ASRock 890GX Extreme3

OC STARTER MOBO

TEXT // **MUZAFFAR ISMAIL**

Overclocking (OC) is becoming more popular these days as motherboard makers are incorporating more options to do overclocking. Typically this involves having a number of voltage and timing settings inside the BIOS but these days, motherboard manufacturers are also including more automatic overclocking tools and functions. This includes one-touch OC buttons, OC dials, OC step buttons, OC remote controls and BIOS automatic OC functions. However, if you really want to see how far you can push your hardware you need to get up close and personal with hardware voltage settings or clock timings. This does make it a bit harder for beginners but this may change as more boards like the ASRock 890GX Extreme3 come out.

The board features an AM3 socket and is based on AMD's new 890GX chipset. This means that it also has an integrated ATI Radeon HD 4290 GPU, enabling a built-in HDMI port, DVI port and VGA port. Board layout is quite busy with no free space at all on the ATX-sized PCB but it isn't cluttered. Each segment is well-spaced with enough room to handle memory and a dual slot graphic card at the same time. Featuring three PCI-e x16 slots, the board can handle three dual-slot sized graphic cards in a CrossFire X configuration. Other slots include three PCI slots and one PCI-e x1 slot. The board offers six SATA3 ports, two USB3 ports and one eSATA3 port to fit ASRock's True 333 series of motherboards.

Performance for the board is very good, easily reaching a PCMark05 score of 8404 on default with just a quad core Phenom II processor and integrated GPU. This is a good performance score as it places the board above the general 8000+ performance board baseline score. What sets it apart is that in its OC section of the BIOS, the board has numerous automatic overclocking functions. This includes overclocking the entire system a certain amount of percentage, settings on what components to overclock, automatic overclocks for just the CPU and automatic overclocks for just the mGPU. While these options offer beginners a lot more overclocking potential, the board still caters well to the intermediate overclocker as it still offers good manual overclocking functions as well. With a simple overall system overclock we got a significant performance boost, scoring 10332 in PCMark05. As beginners get more accustomed, the board has huge potential to overclock even further as it is quite stable despite significant overclocks.

The ASRock 890GX Extreme3 is not meant for the casual mainstream market as even its storage ports are made for higher-end SATA3 technology. However, its good integrated GPU, great default performance, various automatic overclocking options and huge overclocking potential should offer performance users and those interested in overclocking a very good introduction to performance overclocking. As this interest grows, the board can grow along with it, offering the performance user the ability to do CrossFire X or upgrade to a six-core Phenom II processor and better cooling solutions for even better overclocking results.

A great starter performance motherboard for the beginner overclocker

The motherboard and its box

This board delivers good performance scores on default but its many automatic overclocking options make things a lot easier for beginner overclockers

AT A GLANCE

CHIPSET
AMD 890GX / SB850

MEMORY
DDR3

GRAPHICS
Yes / Cross-Fire X

SATA3/USB3
Yes

PRICE
RM428

Verdict: 8.5

SILVER
HWM
MALAYSIA

VERDICT SCORES ARE OUT OF 10.

FEATURES: 9.0
PERFORMANCE: 8.5
VALUE: 8.5

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