

CYBERPOWER Infinity X33 SE

COMPUTER SHOPPER ★★★★★

RECOMMENDED £499 • From www.cyberpowersystem.co.uk

VERDICT

Brilliantly fast and housed in a versatile case, the Infinity X33 SE is a stellar PC

NO OFFENCE TO NZXT, makers of the Infinity X33 SE's all-metal case, but it does make this PC look a little plain. As some of the other systems here show, you don't need to spend a lot of money to get a PC with some visual flair.

Yet the Infinity X33 SE's looks are as deceptive as they are ordinary, because once this PC gets running it delivers a wonderfully high level of gaming performance, edging out most of its competitors at this price point.

In Dirt Showdown, for instance, the Infinity X33 SE averaged a stellar 72fps, using the highest possible Ultra quality settings and at 1,920x1,080 resolution. Physics-bothering vehicle collisions and particle effects, didn't slow the PC down a jot.

TIME AND PUNISHMENT

Metro: Last Light Redux, with its much more punishing visual effects, put up a bigger challenge. Here, on Very High settings with SSAA enabled, the Infinity X33 SE averaged 28fps. That's 2fps fewer than the Box Cube Captain, and is only just about playable, but disabling SSAA had a greater effect than on its rival; while the Cube Captain gained 17fps from the same tweak, Cyberpower's PC found an extra 22fps, pushing it up to 50fps.

Its scores in our own benchmarks are also up there with the best, at least in this price range. The Infinity X33 SE scored 90 for image editing, 68 for video encoding, 54 for multitasking and 65 overall; that's plenty high for occasional media editing or handling large documents. As you'd expect from these numbers, Windows 10 runs beautifully, opening, closing and switching between programs with ease. We think it even boots

quite quickly, by the standards of a PC with only a mechanical hard disk for storage.

Cyberpower has opted for a newer dual-core processor instead of an older quad-core chip, and judging by the benchmark scores it's paid off. The Intel Core i3-6100 has proven itself a plucky little piece of silicon, with its two 3.7GHz cores joining forces with a bulky MSI GeForce GTX 960 graphics card – itself a thoroughly mid-range product. The use of fast, 2,133MHz DDR4 RAM is a nice boost to its multitasking capabilities as well.

The range of ports isn't as extensive as on some of its competitors, but there's still more than enough for the basics. Around the back, four USB2 and two USB3 ports are accompanied by mic in, line in and line out 3.5mm jacks, an Ethernet connector, one dual-link DVI-I and DVI-D output each, a VGA port, one HDMI port and a total of three DisplayPorts. All in all, enough for a very respectable multi-monitor setup with a good few peripherals and USB adaptors.

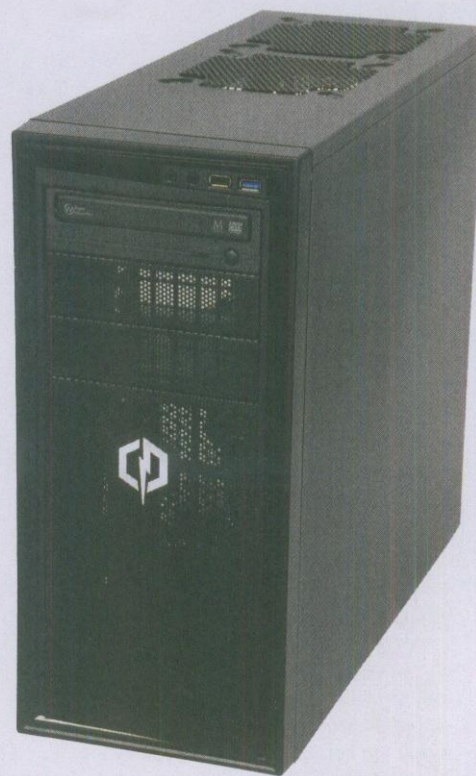
We'd have liked a few more USB inputs at the front, though. Here, there's only one USB2 and USB3 port apiece, next to the standard

It may not look particularly interesting, but a fine combination of components ensures it's a top performer

mic in and headphone jacks, though you do get a DVD-RW drive, which you don't always get on rigs that cost three times as much.

Inside, you'll find this drive occupies one of three 5¼in bays, which themselves are part of a rack containing a whopping eight 3½in bays. Accounting for the existing 1TB hard drive, that's seven spaces going spare, and they all – including the 5¼in bay – include nifty tool-less clamps for holding the drives in place, though you can also remove these clamps and screw the drives in manually.

We'd love to say this rack avoids an issue common to low-cost PCs – the lack of empty drive bays for future upgrades – but it is conspicuously missing anywhere for smaller 2½in drives. Considering that 1TB of hard disk space will suffice for most, it seems that a lower-capacity SSD (for saving the



Windows install and perhaps a few choice apps) would be a particularly logical first upgrade, but there's nowhere to easily and securely mount one.

BOARD TALK

Another peculiarity is that the Infinity X33 SE includes a microATX motherboard, when the case is big enough for a full-size ATX. As with the Cube Captain, we suspect this is to keep costs down, and to be fair the MSI H110M PRO-VD board does have a good selection of

external ports; it's just lacking in expansion slots as well. We could barely see the two PCI-E x1 slots underneath the graphics card, which takes up the sole PCI-E x16 slot, and there are only two RAM channels.

The case itself can be adorned with up to six fans. Since it starts off with none, we'd recommend adding at least a basic front intake or rear exhaust fan – both are among the cheapest PC upgrades you can go for – though it should be said that the Infinity X33 SE doesn't get warm under load. The stock CPU fan and GPU cooler are surprisingly efficient, and are probably helped by the empty fan slots and perforated front panel allowing a bit of air in by themselves. The GPU cooler runs at a somewhat high pitch, but even with all the holes in the case, this is far from the loudest PC around.

Indeed, the Infinity X33 SE may not look particularly interesting on the outside, but a fine combination of key components ensures that it's a top performer, and a customisation-friendly case means that – despite a few missing features – you can end up adding to and tweaking the configuration for years.

