

GAMING PC

CyberPower Fang Trinity 300 / £1,999 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.cyberpowersystem.co.uk

CyberPower's latest machine is, technically, a desktop PC, but it doesn't look like any gaming system we've seen recently. It uses the DeepCool Gamer Storm Tristellar case – a chassis that divides the system's components into three discrete sections, described as 'blades'. The trio of blades are coated with thick surrounds of sandblasted metal and make this machine look like a spaceship. The cables that flow between the components and their separate sections are stored in a strut in the middle of the case, and the large power button is illuminated with red LEDs.

There's no denying its striking appearance, but manufacturer Deepcool says there are practical benefits too: the separation of major components keeps down temperatures, and the modular design means it's easy to access particular parts if they need to be replaced. It isn't difficult to get inside; the metal shrouds all slide away after removing a couple of thumbscrews.

The top blade houses the overclocked MSI Nvidia GeForce GTX 980 graphics card and the 250GB Samsung 850 Evo SSD, with the rest of the components divided between the two lower sections. One section houses the full-sized Cooler Master PSU and the hard drive, while the other contains the mini-ITX motherboard and cooler.

The Tristellar's looks will divide opinion, and its width and shape means it's not as easy to accommodate as a traditional tower case, but its build quality is rock-solid, with a metal skeleton beneath thick, sturdy panels. It has a surprising amount of upgrade room too; the top blade has two tool-free SSD bays vacant, and there's room for a second hard disk towards the bottom. It's no match for the versatility of ATX towers, but it isn't bad when compared to other mini-ITX machines.

Plus, while the CyberPower be a mini-ITX system, it has a specification we'd expect from a full-sized desktop. The Core i5-5820K processor has had its six cores overclocked from 3.3GHz to 4GHz, and there's 16GB of DDR4 RAM too. That's a good selection of components, but the CyberPower still can't compete with traditional towers such as Scan's 3XS X99 Carbon Ti – another machine that also costs £1,999.

The Scan machine shares the Core i7-5820K and 16GB of memory, but both are clocked a little faster: the CPU at 4.2GHz and the memory at 2,666MHz. The 3XS system also has the GTX 980 Ti rather than just the standard GTX 980 too, enabling the Scan machine to play 4K games. And, while we're pleased by the CyberPower's Samsung Evo SSD, Scan goes one step further, with a 512GB SM951 model



that uses PCI-E 3 to deploy stupendous read and write speeds. Like the Scan, the CyberPower doesn't have an optical drive either, although there's room for a slimline model in a 5.25in bay between the two hard disk bays.

The CyberPower's ASRock X99E-ITX/ac motherboard is obviously also missing expansion features when compared with full-sized ATX boards, although it does have an M.2 slot that supports PCI-E 3.

Meanwhile, the rear I/O panel sports four USB 3 ports, a pair of USB 3.1 connectors, a PS/2 port and five audio jacks alongside dual-band 802.11ac wireless. Amazingly, CyberPower has also managed to cram a liquid-cooling system inside the Trinity – a 120mm Cooler Master Seidon with one fan.

The Fang also comes with a three-year labour warranty with two years of parts coverage, and it's a return-to-base deal for the whole three years. That's a decent deal, even if Scan's is a little better thanks to three years of parts coverage and a year of on-site repairs.

Performance

The CyberPower machine might be a mini-ITX build, but it still has strong application power. Its encoding benchmark score of 358,997 is fantastic thanks to the i7-5820K's six cores, and it also excelled in the multi-tasking test with a result of 183,879. The CyberPower's overall result of 152,964 is superb – not far behind the Scan's 160,430 score, and enough to ensure that high-end games and work tasks are completed swiftly.

There was more of a gulf between the CyberPower's GTX 980 and the Scan's GTX 980 Ti, although that's no surprise: the CyberPower's card has a far weaker specification that's not really designed for 4K. Its minimum frame rate in Crysis 3 at 2,560 x 1,440 was a comfortable 34fps, but that figure dropped to just 7fps with an average of 22fps when we raised the resolution to 3,840 x 2,160.

