



● MID-RANGE PC

Mesh Matrix Titan Vision

PRICE £899 (£1,056 inc VAT)

DELIVERY £39 (£46 inc VAT)

SUPPLIER Mesh Computers 0870 046 4747

INTERNET www.meshcomputers.com

VERDICT Superior in almost every way to the Evesham, the Titan Vision offers impressive dual-core performance and a great monitor at an affordable price.

A couple of months back, we were a little disappointed by Mesh's high-end Vision Plus (see issue 134, p52), which was outdone in both performance and value terms by an Evesham machine. This month sees the two manufacturers duelling again with a pair of mid-range PCs. We were pleased to find that Mesh's latest machine, the Titan Vision, packs an impressive punch for the price.

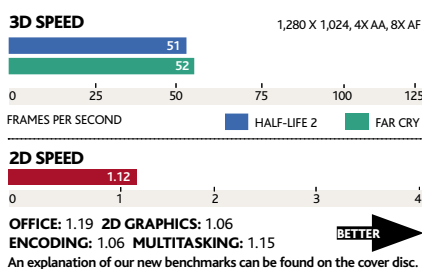
Amazingly, considering it costs nearly £400 less than the company's own Vision Plus, the performance in our 2D benchmarks was almost identical. At the heart of the system lies the same well-proven Asus A8N-SLI motherboard, this time with an Athlon 64 X2 4200+ processor running at 2.2GHz and 1GB of dual-channel PC3200 memory. So it was no surprise to see the Titan Vision achieve a fine score of 1.12 in our intensive application benchmarks, particularly excelling in the office and multitasking applications.

The 250GB Maxtor DiamondMax 10 hard disk is the perfect companion to this power, with a speed of 7,200rpm, quiet operation and 233GB



The Mesh interior is neat and airy, and there's plenty of room for expansion.

● RESULTS



The Titan Vision offers an Athlon 64 X2 4200+, a 6800 GT and 19in TFT all for under £900.

of usable space. If you need more room, there are two free 3.5in bays in the familiar Mesh chassis, as well as one free 5.25in external bay. The other two are occupied by Sony DVD writer and DVD-ROM drives, with the former supporting dual-layer DVD+R burning at a respectable 4x. The chassis itself is neat and roomy, with a quiet 120mm fan at the rear and a useful funnelled side-panel fan supplying the CPU with extra cooling.

While the motherboard has two PCI Express 1x and three standard PCI slots, one of the latter is taken up by a 56K modem card, and two of the rear expansion plates are occupied by FireWire and USB backplanes. You'll have to move one of these to access the second PCI Express 16x slot, although only gamers should need to for the time being thanks to the 256MB nVidia GeForce 6800 GT in the main slot.

With an average of 52fps in Far Cry and 51fps in Half-Life 2, it's clear the Mesh could have handled the jump to 1,600 x 1,200 had the TFT supported such a resolution. The 6800 GT includes support for Shader Model 3 and all its related benefits for the latest crop of games too, although it will begin to struggle with next year's titles once all the effects are piled on.

Nonetheless, Far Cry looked beautiful on the 19in ViewSonic VX912 TFT (see issue 124, p72) as it raced through our standard tests. The picture was crisp and clear at all times, with pleasingly even backlighting, although disappointing

viewing angles may hinder DVD viewing. Our technical tests revealed slight inaccuracies with colour handling, but otherwise it earns a clean bill of health.

To complement your multimedia experience, Mesh has bundled Creative's T6060 5.1 speakers. After adjusting the volume and bass levels, they give an impressively deep sound, detailed at the high end and rich in the low. But don't expect to put these speakers on show: the ugly plastic finish is cheap and tacky. We have no such complaints with the excellent Logitech cordless keyboard and mouse, though, with the keyboard being extremely comfortable to use.

The speakers are connected via some of the six mini-jack ports, and there are optical and coaxial S/PDIF outputs should you own a more comprehensive sound system. The front panel houses a further two USB ports and a floppy drive for those rare occasions when you

may need to use a boot disk. One complaint is the lack of memory card readers or wireless capability, but with the price of upgrading these falling all the time it's a minor quibble.

Included in the price is a Mesh Advantage warranty, giving you two years of on-site support and a third year of return-to-base cover, plus you get lifetime national-rate hardware support. Microsoft Works 8.5 is thrown in too. For £899, you really are getting a good deal with the Titan Vision, especially when compared to the Evesham Axis 64 X2 (see opposite). Double the memory, a superior processor, larger monitor and better speakers: it all adds up to much better value for money.

The Evesham comes with Windows Media Center Edition 2005, and we wish Mesh had gone down the same route given the nominal cost it would add. But even with Windows XP Home Edition as a foundation, it's still an impressive PC and a bargain at this price.

DAVID BAYON

PC PRO RATINGS

PERFORMANCE	★★★★★
FEATURES & DESIGN	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

SPECIFICATIONS 2.2GHz AMD Athlon 64 X2 4200+; 1GB PC3200 RAM; Asus A8N-SLI Deluxe motherboard; 250GB Maxtor DiamondMax 10 hard disk; Sony DW-Q30A DVD writer; Sony DDU1615 DVD-ROM; 256MB nVidia GeForce 6800 GT graphics; 19in ViewSonic VX912 TFT; Creative Inspire T6060 5.1 speakers; 2 x Gigabit Ethernet; 56K modem; Microsoft Works 8.5; Windows XP Home; 2yr on-site plus 1yr RTB warranty.