Tagan CS-Monolize Case Review

Contributed by Buk

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- Product: CS-Monolize "Super Tower" Case
- Company: Tagan

Introduction

A good case is essential when building a sweet gaming PC. You want the exterior to reflect the care with which you chose the parts to build your rig and you want to keep your high end components protected and cool both at home and the occasional LAN party. Today we are looking at the Tagan CS-Monolize a case with an interesting take on air cooling.

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CS-Monolize specifications

- 5.25 drive bays -- 5
- 3.5 drive bays -- 2 external and 6 internal
- 2 x 250mm adjustable fans installed
- Optional fans -- 1 x 80/92/120 mm in back and 120 mm in front
- Additional connectors -- 2 x USB 2.0, 2 x audio and IEEE 1394 Firewire on right side
- Supported main boards -- Standard ATX, extended ATX (12"x13")

- Accessories -- 26 rails for the disk drives, various screws and spacers, piezo speaker and cable ties

First Impressions

As I pulled the Monolize out of it's box I was struck by it's weight and size. Coming in at almost 26 pounds and (at 22 inches) taller then most midtower cases the Monolize is called a "Super Tower Case" by Tagan. You can tell after examining the case that it is well made and sturdy. The case is also very attractive, while the majority of the case is painted flat black the front is made from a silk/rubber skin plastic with an acrylic faceplate over the door. The faceplate has a light up A+ logo that keeps the front from looking bland. The case gives the impression of being as solid as a slab of marble. No mistake this is a fine looking case.

Monolize's External Features

The first thing you notice on the Monolize is the two 250mm fans on it's left side. These fans move massive amounts of air through the case keeping your componets cool. Each fan has an on/off switch and speed control located on the front of the case. To compliment the fans the case has plenty of vents on both the right and left side as well as the top to keep the air flowing. There is a mount for an exhaust fan on the back that supports up to a 120mm fan and there is a 120mm fan mount at the front of the case. The Monolize also comes with two USB ports, a Firewire port, and jacks for your headphones and a microphone on the lower right side. For ornamentation the fans light up with blue LEDs and there is an illuminated A+ logo on the front with it's own on/off switch that doubles as the case power light. With the exception of the front panel and the fan housing the case is made out of steel. The Monolize also has 4 adjustable feet to help keep it steady.

Interior Features

The Monolize has a fairly standard interior with a few exceptions. It is roomier then most midtowers out there which makes installing componets very easy. Adding disk and optical drives is done using included plastic drive rails. These rails are attached to the drives via pins with no screws required. The drives are then slid in to the mounts where they lock. Removing the drives is achieved by pushing the tabs in and pulling out. Extra drive rails are stored in a plastic box mounted in the 3.5 drive bays. The Monolize also features a locking clip system to hold your cards in place without screws.

Performance

Powering on the Monolize the first time I was impressed with how quiet the fans were. While certainly not silent they weren't much noisier then the two 120mm fans on my old case. With both fans running you get quite a cool breeze from the exhaust vents. With the room darkened while playing Team Fortress 2 the two fan LEDs and the LED logo weren't too bright but the fan power LEDs seemed like small blue laser beams. If you keep your PC under your desk this shouldn't be a problem but if it's on the right side of your desk they will shine in your eyes and be annoying. The case is very steady with either the feet extended or folded in and I didn't worry a bit about it tipping. One thing I don't like is the USB/Speaker jack placement. I think they would have benefited by being on the front or top of the case instead of the opposite side from the fans as this could make it hard to use them if your PC is stored in a narrow space. That being said for the vents to work properly you need to have some room around the case while it's on.

LAN Party Road Trip

A few days after I got the Monolize I took it to a LAN party to gauge other gamers' impressions. It wasn't long after I set up that it had a ring of people around it. I had several compliments on it and at least one guy who had admired it online swore to buy one after seeing it "in the flesh". The Monolize is definitely a stand out even among the modded cases you see at LAN parties. This isn't a case for the shy.

Conclusion

The CS-Monolize is an impressive looking case that does a great job of air cooling your PC componets. The case has plenty of room to work inside and if you ever need to add a card the only screws you need to deal with are the thumbscrews on the back. The Monolize has a high level of workmanship and a nice paint job and should look great for years to come. The case's front I/O ports are in a poor location and would be more accessable in the front or top of the case. The fan LED power lights could be toned down or have an independant on/off switch. I would recommend this case to anyone wanting a good looking case that will keep their PC cool. I am giving the CS-Monolize the Bukworld Reviewers Choice Award.