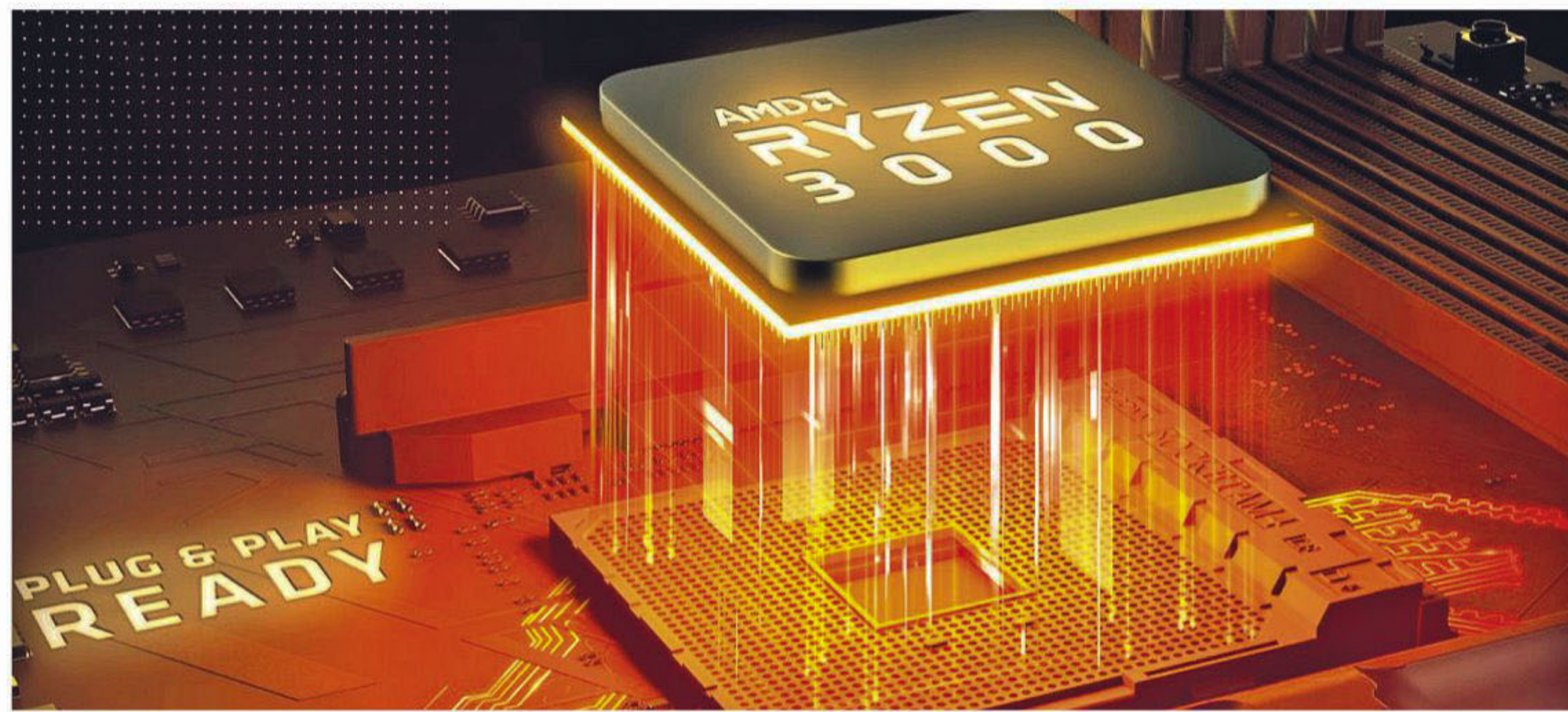




Living in a Ryzen Radeon world

While AMD had been on Intel and Nvidia's tail for the longest, they could never quite oust the big two out of their own game. But with the AMD Radeon 5700 series graphics cards and AMD's 3rd generation of Ryzen processors, they are asking some serious questions. And although the performance of Ryzen's 2nd generation processors did raise some eyebrows and stirred the "AMD vs. Intel" melting pot, the Ryzen 9 3900x and Ryzen 7 3700x have left little room for debate and have met most of its outlandish promises.

