

Cerise Quad-Core Workstation

\$3,342 direct



PROS RAID 5 array for speedy, safe storage. Really quiet operation. Lots of expansion space. Windows XP instead of Vista. No bloatware.

CONS Windows XP Home. Limited tech-support hours. Pricey.

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CERISE QUAD-CORE WORKSTATION

Silent Running

The Cerise Quad-Core Workstation is a model of understated efficiency. No frills, no overclocking, no bloatware, no noise. But its unassuming, silver-colored case conceals a multimedia powerhouse. It's there to get that big photo or video project done, and it does so with aplomb.

The Cerise is powered by a 2.67-GHz Intel Core 2 Quad Q6700, 3GB of 800-MHz DDR2 memory, and a 256MB nVidia GeForce 8600 GT graphics card—a decent and solid DX10-compatible mid-level card. Another of the system's claims to fame is that it's noiseless. Screen vents and a separate chamber for the hard drives help keep the heat and the load on the fans down.

Speaking of hard drives, the Cerise has no less than four 500GB, 7,200-rpm ones. Three of the drives are arranged in a RAID 5 array, which ensures no data lost, even if a drive fails—as they often do when, say, flogged with a string of video-editing projects. And it's fast—the RAID array scored a blazing 6,627 on the Futuremark PCMark05 disk test, far outpacing even a quick eSATA external drive. The downside of RAID 5 is that one drive's space is effectively lost, leaving you a “mere” 1TB of storage space. (There's also the fourth drive, however, which acts as the C: drive but can store data in a pinch.)

The Cerise showed its multimedia chops on our benchmark tests. It finished the Windows Media Encoder test in a respectable 56 seconds and zoomed through the Photoshop CS3 test in a mere 26 seconds. Its CineBench R10 score, indicative of multimedia performance, was a stellar 9,523. On SYSmark 2007 Preview Overall, which measures the ability to do day-to-day business tasks, it scored 131, in line with other high-end PCs. On 3DMark06, an indicator of 3D graphics performance, the Cerise tallied a so-so 5,459—adequate for basic 3D rendering and gaming. (A professional animator would want to go with a higher-end workstation.)



Our test system came with Windows XP Home. Other options are Windows XP Pro, Vista Home Premium, and 32-bit Vista Ultimate.

We've seen screaming rigs (literally and figuratively) at this price point. The Cerise Quad-Core Workstation's quiet efficiency is a refreshing change, and makes the system merit a place on any multimedia pro's short list.—*Joel Santo Domingo*

PERFORMANCE TESTS

▲ High scores are best.
▼ Low scores are best.
Bold type denotes first place.

MULTIMEDIA TESTS

	CINEBENCH R10 ▲	WINDOWS MEDIA ENCODER ▼ min:sec	PHOTOSHOP CS3 ACTION SET ▼ min:sec
Cerise Quad-Core Workstation	9,523	0:56	0:26
Apple iMac (24-inch Penryn)*	5,842	1:03	0:30
Polywell Poly X3800**	9,343	0:42	0:20

* Editors' Choice, reported for comparison.

** Reported for comparison.