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Alienware Area 51 Review

Computers / Gaming / Gaming PC / Custom Gaming Desktops Review / Alienware Area 51



by Eric Chiu

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PROS / The Area 51 has superb configuration options for high-definition PC gaming.



[View Full Gallery](#)

CONS / Its case only comes in a single finish.

★ VERDICT / The Alienware Area 51

stands out from the competition aesthetically and performance-wise.



For a certain generation of mainstream PC gamers, companies like Alienware were

practically synonymous with high-end [gaming PCs](#). With design flourishes like alien-eye-

OVERALL RATING

9.48 / 10

RANKING

2nd in [Custom Gaming Desktops](#)

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-  [Velocity Micro Raptor Signature Edition](#)
-  [XOTIC PC Scourge V2](#)
-  [iBuyPower Erebus GT](#)
-  [Origin Genesis](#)

...ed lights and polished finishes, its
... separated themselves
...m most standard home desktops.



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The current custom gaming PC market remains competitive, but the Alienware Area 51's strengths help it remain as distinctive as its predecessors. Along its strong build quality, the Area 51's excellent specifications and value earn the desktop the Top Ten Reviews Silver Award.



[Origin Genesis](#)



9



[MAINGEAR Force](#)

10



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Performance of selected graphics card at 3840 x 2160

More is better

2
**ALIENWARE
AREA 51**

SILVER AWARD WINNER

111 Frames Per Second

1
**CYBERPOWERPC
FANG III**

GOLD AWARD WINNER

135 Frames Per Second

3
**CYBERTRONPC
SILENCER**

BRONZE AWARD WINNER

135 Frames Per Second



CATEGORY



84.60 Frames Per Second



Graphics & Performance



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Dell offers several customizable configurations for the Area 51. Our review unit was built close to our selected configuration but relied on

three NVIDIA GeForce GTX 980 graphics cards versus a dual GTX 970 setup.

During our benchmarking, the triple card GTX 980 setup produced exceptional numbers in a variety of titles. In "Crysis 3" at a resolution of 1920 x 1080 and Very High graphics settings, the Area 51 had a frame rate of 85 frames per second (fps). Likewise, the custom gaming computer produced an exceptional 186 fps mark in "BioShock Infinite" at comparable settings.

Alienware's included overclocking application automates the calibration process, so you can automatically set your preferred performance level. It also provides modest frame rate bumps. Our testing found average performance increases of around 7 percent in games and synthetic benchmarking.

In benchmarking from our colleagues at Tom's Hardware, a comparable dual GTX

070 active users equally reliable with 4K
and 110 fps in the games



f "Far Cry 3," "Battlefield 4" and "BioShock
t Infinite." In practice, there's virtually
nothing to dislike about the system's
r graphics card options. Considering that
p games typically need a minimum of 30 fps
to run smoothly, the Alienware has the
overhead needed to handle high-end PC
gaming without issue.

Processor & Storage

The series relies on Intel's Haswell-E line of processors, which provide excellent levels of day-to-day performance. Our review unit's 3.5GHz Intel Core i7-5930K produced a score of 11.8 in processor benchmark Cinebench 11.5, which was in line with comparable high-end Ivy Bridge-E processors. For more demanding users, the processor can be upgraded to an Intel Core i7-5960X that provides a significant performance boost. Via our colleagues at Anandtech, the 5960X scored a 15.2 in the same Cinebench 11.5 test.



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Generally, gaming PCs are more dependent on graphics card performance than processor ability and anything from the Haswell-E lineup has enough processing headroom for PC games. Still, a faster

processor makes bottlenecking a nonissue
serves as a workstation for
tasks like video editing. For storage, Dell
includes a standard slate of high-capacity
solid-state and hard-disk drives upgrade
options.

Design & Connectivity



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Unlike many top gaming PC companies, the Alienware uses a proprietary case instead of relying on a third-party manufacturer and the

choice pays off in many ways. The case's semi-triangular design is built with a dense plastic exterior and features customizable lighting throughout the chassis.

With its dimensions and hefty size – our review unit weighed 59.2 pounds, but this varies depending on your exact build – the Area 51 is hardly compact but has ample room for all of its components. The extra space inside of the computer also encourages efficient airflow. Three fans are mounted in a triangular pattern inside the case and work in unison to circulate air. During multiple extended gameplay sessions, the Area 51's fans were virtually inaudible.

Elsewhere, the side panels of the Alienware are easily removed via latches on the desktop's backside and provide easy access

to the computer's internals. The left panel
computer's

motherboard and main components, while
the right hosts a dedicated hard drive
housing area. With design features like
customizable finishes commonplace
among premium gaming desktops, the
plastic chassis is a minor limitation, but it's
more than made up for by the Alienware's
build quality. Our hands-on testing found
the Area 15 to be a durably constructed
desktop, from its metal-backed side panels
to the clean layout of its internal
components.

Help & Support

Dell covers the basics with its warranty
options for the Area 51. Dell includes a base
one-year warranty on the computer and
offers support through several channels.
These include live chat, phone support,
email and online support via Dell's
troubleshooting section.

Summary

Case design can often be a crutch for mid-
major custom gaming PCs companies, and
you see computers with average
components stuck inside cases with add-
ons like side windows or excessive LED
lighting. The Alienware's design is certainly
not one of your run-of-the-mill desktop
gaming cases, but the desktop backs up its



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