Performance P45

ASRock P45X3 Deluxe

BY MUZAFFAR ISMAIL

Strangely enough, with the release of the X58 chipset, practically no one is talking about Intel X38 or X48 motherboards, especially where performance motherboards for the LGA 775 socket are concerned. Instead, focus has mostly shifted to the Intel P45 chipset, with many motherboard makers and vendors offering performance P45 motherboards for enthusiasts. This month we have the ASRock P45X3 Deluxe motherboard for review, which is an Intel P45 chipset based motherboard targeted at the mid-range market.

The board looks like your usual P45 chipset based layout with two PCI-e x16 slots, three PCI-e x1 slots and two PCI slots. The layout is nicely segregated with just enough space to remove and install 16GB worth of DDR3 memory in the four DIMM slots even with a long graphic card installed. While the board only has six SATA ports, all of them are placed at 90 degree angles so there is no risk of them becoming inaccessible. The heatsinks are small, separated and functional which does make for more discrete cooling but no additional heatpipes to lessen thermal burden. The board offers onboard power, reset and clear CMOS buttons for easier overclocking as well as a two digit status LED. On the rear are seven USB ports, one RJ-45 LAN port, one IEEE 1394 port, one eSATA port, two PS/2 ports, one coaxial S/PDIF-out

port, one optical S/PDIF-out port and the usual six audio jacks. The clear CMOS button is also located on the rear panel as well.

ASRock have included their SLI/XFIRE switch card with this board but don't get your hopes up high as the board only offers support for CrossFire X setups. The whole purpose of the switch card is just to change modes for the PCI-e lanes from x16 for a single PCI-e slot to x8 for two PCI-e slots. It allows some manual controls instead of leaving it to the BIOS or other automated functions.

The board does impressively with a PCMark05 score of 6105 which is at least 1000 points more than the average 5000 points a standard performance board is capable of. So while the CPU score and graphics score isn't as high as we would have expected, the overall performance still manages to outperform some other boards of the same class. In PCMark Vantage the board delivered a good score of 4431 which shows that it can still hold its own in higher end environments.

The board has some good overclocking potential and should be able to handle the first few steps quite well. We pushed the processor to 3.75GHz without much hassle but going higher than that does make the board a little unstable with just the

default cooling. Pushing the FSB a notch higher works equally well, but getting to the full potential is still slightly shaky. The BIOS offers some good options which do the job for the most part.

The ASRock P45X3 Deluxe delivers impressive performance for the average or intermediate performance user, especially those looking to do a dual CrossFire X setup.

SPECIFICATIONS

Chipset	Memory	Graphics	Price
Intel P45	DDR3	CrossFire X	RM 388

Model : P45X3 Deluxe
Processor Support : All LGA 775 socket processors including Intel Core 2 Extreme / Core 2 Quad / Core 2 Duo / Pentium Dual Core / Celeron Dual Core / Celeron, supporting Penryn Quad Core Yorkfield and Dual Core Wolfdale (FSB = 2000/1600/1333/1066/800MHz)
Memory Support : Up to 16GB 1600 / 1333 / 1066 MHz x 4 DIMM slots
PCI Express Slots : 2x PCI-e x16 / 3x PCI-e x x1 / 2x PCI
Drives Supported : 6x SATA2, 1x IDE (2 devices supported), 1x floppy
I/Os : 2x PS/2, 7x USB, 1x optical S/PDIF-out, 1x coaxial S/PDIF-out, 1x RJ-45, 1x IEEE 1394, 1x powered eSATAII/USB port, 1x clear CMOS button, audio jacks
Warranty : Two-years
Contact : Planet Technology (M) Sdn Bhd
Telephone : (03) 5032 3888
URL : www.asrock.com

Available at
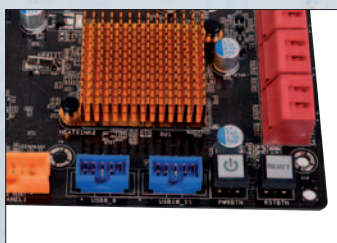
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HWM'S VERDICT

Features: **8.5**
Performance: **8.5**
Value: **8.5**

8.5
Out of 10

A performance P45 for the average or intermediate enthusiast user

HWM SILVER AWARD

The board offers onboard power, reset and clear CMOS buttons as well as a CMOS status LED for easier overclocking

The sideport SLI/XFIRE switch card allows for manual switching of x16 and x8 modes for the PCI-e lanes

Results

PCMark Score:	6105
CPU Score:	6534
Memory Score:	5187
Graphics Score:	10301
HDD Score:	4338

The board delivers an impressive above average score for P45 performance boards of the same class