

THE MENAGERIE

Making sense of your next PC purchase, with **TERRENCE JARRAD**

The new videocards from AMD and NVIDIA have pushed the prices of previous models down so low that high-end gaming is now more affordable than ever. Things haven't moved much at the low end, but the Roadster and GT now benefit from the new 4000 series cards from AMD.

The 4870 also appears in the Beastie, along with a CPU upgrade; the Q9450 with a core speed of 2.66GHz. The Beast sees two factory OC GTX280s in SLI for the ultimate in framerate!

Got suggestions, comments, or criticism for these systems? terrencej@pcpowerplay.com.au.

We quote SSP (Sensible Shopper Price) on all components.

Don't pay RRP - sites like www.staticice.com.au and www.shopbot.com.au will help you find and negotiate a better price!

THE COUPÉ

Pressed for cash? Take this for a spin!

CPU	Intel E2180 \$79 www.intel.com.au 2GHz dual core, and overclockable	
MOBO	Gigabyte GA-945GCM-S2L \$63 www.giga-byte.com.au Solid capacitors and up to 1333 FSB	
RAM	Value Select 2Gb 667Mhz \$49 www.corsair.com The name says it all	
VIDEO	Gainward 512MB 9600GT \$149 www.gainward.com Great performance and great price	
POWER	Thermaltake TR2 RX 450W \$80 www.thermaltake.com.au Modular cabling and three-year warranty	
OPTICAL	Pioneer 20x SATA 215BK \$37 www.pioneer.com.au Cheap as chips. Mmm chips.	
STORAGE	Maxtor 160Gb 7200RPM 2Mb cache SATAII \$58 www.seagate.com/maxtor Cheap with decent storage capacity	
CASE	Coolermaster Elite 330 \$49 www.coolermaster.com Tool-free sleek design	
TOTAL COUPÉ VALUE		\$564

THE ROADSTER

Aptly named, this LAN box loves to travel.

CPU	Intel E7200 \$149 www.intel.com.au 45nm dual core. Highly overclockable.	
MOBO	Gigabyte GA-EP45-3SL \$159 www.giga-byte.com.au 1600MHz FSB, and supports DDR2 1200	
RAM	A-DATA 2Gb Kit 800Mhz \$55 www.aadata.com.tw Minimum required for gaming these days	
VIDEO	HIS 512MB HD4850 \$215 www.inno3d.com Taste the eye-candy	
POWER	Corsair VX 550W \$134 www.corsair.com Reliable power, short-circuit protection	
OPTICAL	Pioneer 20x SATA 215BK \$37 www.pioneer.com.au Burn like the wind!	
STORAGE	Seagate 320Gb 7200. 10RPM 16Mb cache SATAII \$88 www.seagate.com Great drive with plenty of room	
CASE	Coolermaster Ammo 533 \$99 www.coolermaster.com Ammo for your next LAN	
TOTAL ROADSTER VALUE		\$936

THE GT

Cruising performance, comfortable price.

CPU	Intel E8400 \$219 www.intel.com.au Dual core, 3GHz, 45nm	
MOBO	Gigabyte EP45-DS4P \$199 www.gigabyte.com.tw CrossfireX, 1600MHz FSB, 1200MHz DDR2	
RAM	A-DATA 4Gb 800Mhz \$110 www.aadata.com.tw 4GB of goodness for gaming	
VIDEO	HIS 512MB HD4870 \$329 www.hisdigital.com AMD back with a bang	
POWER	Corsair HX 620W \$149 www.corsair.com Modular cabling and power for upgrades	
OPTICAL	Pioneer 20x SATA 215BK \$37 www.pioneer.com.au Why settle for less than the best?	
STORAGE	Seagate 500Gb 7200RPM 32MB Cache SATAII w/ NCQ \$130 www.seagate.com Plenty of space for all your "downloads"	
CASE	Coolermaster CM690 (no PSU) \$104 www.coolermaster.com Chilled and in control	
TOTAL GT VALUE		\$1262

PERIPHERALS

Choice extras, whether upgrading, replacing, or buying new. Cheaper options exist, but when it comes to the laying on of hands and eyeballs, it's worth paying for the best in the business.

