

Contents

Welcome to Issue 219

Highlights

08 Hybrid theory

Intel's Alder Lake CPUs are just around the corner and will combine 'big' performance cores and 'little' efficiency cores, but Richard Swinburne wonders if it will work.

10 Men at war

Is gaming inherently unmanly? Whatever that may even mean, Tracy King has a bone to pick with the very notion.

16 Asus ROG Strix Z590-I Gaming WiFi

Asus' latest mini-ITX Z590 motherboard is a tiny, attractive-looking bit of kit but isn't without a few flaws.

20 Ssupd Meshlicious

For when one perforated panel just isn't enough, the Meshlicious is the ultimate in ventilated mini-ITX cases.

26 Unicomp New Model M

The original coveted mechanical keyboard, IBM's Model M, is available again under a different name.



40 Can you hear me now?

Make garbled audio a thing of the past with our group test of eight high-end USB microphones.

50 Low-profile coolers

Want a slim PC but don't want to compromise on cooling? We put five low-profile CPU coolers to the test.

64 Refund repercussions

Steam's refund policy fails to account for developers of shorter games, argues Rick Lane.

66 Wildermyth

One of the finest RPGs ever mixes amazing storytelling and superb tactical combat.

72 Make a mini marvel

Learn how to build the perfect petite PC for your needs with our comprehensive guide to the world of mini-ITX.

84 Intel Arc

Intel is finally entering the discrete graphics card market but what can we expect? Edward Chester investigates.

90 Project Tilia

If space is at a premium, you can always do away with a case altogether, as Axel Lindmarker proves with this stunning scratch build PC.

102 How to make an acrylic side panel

Antony Leather shows you how to cut and shape a custom clear panel for your case.



Cover guide



Regulars

- 3 From the editor
- 8 Richard Swinburne
- 10 Tracy King
- 12 Letters
- 14 Incoming
- 36 Custom kit
- 56 How we test
- 58 Elite products
- 64 Inverse look
- 70 Reality check
- 94 Hobby tech
- 100 Customised PC
- 102 How to guides
- 107 For the win
- 108 Retro tech
- 110 Readers' drives
- 114 James Gorbald

Reviewed



MOTHERBOARDS

- 16 Asus ROG Strix Z590-I Gaming WiFi
- 18 NZXT N7 Z590

CASES

- 20 Ssupd Meshlicious

GAMING HEADSETS

- 22 Roccat Syn Pro Air

KEYBOARDS

- 26 Unicomp Model M

LAPTOPS

- 28 Asus ROG Flow X13 GV301

PC SYSTEMS

- 32 PC Specialist Infinity LC
- 34 Wired2Fire Predator Extreme

Custom kit

- 36 Boompods Powerboom X10
- 36 Sinjimoru Cable Clip
- 36 ZeroWater 10 Cup Jug
- 37 G-Drive Mobile SSD
- 37 NuraTrue Earbuds

USB microphone Labs

- 41 Blue Yeti
- 42 Elgato Wave 1
- 43 Elgato Wave 3
- 44 EPOS B20
- 45 Razer Seiren Mini
- 46 Roccat Torch
- 48 Shure MV7 Podcast Kit with Mini Tripod
- 49 Trust GXT 241 Velica

Low-profile cooler Labs

- 51 be quiet! Dark Rock TF 2
- 52 Cryorig C7
- 53 Jonsbo CR-701
- 54 Noctua NH-L12S
- 55 Raijintek Pallas 120 RGB

Games

- 65 Chemobylite
- 66 Wildermyth
- 68 Cruelty Squad
- 69 Orcs Must Die 3
- 70 I Expect You to Die 2

Hobby tech

- 94 Airxed IRX Smart Home Hub
- 96 Kobol Helios64 long-term testing
- 98 Quantum Computing