

■ VELOCITY MICRO, WWW.VELOCITYMICRO.COM, 800-303-7866 ■ PRICE \$2,495



Gamer's Edge PX 2100a



THIS NEW COMPUTER'S GOT A PRETTY FACE AND THE GUTS TO BACK IT UP

Originally a builder of custom PCs designed to run CAD software for the kitchen- and bath-design industry (exciting, huh?), Velocity Micro shifted gears in 1998 when the founding members of the company realized that there was a lot more to life than tile and porcelain. With the doors to the entire computing world finally open to them, the outfit set about building PCs for all occasions — including gaming.

With such a long history of building highly customized rigs, it probably shouldn't have come as a shock that the Gamer's Edge PX 2100a performs well, but we were pleasantly surprised nonetheless — after all, gamers can be hard to please, and pedigree alone can get you only so far.

The first thing that struck us about Velocity Micro's system is that it uses a case design we'd never seen before. This "Platinum XP" is a particularly attractive tower, and it's got some rather ingenious functionality, too. The most obvious is the temperature gauge right on the front of the system. While it reports only Celsius, it's still a handy tool. Better still, if the system is getting a little too hot for your tastes

(you know, because you're doing something evil and wrong like overclocking), one click of the thermometer's "turbo" button will increase the speed of the case's internal fans dramatically (and audibly).

As an extra bonus, on the bottom-righthand side of the Platinum XP are three additional inputs: two USB ports plus an IEEE 1394 port (aka Firewire) for all of your high-speed-peripheral needs.

After getting in and tinkering with this computer (a very well-constructed and organized system, we might add), we did come across one fairly sizable drawback to the Platinum, which rears its "ugly" head when certain hardware is installed. If you buy a product that includes (or is) an internal breakout box (think: Sound Blaster Audigy Platinum), it's really going to spoil the clean, shiny aesthetic of this tower's 5.25-inch designer bays. To its credit, Velocity Micro clearly warns you of this fact on its

SYSTEM SPECS	
System	
Processor	AMD Athlon XP 2100+
Motherboard	Asus A7V266-E
Memory	512MB OCZ PC-3000 with copper heat spreaders (2x256)
Storage	
Primary Hard Drive	120GB Western Digital 7,200rpm
Secondary Hard Drive	Same (240GB total storage space)
RAID Controller	Promise ATA/100 (on motherboard)
DVD-ROM Drive	Pioneer 16x
CD-RW Drive	Plextor 40x/12x/40x
Expansion	
5.25-inch bays	4 (2 free)
3.5-inch bays	4 (1 free)
AGP Slot	Yes (1)
PCI Slots	5 (full)
RAM Slots	3 (1 free)
Audio	
Sound Card	Sound Blaster Audigy Gamer
Video	
Primary Display Adapter	Visiontek GeForce4 Ti 4600+
Other	
Keyboard	Logitech Cordless Freedom Optical
Mouse	Logitech Wireless Optical Scroll Mouse
Network Card	Yes
Modem	USR 56K
Recovery CD	Yes
Firewire	Yes (1 port)
Warranty	Three years parts and labor, first-year express service, 30-day satisfaction guarantee



website, and also makes alternative system cases available to you should you so desire.

Check the specs above and you'll see that this Gamer's Edge is overflowing with the newest and fastest tech around. Dual 120GB

parts-and-labor warranty, as well as lifetime web and email support. In addition, every Gamer's Edge comes with your choice of Windows plat-



THE THERMOMETER ON THE FRONT OF THE GAMER'S EDGE LETS YOU KNOW IF YOU'RE PUSHING YOUR SYSTEM A LITTLE TOO HARD. HIT THE "TURBO" BUTTON TO SPEED UP THOSE INTERNAL FANS!

hard drives? Athlon XP 2100+? GeForce4 Ti? Oh my! How fast does that really make this system? Well, those of you who are always asking us if there's really a difference between different computer builders will be interested to learn that the Falcon Northwest Mach V we reviewed last month — a machine with the same CPU, video card, and quantity of RAM — is as much as 9 percent faster than the Gamer's Edge at low resolutions. At resolutions you'll actually use (i.e., 1024x768 and above), the gap lessons dramatically, and at 1600x1200, there's literally no performance difference at all between the two systems. So there you have it!

Velocity Micro can build you a system with either AMD or Intel CPUs, and offers a great deal of further customization options, to boot. Each computer comes with a very good three-year

form, a three-ring notebook that includes all of the manuals and drivers for the hardware in your computer, and a system-restore CD that will return your hard drive to like-new condition in the event that you need to reformat.

BENCHMARKS

3DMARK2001

(Tests run at 1024x768 in 32-bit color with triple frame buffer, 24-bit Z-buffer, compressed textures, hardware T&L enabled, and V-sync disabled)

3DMarks: 10,277

Game 1: Car Chase

High Detail: 53.5 fps

Game 2: Dragothic

High Detail: 105.4 fps

Game 3: Lobby

High Detail: 61.0 fps

Game 4: Nature: 55.9 fps

Fill Rate: 2,486.3 MegaTexels per second
Vertex Shader: 100.2
Pixel Shader: 137.1

Advanced Pixel Shader: 103.3

QUAKE III

(Tests run in full, 32-bit color with trilinear filtering, max-res textures, compressed textures, and V-sync disabled. Second number is with 2x AA; third number is with Quincunx AA; fourth number is with 4x AA.)

640x480

192.8 fps, 192.5 fps

800x600

193.3 fps, 190.1 fps

1024x768

189.3 fps, 175.6 fps,

177.5 fps, 118.2 fps

1280x1024

169.2 fps, 134.2 fps

1600x1200

136.9 fps, 75.6 fps

MDK 2

(Tests run in 32-bit color with trilinear filtering, max-res textures, T&L enabled, and V-sync disabled)

640x480: 195.5 fps

800x600: 196.0 fps

1024x768: 196.2 fps

1280x1024: 191.6 fps

1600x1200: 156.6 fps

FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great-looking computer; top-of-the-line components; competitively priced.

LOWS: Wireless keyboard/mouse should be avoided at all costs; somewhat slower than the latest Mach V.

BOTTOM LINE: Add Velocity Micro to our short list of highly recommended premier system builders.

PC GAMER **90%**
EDITORS' CHOICE