/SPECIFICATIONS

CPU Intel Core i7-5820K
overclocked to 4GHz

Motherboard ASRock
X99E-ITX/ac

Memory 16GB Kingston
HyperX Fury 2,400MHz
DDR4

Graphics MSI GeForce GTX
980 4GB

Storage 250GB Samsung
850 Evo SSD; 2TB Seagate
hard disk

Case DeepCool Gamer
Storm Tristellar

Cooling CPU: Cooler Master
Seidon with 1x 120mm fan;
GPU: 1x 60mm fan; rear 1x
90mm fan

PSU Cooler Master
RS-600 600W

Ports Front 2x USB 3, 2x
audio; Rear 4x USB 3, 2x
USB 3.1, 2x USB 2, 1x PS/2, 2
x Gigabit Ethernet, 1x eSATA,
1x optical S/PDIF, 5x audio

Operating system Windows
8.1 64-bit

Warranty Two years parts
and labour return to base,
with a third year labour only

It was a similar story in other games. A playable 2,560 x 1,440 minimum of 46fps in Battlefield 4 dropped to 22fps at 4K, although Shadow of Mordor didn't drop below 31fps at 3,840 x 2,160.

The CyberPower's SSD can't compete with that of the Scan either. Its sequential read and write speeds of 469MB/sec and 412MB/sec are good, but they're less than a third as quick as the Scan's Samsung M.2 drive. In fairness, though, the average home user or gamer is unlikely to see much advantage from the Scan's high storage speeds anyway.

There's little to choose between the two machines when it comes to temperatures, with the CyberPower's CPU and GPU topping out with delta Ts of 70°C and 61°C – that's hot, but still within the CPU's thermal limits. However, the cramped CyberPower makes a little more noise than the Scan. It isn't too bad, though, and will be easily countered with some decent speakers or a set of headphones.

Conclusion

CyberPower's system is striking thanks to its triple-pronged case design, and there's plenty to like about the Tristellar chassis: its looks will draw admiring glances, and it's well built too. There are reminders throughout, though, that the Fang makes compromises in order to look so outrageous. Its processor and memory are a little slower than the similar



hardware in the Scan, and the GTX 980 and SSD are outpaced by Scan's machine too.

There's no denying the Trinity's outstanding design though – if you're not bothered by 4K gaming, and your priority is a system that looks great, and you're prepared to pay for it, the Fang Trinity 300 is still a cracking PC – just be aware that you can get more performance for the same money in a standard PC case elsewhere.

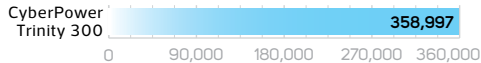
MIKE JENNINGS

CPC REALBENCH 2015

GIMP IMAGE EDITING



HANDBRAKE H.264 VIDEO ENCODING



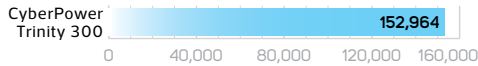
LUXMARK OPENCL



HEAVY MULTITASKING



SYSTEM SCORE



INTEL REFERENCE: 133.65%

BATTLEFIELD 4

2,560 x 1,440, Ultra Detail, 4x AA



3,840 x 2,160, Ultra Detail, 4x AA



Minimum Average

BIOSHOCK INFINITE

2,560 x 1,440, Ultra Detail with Depth of Field



3,840 x 2,160, Ultra Detail with Depth of Field



SHADOW OF MORDOR

2,560 x 1,440, Ultra Detail



3,840 x 2,160, Ultra Detail



CRYSIS 3

2,560 x 1,440, Very High Detail, 0x AA



3,840 x 2,160, Very High Detail, 0x AA



Minimum Average

SPEED
21/25

DESIGN
23/25

HARDWARE
21/25

VALUE
20/25

OVERALL SCORE
85%

VERDICT

A striking, sturdy design and great performance in most tests, but more traditional PCs can offer 4K gaming performance for the same money.