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Most game cases either fall into one of two categories, either too extreme to be practical or, conversely effective cooling solutions that aren't exciting enough. The Nitro AX manages to balance those two opposing forces reasonably well, providing a distinctive and eye-catching design with a case that's built for purpose.

Visually the Nitro AX is decidedly high technology, in a kind of Battlestar Galactica meets IKEA and wins, sort of way. The vast majority of the chassis is made from 1mm steel, but the bezel assembly and some other detail elements are made from milled aluminium. These look good on the silver model, and provide accented highlights on the black version. From a build quality perspective this is reasonably good, comparable with Antec in many respects.

If there's a word that sums up the Nitro AX best it is 'innovative', because it has

slid push with the side of the case. Those people who keep the door permanently open to access drives will find this a welcome aspect. The bezel also has a stealth drive cover, so if you only use one CD/DVD then the door can always be left in a closed position. There are other equally neat twists, like a front USB/1394 panel that can swivel through 90 degrees. So it's accessible from both the front and the side.

Inside are the now standard screw free mechanisms to aid installation, including a removable motherboard tray and rails for all drive types. Cooling is also a key factor, with a single 120mm fan at the rear and a place for another behind the bezel. To remove excess CPU heat, vital on Prescott based systems, there's also a plastic air duct, which can be adjusted to handle alternate CPU locations.

But this design isn't just about what you get in the case, as PCI

bezel, and a range of tailored silent power supplies. These might bump the price up, but the lighting in particular is most effective.

Some of the ideas in the Nitro AX are so good I'll be surprised if they're not 'borrowed' by other case makers in the near future, and hopefully in this respect imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.

- Material: 1mm steel chassis and ABS/ALUMINIUM(front bezel)
- Mainboard: Full size P4 ATX. Prescott ready - FMB 2.0 and CAG1.1
- Drive space: 5.25" x 5 + 3.5" x 2 exposed & 3.5" x 5 hidden
- Expansion Slot: 7
- Front Port: Dual front USB ports, Firewire and Audio ports
- Power supply: 400W ATX 12V
- Dimension (WxDxH): 290 x 500 x 550mm
- Cooling: 120mm temperature controlled rear fan, airduct for FMB 2.0 and optional front mounting 120mm fan.

SPECIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Lockable side cover
- Removable 3.5" rails
- 5.25" drive assembly with slide rails
- Toolless fan holder
- Toolless front bezel design