

# Scan 3XS C2D-OC

Price £1,499.99 Contact <http://3xs.scan.co.uk>



Scan's 3XS C2D-OC stands out in a number of ways – not least because of the cool blue neon glow emanating through its see-through side panel. The neon strip inside the unit is purely for decoration, but the see-through side panel also gives you a good view of the unusual liquid cooling system installed in the machine.

The cooling system is there for a more practical reason, though, as Scan has overclocked the Core 2

Duo E6600 processor from its standard 2.4GHz right up to 3GHz.

Not surprisingly, the 3XS C2D-OC's performance benefits significantly from this overclocking and takes top place in most of our benchmarking tests. To back up the strong processor performance, Scan has also included an Nvidia GeForce 7900 GTX graphics card with 256MB of video memory. That combination produces a score of 129fps in our Far Cry test – one of the highest scores we've ever seen in that particular test. You even have a spare x16 PCI Express slot available for a second graphics card, so the 3XS C2D-OC should provide enough performance to keep even hardcore gamers happy for years to come.

We also like the three 'hot swap' drive bays located on the machine's front panel, which pop open at the press of a button and allow you to insert or remove a hard disk. The supplied 300GB hard disk uses one of these bays, leaving the other two empty for additional upgrades.

Scan has opted for the Media Center Edition of Windows XP, along with a TV tuner card, so you have the makings of a good home-entertainment system as well. It might have been useful to have 2GB of Ram rather than the 1GB provided by Scan, but the sheer performance of the 3XS C2D-OC ensures that this PC should earn its keep for a long time to come.

Personal  
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Verdict

**Pros** Overclocked processor provides superb performance; hot-swap drive bays for easy upgrades; good accessories

**Cons** Big, bulky tower chassis; just 1GB of Ram

**Features** ★★★★★

**Performance** ★★★★★

**Value for money** ★★★★★

**Overall** Terrific performance and lots of upgrade potential make this a gamer's dream machine

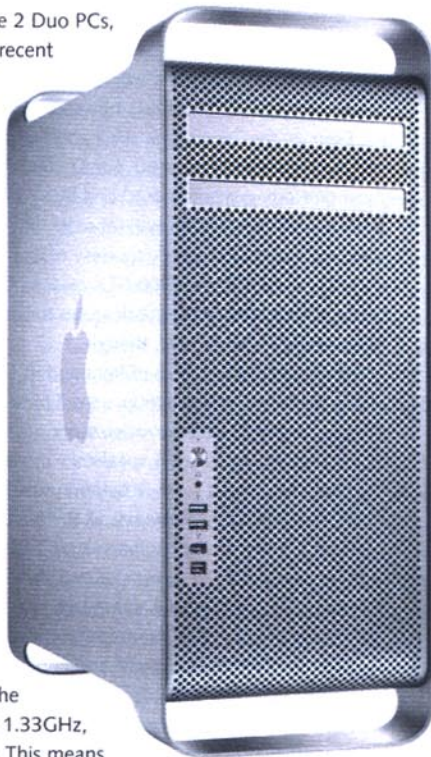
★★★★★

## An Apple with four cores

As well as looking forward to testing these Core 2 Duo PCs, we have been keeping a keen eye on Apple in recent weeks. Now that it uses Intel processors in all its Mac computers – and even allows them to run Windows via the Boot Camp utility – Apple was widely expected to launch its own Core 2 Duo machines at its annual developer conference in August.

Instead, the company went even further upmarket and launched a new Mac Pro system that uses Intel's latest Xeon processor. The Xeon name has been around for some time, but these new Xeons have a dual-core architecture based on the same Core micro-architecture as the Core 2 Duo processors used in the PCs reviewed here. But while the Core 2 Duo processors have been designed for use in ordinary desktop PCs, the Xeons have been modified to make them suitable for high-end workstations and servers.

The Xeon 5100 is currently available running at three speeds: 2GHz, 2.66GHz and 3GHz – again, very similar to the Core 2 Duo processors found in this group test. However, the Xeon has a faster front-side bus, which runs at 1.33GHz, compared to the 1GHz FSB of the Core 2 Duo. This means that the Xeon is better at moving around large quantities of data,



making it ideal for applications such as video editing and digital photography, which are key markets for Apple.

The Xeon is also designed to be used in multiprocessor configurations. Apple has put two dual-core Xeons inside its new Mac Pro system, providing users with an extremely powerful 'quad core' workstation. When it launched the Mac Pro, Apple also went out of its way to emphasise that it wanted to 'bust the myth' that Apple computers were more expensive than their PC counterparts. Coincidentally, the cheapest version of the Mac Pro costs £1,499 – the maximum price point set for the Core 2 Duo PCs in this group test.

That model includes two Xeons running at 2GHz – slower than the Core 2 Duo PCs in this review, but with four cores instead of two – potentially offering extremely good performance at a very competitive price. Unfortunately, the Mac Pro wasn't available for review in time for this group test, but we will test it as soon as it becomes available to see how the Xeon compares with the Core 2 Duo, in terms of overall price and performance.

Apple's Mac Pro offers four CPU cores for only £1,499