TOTAL
\$551

22" Viewsonic VX2235
\$290 www.viewsonic.com
1680x1050; gaming greatness

DISPLAY

Logitech X-530 5.1
\$79 www.logitech.com
Totally addicted to bass

SPEAKERS

Logitech G15
\$94 www.logitech.com
Push all the right buttons

KEYBOARD

Logitech G9
\$88 www.logitech.com
Corded but customisable

MOUSE

**I WAN!
THE BEAST!**


Want the Beast? Need the Beast? We quote RFPs for all these components, but only chumps pay RFP. Search the Interweb for a price that suits you and don't be afraid to haggle, because money saved means you can afford more games!




The Beastie

Getting your game on for under \$2500

CPU
Intel Q9450
\$399 www.intel.com.au
Intel's 45nm quad core solution



MOBO
Gigabyte X48-DQ6
\$338 www.gigabyte.com.tw
Faster than a speeding bullet!



RAM
A-DATA 4Gb 800Mhz
\$110 www.adata.com.tw/adata_en
4GB is essential for Vista gaming.



VIDEO
HIS 512MB HD4870
\$329
www.hisdigital.com
Incredibly powerful, and ridiculously cheap, they hit a price/performance ratio. Two of these in Crossfire even challenge the GTX280!



POWER
Tagan TG800-U33 ITZ
\$250 www.tagan.com
For when you add that second 3870X2



SPEAKERS
Logitech X-530 5.1
\$79 www.logitech.com
Good surround sound at a great price




OPTICAL
Pioneer 20x SATA 215BK
\$37 www.pioneer.com.au
20x DVD media isn't even common yet!




STORAGE
Seagate 500GB 7200RPM
\$130 www.seagate.com
Too many SATA devices aren't enough




DISPLAY
AOC 416V 24" 5ms LCD
\$450 www.aocmonitors-anz.com
1920x1200




CASE
Coolermaster CM690
\$104 www.coolermaster.com
Stylish and functional



KEYBOARD
Logitech G15
\$94 www.logitech.com
The best gaming keyboard around



MOUSE
Logitech G7
\$95 www.logitech.com
The best wireless gaming mouse around



TOTAL BEASTIE VALUE \$2467

THE BEAST!

Next-gen videocards for all... or at least, the Beast

CPU
INTEL CORE 2 EXTREME QX9770
\$1900 www.intel.com.au
When only the best will do



MOBO
XFx 790I ULTRA SLI
\$550 www.xfxforce.com
Tri-SLI with a plethora of overclocking options.



RAM
4GB CORSAIR DOMINATOR 1600MHZ DDR3
\$890 www.corsair.com
Faster than four speeding bullets AND an express train. Zoocooooom



VIDEO
2x 1GB XFX GTX280 XXX EDITION
\$1480 www.xfx.com
This overclocked edition of the GTX280 runs at 670MHz, and with two of them running in SLI, your games will run faster than ever before.



POWER
TAGAN BZ SERIES 1300W PSU
\$499 www.tagan.com
Gold-plated screw-in modular cabling!



SOUND
CREATIVE SOUNDBLASTER X-FI ELITE PRO
\$929 au.creative.com
The sound and the fury. Mostly the sound.



SPEAKERS
CREATIVE GIGAWORKS S750 7.1 THX
\$726 au.creative.com
Pump it. Louder!




OPTICAL
SONY BWU-200S BLURAY BURNER
\$899 www.sony.com.au
Can burn 50GB and 250GB BD-R/BD-RE




STORAGE
**2X 300GB WD VELOCIRAPTOR DRIVES IN RAID 0
2X 1TB WD DRIVES IN RAID 0**
\$1580 www.westerndigital.com.au
Even faster than the old Raptors, the new VelociRaptors are increased in capacity, and while technically a 2.5" drive, the mandatory heatsink makes up the space to 3.5"



DISPLAY
2 X 30" SAMSUNG SYNCMASTER 305T
\$4998 www.intel.com.au
One GX2 per monitor seems only fair



CASE
THERMALTAKE SWORDM
\$699 www.thermaltake.com.au
Big. Exactly what we need



INPUT
LOGITECH G7 LASER MOUSE + OPTIMUS MAXIMUS OLED KEYBOARD
\$1900 www.logitech.com
The reins to control The Beast!



TOTAL BEAST VALUE \$17 050