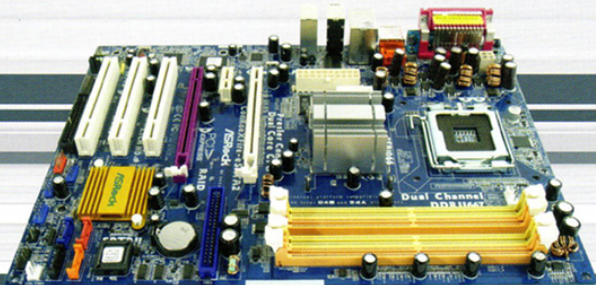


• 2006 continues to be a great year for H&M in terms of our leadership and the support the industry has been giving us. With a presence in 165 countries now (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia), to emphasize that the strength and breadth of our editorial staff is extensive and detailed, enriching and diverse.

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ASROCK CONROEXFIRE-E SATA2 (INTEL 945P EXPRESS)

ASRock has been a very interesting underdog of the motherboard industry, releasing various motherboard models that bear older series of chipset for cost savings, but ensures that modern features are integrated at the board level to match up against the big players. Practical in both cost and features while being at the forefront, ASRock has been offering competitive solutions at interesting price points that most of the bigger names find it difficult to retaliate, thus carving their own niche market.

Of the more recent slew of boards, ASRock's ConRoeXFire-eSATA2 caught our attention. Certified for Core 2 Duo and Core 2 Extreme processors as well as the older versions of Intel processors, it's a surprise, considering that the Intel 945P Express chipset it uses does not support Intel's latest processors. Normally, one would require an Intel P965 Express at the very least for this purpose, but time and time again, ASRock has proven to us that they can conjure up some interesting

stunts. What's more, it has dual PEG x16 slots and is certified for ATI's CrossFire, a feature reserved only for the new P965 and 975X Express.

Besides that, it has SATA RAID, eSATA, PCIe Gigabit, FireWire and 8-channel HD-Audio, among a few others. ASRock has managed to integrate all these high-end features and yet it costs no more than a normal budget board. In fact, at its price range, there's not a single board to rival its capabilities, as it's big on that but feather-light on your wallet.

While we have to admit that it's not the perfect board with a few layout concerns and certain features like eSATA that was not elegantly implemented, for its caliber and going price, it's hard to nitpick. So for those on a tight budget and aren't too ambitious, this ASRock board comes highly recommended for your next budget Intel Core 2 Duo upgrade.