

CyberPower Gamer Ultimate SLI Quad

Unbelievable performance at an unbelievable price

For all those readers who have added up the price of the parts in an OEM box and screamed into the night air: "Hell, I can build it cheaper than that!" CyberPower has a retort: Beat this one, sucker! While you might think you're up to the challenge, we suspect the price-to-performance ratio of the CyberPower Gamer Ultimate SLI Quad is impossible to match—unless you're using boosted parts. In fact, we're not sure how CyberPower is making a profit off this stacked and packed rig.

Peep this: The Gamer Ultimate features no less than Intel's 3.2GHz Core 2 Extreme QX9770 along with a pair of EVGA GeForce 9800 GX2 cards. The CPU itself retails for \$1,500, and the pair of GPUs runs about \$1,100. Indeed, we added up the retail price of all the Gamer Ultimate's parts and reached a total of \$5,500. The machine sells for just \$5,000.

CyberPower pushes the eminently over-clockable Intel core up 800MHz to an even 4GHz using Cooler Master's new ESA-enabled AquaGate Max. To this, CyberPower adds an Asus Striker II Extreme mobo. Based on the nForce 790i Ultra SLI chipset, this board is wicked cool and feature rich—and DDR3 all the way. Cyber-

Power includes 4GB of Corsair Dominator DDR3 DIMMs rated to operate at 1,600MHz data rates.

But not all of the Gamer Ultimate's parts are top-notch: The main hard drive array hosting the OS isn't composed of Western Digital's spanking-new fourth-generation 300GB VelociRaptor drives. We can't blame CyberPower for this oversight, as the drives are just now trickling out. We can, however, blame the company for a funky hard-drive config. A pair of 150GB Raptors hosts the OS, and CyberPower includes a second pair of 500GB Hitachi 7,200rpm drives in RAID 0 as well. Huh? We put a premium on safety when storing our precious photos and videos—and RAID 0 ain't safe. The chance of both arrays going bunk is low, but if the board goes south, you'd have to hunt for another Striker II to get your data back. Also controversial is the OS choice: Windows Vista Home Premium 64 bit. For times when driver and app support fail, however, CyberPower also includes Home Premium 32 bit.

The Gamer Ultimate sets new performance records in just about all of our benchmarks and makes the Kentsfield Q6700-based zero-point system we built in



Intel's long-delayed QX9770 finally makes an appearance in CyberPower's machine.

December seem antiquated.

Still, there were some issues: The machine occasionally failed to boot. We're not sure what caused the problem, but it may be related to the soft start button in the Cosmos S case. Only after cycling the power on the PSU would the machine restart. The top USB ports were also nonfunctional. CyberPower said it decided to use the ports for the media reader, which does include USB, so it's not too horrible a trade-off.

The Gamer Ultimate is a stellar performer, but the real story is its price. You could almost buy this rig and sell off its individual components for a tidy profit. —GORDON MAH UNG

SPECIFICATIONS

PROCESSOR	Intel Core 2 Extreme QX9770 (3.2GHz@4GHz)
MOBO	Asus Striker II Extreme (nForce 790i Ultra SLI)
RAM	4GB Corsair Dominator DDR3/1600
VIDEOCARD	Two EVGA GeForce 9800GX2s in SLI mode
SOUNDCARD	ADI 1988B 8-channel HD audio codec
STORAGE	Two WD Raptor 150GB in RAID 0, two Hitachi 500GB
OPTICAL	LG GGC-H20L
CASE/PSU	Cooler Master Cosmos Sport / ThermalTake ToughPower 1200

VISTA 64-BIT BENCHMARKS

ZERO POINT			
Premiere Pro CS3	1,260 sec		673 sec
Photoshop CS CS3	150 sec		78 sec
ProShow	1,415 sec		784 sec
MainConcept	1,872 sec	1,215 sec	
Crysis	26 fps		54 fps (108%)
Unreal Tournament 3	83 fps	130 fps	

Our current desktop test bed consists of a quad-core 2.66GHz Intel Core 2 Quad Q6700, 2GB of Corsair DDR2/800 RAM on an EVGA 680 SLI motherboard. We run two EVGA GeForce 8800 GTX cards in SLI mode, Western Digital 150GB Raptor and 500GB Caviar hard drives, an LG GGC-H20L optical drive, a Sound Blaster X-Fi soundcard, a PC Power and Cooling Silencer 750 Quad PSU, and Windows Vista Home Premium 64 bit.

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CYBERPOWER GAMER ULTIMATE SLI QUAD

<p>HK416</p> <p>Holy smokes, this thing is cheap! And it offers QX9770 performance!</p>	<p>M4</p> <p>Two RAID 0 arrays is like playing Russian roulette with an auto-loader.</p>
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\$5,000, www.cyberpowerpc.com