



£800 PCs shootout

Chillblast Fusion Arrow



SCORE ★★★★★

PRICE £667 (£800 inc VAT); free delivery from chillblast.com

Chillblast's Fusion Arrow makes a statement right away with its striking purple trim; turn it on and colour-matched LEDs glow through the front fan and windowed side. If purple isn't your thing, you can switch it for red, green, blue or a bold white design, but we rather like it as is.

This compact case is well appointed, with three USB ports at the top (one of which supports SuperSpeed USB 3), twin audio jacks and an SD card reader. Round the back, the Asus H110M-A motherboard offers an additional pair of USB 3 connectors, plus four USB 2 sockets and twin PS/2 connectors for anyone still wedded to an ancient keyboard.

It's powered by a 3GHz Core i5-7400 processor, built on Kaby Lake architecture, but the technical improvements in Intel's latest chips are largely to do with power consumption rather than performance. In our desktop benchmarks, the Fusion Arrow achieved an overall score of 101, indicating it's effectively no faster than a Haswell-era Core i5-4670K. Still, this is a very powerful computer that will leave almost any laptop in the dust.

It's also a capable gaming machine. The supplied 3GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card won't whizz through the toughest games at 4K, but its performance at 1080p impressed us. In *Metro: Last Light Redux*, with all detail settings set to high, it kept up a slick 53fps. That represents enough power to keep you gaming for several years to come.

One point worth noting, though, is that the Fusion Arrow comes with "only" 8GB of DDR4 memory. That's plenty for almost any modern workload, but there are no spare DIMM slots. Finally, storage comes in the form of a 250GB SATA SSD and a 1TB Seagate data drive. It's an unremarkable provision, but there's an M.2 slot on the motherboard if you want to upgrade later.

The Fusion Arrow isn't a groundbreaking PC, but it comes with the best warranty here and has enough power to eat up desktop applications and games alike.

KEY SPECS 3GHz Intel Core i5-7400 • 8GB RAM • GeForce GTX 1060 graphics • 250GB SATA SSD • 1TB hard disk • 5yr RTB warranty (first 2yrs C&R) • 195 x 375 x 390mm (WDH)



PC Specialist Enigma K2



SCORE ★★★★★

PRICE £667 (£800 inc VAT); free delivery from pcspecialist.co.uk



PC Specialist's £800 PC follows a similar blueprint to the Chillblast, partnering a Kaby Lake Core i5-7400 processor with an Asus H110M-R motherboard. This is basically identical to the H110M-A, so you get the same set of connectors at the back, and the same internal expansion options.

One difference worth noting, however, is the lack of an M.2 connector. To be fair, the 240GB Kingston SATA SSD does a fine job of keeping Windows 10 running smoothly, and it's supplemented by a 1TB WD hard disk.

It's also worth noting that the H110M-R, like its brother, has only two DIMM slots. In this case, however, they come populated with a pair of 8GB modules, adding up to a generous 16GB of DDR4. That should be enough to accommodate the most demanding workloads you encounter during the life of this PC. The extra RAM doesn't make a difference to everyday computing, though: the Enigma K2 achieved an overall score of 102. That's functionally identical to the Chillblast, and indeed to mid-range systems from previous generations, making this a strong rather than exceptional performer.

It's the same story when it comes to gaming: with a 3GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 1060 once again sitting pretty in the motherboard's sole PCI E x16 slot, high-detail 4K gaming is out of reach. Stepping down to 1080p, though, saw a tasty average frame rate of 50fps in *Metro: Last Light Redux*, with all visual settings dialled up to maximum.

While the Enigma K2's specs are similar to those of the Chillblast, the machine itself is physically quite different. The Cooler Master K350 case is taller, deeper and squarer, not to mention more imposing. Unlike the Chillblast, it will take an internal optical drive. Note that it offers only two front-facing USB ports – one USB 2 and one USB 3.

Such minor matters are easy to look past, though. The Enigma K2 offers all the same core strengths as the Chillblast save for the M.2 slot, and it doubles the memory, making this a more complete all-rounder.

KEY SPECS 3GHz Intel Core i5-7400 • 16GB RAM • GeForce GTX 1060 graphics • 240GB SATA SSD • 1TB hard disk • 1yr RTB warranty (30-day C&R) plus 2yr RTB (labour only) • 200 x 450 x 415mm (WDH)



"While the Enigma K2's specs are similar to the Chillblast, the machine itself is physically quite different"