

ASRock P55 Extreme4

ROCKING P55 MOTHERBOARD

TEXT // **BRYAN CHAN**

AT A GLANCE

CHIPSET
Intel P55

MEMORY
DDR3

GRAPHICS
1GB GDDR5

SATA3/USB3
SLI / CrossFire X

PRICE
RM488

This month, we find ourselves reviewing one of the many motherboards in the market sporting Intel's P55 chipset and a multi-GPU setup. In our hands is ASRock's P55 Extreme4 motherboard. Branded as one of their higher-end models, the ASRock P55 Extreme4 has several features up its sleeve that are definitely worth checking out.

First off, there's USB3 and SATA3 support. This motherboard comes with four USB3 ports, two ports at the rear and another two at the front, via a bundled panel, and four SATA 3 ports. Though not many peripherals support USB3 at the moment, the technology is catching on steadily and should go mainstream in a year or two, at least we hope so. Either way, USB3 ports are backward compatible, and can speed up transfer speeds of USB2 peripherals by a small percentage, so there's no real waste here.

SPECIFICATIONS MODEL P55 Extreme4 // **PROCESSOR SUPPORT** Supports LGA1156 socket for Intel Core i5, Intel Core i3, Core i7 8xx series (Turbo Boost supported) // **MEMORY SUPPORT** 4x DIMM, Dual Channel, Up to 16GB, DDR3 2600 / 2200 / 2133 / 2000 / 1800 / 1333 / 1066 MHz // **PCI SLOTS** 2x PCIe 2.0 x16 / 3x PCIe 2.0 x1 / 1x PCI 2.2 // **DRIVES** 6x SATA2 / 4x SATA3 // **I/O** 2x PS/2, 2x USB3, 6x USB2, 1x eSATA3, 1x RJ-45 LAN, 1x S/PDIF-out (optical), 1x Coaxial S/PDIF-out, 6x Audio jacks, 1x Clear CMOS button // **WARRANTY** 3-years // **CONTACT** JW Power Marketing Sdn Bhd // **TELEPHONE** (03) 2148 1307 // **URL** www.asrock.com

Another feature we found to be interesting on the Extreme4 is the Combo Cooler Option, which is a feature unique to several ASRock motherboards currently. This feature is basically the ability to use a CPU cooler that uses either an LGA 1156 socket or an LGA 775 socket. This allows for more freedom when deciding on which aftermarket CPU cooler to buy.

Having said that, the layout of the board is a bit too tight for our liking, as the processor sits very close to the memory slots, which may prove challenging to install large aftermarket CPU coolers such as the CoolerMaster V6GT, especially if you're using RAM modules with large heatspreaders attached. Speaking of RAM, this motherboard is one of the few motherboards in the market currently that's capable of supporting DDR3 2600MHz, so this is definitely one for the overclockers.

The board comes with two PCI-e x16 slots, which allows for either a CrossFire X or an SLI setup. When we installed a dual-slot graphics card onto the top slot however, we noticed that the card blocked one of the PCI-e x1 slots, rendering that slot unusable. Installing the card onto the bottom PCI-e x16 slot also caused one of the PCI slots to be slightly obstructed, making that slot unusable as well, but we guess you won't really need that many PCI slots anyway, so this shouldn't really be an issue.

Performance wise, this ASRock motherboard gave us an impressive score of 11240 on PCMark05 when equipped with an Intel Core i7 870 processor at stock clock speeds. When we tried overclocking the said processor to 4180MHz however, we received a lower score of 10303, which indicates that this board isn't really a platform for overclockers.

Overall, we found the ASRock Extreme4 to be a very interesting motherboard. With a plethora of high-end features, and a good performance score on PCMark05, this new motherboard from ASRock seems to be a good choice for most mainstream users. However, we think that the board layout could have been slightly better to allow for full usage of every PCI slot.



An impressive score for PCMark05



Plenty of connectivity options on this board



ASRock's Extreme4 has lots of good features but board layout could have been better

Verdict:

SILVER

HWM

MALAYSIA

FEATURES: 8.5
PERFORMANCE: 8.0
VALUE: 8.0

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