

DESKTOP GAMING PC

PC SPECIALIST Enigma X 02

COMPUTER
SHOPPER
RECOMMENDED



£1,029 • From www.pcspecialist.co.uk

VERDICT

Six cores, 6GB of VRAM and two storage drives add up to a quietly brilliant PC

AT A TOUCH over a grand, the Enigma X 02 goes head-to-head with the £1,053 Wired2Fire Pyro Reactor (Shopper 358), one of our Best Buys. They've clearly been pieced together with similar thinking: forgo any big luxuries and focus on delivering fast, if ultimately mid-range, performance across the board.

So the Enigma X 02 doesn't try to impress with water-cooling, built-in Wi-Fi or a glass side panel (there is a window, but it's acrylic). However, it has been built around a formidable set of components, namely the latest Intel Core i5-8600K, a Z370 motherboard, 16GB of DDR4 RAM and a 6GB GeForce GTX 1060.

STOCK AND ROLL

As we've seen several times in recent issues, the Core i5-8600K's six cores (from the Core i5-7600K's four) hugely hikes its multitasking capabilities. The Enigma X 02 scored 146 in our image test, 189 in the video test and 212 in multitasking, for an overall score of 193; not what you'd get from a high-end workstation, but more than enough for everyday use.

However, the Pyro Reactor comes out slightly ahead, with its titanic multitasking and overall scores of 246 and 217. To be fair, that's with an overclocked AMD Ryzen 5 1600X, while the Core i5-8600K here is running at its stock speeds of 3.6GHz base and 4.3GHz with Turbo Boost. But for those without an interest in tinkering with ratios and multipliers, the Pyro Reactor might be the better choice.

That said, there is untapped potential here; the Overclockers Gaming Oxygen (Shopper 361) scored 225 overall by overclocking its

own Core i5-8600K to 4.8GHz. Overclocking will make the air cooler run louder, but since it's very quiet to begin with, that's not much of a worry. In a sustained run of 100% CPU load in our benchmarks, we measured core temperatures sticking around 60-64°C, so there's some thermal headroom to work with as well.

Since the Enigma X 02 and Pyro Reactor have the same GPU, they're much more evenly matched on gaming performance. In Dirt Showdown, the Enigma X 02 put out 122fps at 1,920x1,080, 99fps at 2,560x1,440 and 55fps at 3,840x2,160, so older and less demanding games will run fine even at 4K.

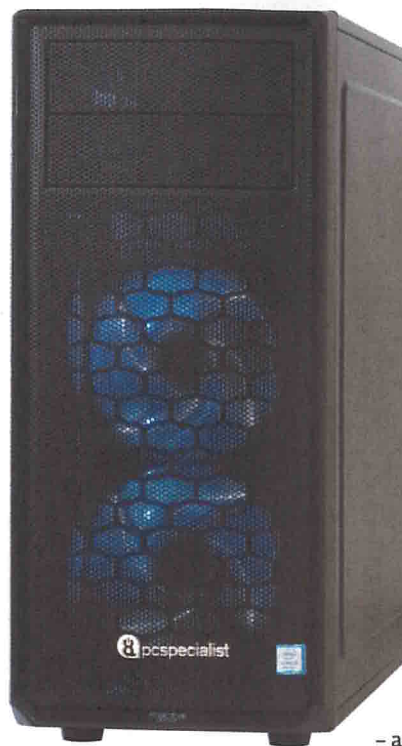
As for the less forgiving Metro: Last Light Redux, the Enigma X 02 copes at 1,920x1,080, averaging 50fps. 2,560x1,440 proved a bit too much, dropping to 29fps, and 3,840x2,160 was unplayable at 12fps. Fortunately, to get 1440p going at a better pace, we just had to disable SSAA to reach 55fps, and while 4K forced us to drop from Very High to Medium settings, this produced a still-acceptable 51fps.

PC Specialist's system also matched the Pyro Reactor in the SteamVR Performance Test with a final score of 7.9, thus earning it VR-ready status. For less money, the Medion Erazer X5361 G (opposite) offers a more powerful, more 4K-inclined GTX 1070, but this is a far better-balanced rig on the whole.

SOLID STATE OF MIND

This balance can be seen not just in the choice of CPU, but in the storage. Here, the 1TB hard disk has been relegated to backup space, with a 250GB NVMe SSD acting as the main drive. Unlike the vast majority of M.2-mounted SSDs we've used, this Western Digital model uses the mSATA interface rather than the much faster PCI-E, so speeds aren't really any different to how a standard 2.5in SATA drive would run.

Indeed, according to the AS SSD test, it recorded a sequential read speed of 520MB/s and a sequential write speed of 476MB/s – bog-standard SATA scores if we've ever seen them. It's not a



huge disappointment, though: the drive keeps Windows feeling slick, and matches the Pyro Reactor's SSD on both capacity and (roughly) transfer speeds.

Open up the case – which is pleasantly compact for a mid-tower – and you have the chance to add a few parts to the motherboard.

One PCI-E x16, four PCI-E x1 and four RAM slots are all free for future upgrades, as is a second M.2 slot. Physical storage capacity is limited, however: there are only two 3.5in bays and a single 2.5in bay hidden around the back, and one of the former is already taken. Both 5.25in trays are empty, though.

Connectivity is fine, if unexceptional. That means the usual three 3.5mm audio jacks rather than fancy stuff such as S/PDIF, along with an Ethernet jack, four HDMI ports, two DisplayPorts and two DVI-D sockets. The front I/O panel has only one USB2 and USB3 port apiece, so you'll be relying on the two USB2 and four USB3 connectors at the back. A PS/2 port is included as well.

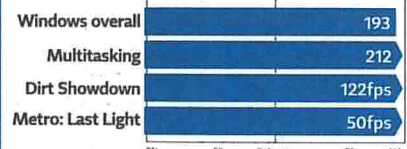
ZERO TWO HERO

In the end, there isn't much separating the Enigma X 02 and the Pyro Reactor; even the latter's modest CPU advantage is arguably balanced out by the PC Specialist system being slightly cheaper. In terms of handing out awards, that extra processing power is enough for the Pyro Reactor to keep its Best Buy, but this challenger is still a brilliant multi-purpose PC that's fully deserving of your cash.

James Archer

SPECIFICATIONS

PROCESSOR Hexa-core 3.6GHz Intel Core i5-8600K • **RAM** 16GB • **FRONT USB PORTS** 1x USB2, 1x USB3 • **REAR USB PORTS** 2x USB2, 4x USB3 • **GRAPHICS CARD** 6GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 1060 • **STORAGE** 250GB SSD, 1TB hard disk • **DISPLAY** None • **OPERATING SYSTEM** Windows 10 Home • **WARRANTY** Three years labour, including one year parts and one month collect and return • **DETAILS** www.pcspecialist.co.uk • **PART CODE** Enigma X 02



See page 68 for performance details

