price bracket, and PC Specialist hasn't skimped on the components that surround them either – even if they all come installed in rather an ordinary-looking mid-sized tower case. A few sharp angles and stripes probably won't be enough to persuade you to plonk this chunky chassis on top of your desk rather than hiding it underneath.

What's inside is more interesting. Windows 10 Home comes installed on a 240GB Kingston **SSD** for speed, and there's also a 1TB hard drive to give you room for everything

else. A large 16GB of memory is installed as standard, twice the norm, which will help with multi-tasking and more advanced software. The SSD has fast **DDR4** memory too, which for a PC at this price is a notably generous specification.

A few corners have had to be cut, but they're sensibly chosen. For instance, there's no optical drive fitted as standard, but if you need a DVD burner, PC Specialist will add it in for just £15. You get eight USB ports to play with, two of which are handily mounted on the front, but the Asus micro-ATX motherboard provides limited room for internal upgrades. A pair of **PCI-Express** 1x slots are free, but the graphics card already fills the single PCIe 16x slot, and the memory modules fill both of the slots provided. The 350W power supply gives you a little bit of wriggle room for a more power-hungry graphics card in the future.

Upgrading may be a distant concern, though, because we had absolutely no complaints about this PC's performance. The fast central processor and SSD ensured programs loaded and ran quickly, and the GTX 1050, despite coming from the bottom of Nvidia's new

range, kept up its end of the bargain by running the latest 3D games smoothly at Full HD resolution with the detail settings turned up. Only the most demanding titles required some tweaking.

Power efficiency is impressive, too. The Core i5-7400 and GeForce GTX 1050 are both around 10–15 per cent quicker than their previous generations, yet much more power efficient. That means the Enigma K1 only uses 27 watts while sitting booted up but idle,



occasionally flickering above 120 watts while running the latest games. A further benefit is that, because the processor and graphics card produce so little heat, the various cooling fans never waver from a steady background whirr.

The Enigma K1's appeal is clear. If you are on a budget but want a good processor and a GPU that can cope with photo and video-editing apps as well as handling some gaming, it's an excellent choice.

SPECIFICATIONS

3.0GHz Intel i5-7400 quad-core processor • 16GB memory • Nvidia GeForce GTX 1050 graphics card • 240GB SSD • 1TB hard drive • 3x USB 3.0 • 5x USB 2.0 • Gigabit Ethernet • HDMI port • DisplayPort • DVI port • Windows 10 Home • 415x192x418mm (HxWxD) • Three-year warranty www.snipca.com/22318

VERDICT: Not many frills and limited upgrade potential, but for the money you get a fast PC and plenty of storage

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE: Chillblast Fusion Sentinel **£750** A faster graphics card justifies the higher price of this desktop, tested last issue