The short version of it all is that the new Ryzen 9 3900x is almost twice as powerful as the Intel Core i9 9900K and the AMD Radeon 5700 is as powerful as an Nvidia card which costs more than it. If you're a gamer and were looking to get an upgrade, then all the numbers point towards getting the new processors. But before spoiling everything, let's get into why and how the new Radeon card shouldn't be overlooked.



It's been an interesting couple of weeks for the Radeon 5700 and 5700 XT. First AMD announces the cards which Nvidia followed up with a "Super" line-up for their existing RIX cards, only for AMD to promptly follow up with a price cut to the 5700s - just two days before release. But that's not the only

thing that's interesting about these cards. The Radeon 5700 is powered by a 7nm core design which offers native PCI-E 4.0 support over last generation's GCN based cards which had PCI-E 3.0 support. The new cards also use GDDR6 over the more expensive and less available HBM2 memory which helps AMD to

keep its prices down. Image processing is also much faster on the new RDNA cards, being twice as fast as last gen's GCN Vega cards. And benchmark scores all point towards that, as the Radeon 5700 beats the RTX 2060 and RTX 2060 Super, its Nvidia counterpart, on all accounts. And while the Radeon 5700 XT isn't as powerful as the RIX 2070 Super or RIX 2070, the AMD cards perform on par with Nvidia on games like Shadow of the Tomb Raider, Rainbow Six: Siege and Battlefield V despite costing a fraction of the price.

The new Radeon 5700, which is priced at \$349 performs better than the RTX 2060, which happens to be the same price. Similarly, the AMD 5700 XT priced at \$399 also performs better than the \$399 RIX 2060 Super. The new AMD cards, while not being something to write home about still manages to perform very well in gaming while managing to stay competitive in productivity tasks like video rendering. Early adopters be warned however as new AMD drivers have yet to roll out properly and the cards still have minor heating issues.

AMD's new 3rd gen processors have however completely turned the tide of PC consumer

electronics. AMD released the Ryzen 5 3600X and 3600, Ryzen 7 3800X and 3700X and the flagship Ryzen 9 3950X and 3900X. The new CPUs, which are cheaper than their Intel counterparts, steam rolls the blue boy in all things productivity and surprisingly in gaming. Intel has been the go to choice for gaming ever since the AMD Athlon 64 processors, but now for the first time in over 15 years, AMD can claim that they have the best overall CPU on the market in the form of the Ryzen 9 3900x.

The new processor feature AMD's next generation Zen 2 (7nm) microarchitecture and can be overclocked to 5100 MHz natively. The \$329 Ryzen 7 3700x has 8 cores and 16 threads which is equivalent to the Intel Core i9 9900k, while the Ryzen 9 3900x has 12 cores and 24 threads. So, while the 3900x is similarly priced as Intel's flagship 9900K, the new processor has more cores and not to mention that they are faster.

ASUS's new AMD X570 motherboard also released during the same time and it's what AMD is recommending for their 3rd gen Ryzen CPUs. The motherboard supports PCI-E 4.0 is double the bandwidth of last

gen's X470 motherboard. This makes the new motherboards future proofed as well as allowing you to use high performance devices like USB 4.0 controllers and such. But nothing screams next gen than the overall performance increase of the new processors which see them going toe-to-toe with the Intel Core i9 9900K in games like Counter Strike: Go, Metro: Exodus and Shadow of the Tomb Raider. But if you do anything else on your PC other than gaming then the Ryzen 9 3900x blow Intel out of the water, with the Ryzen 7 3700x giving the i9 9900K a run for its money. The Ryzen 9 3900x leaves Intel far behind with tasks like unzipping files from WinRAR or browsing the web. Cinebench benchmarks also show a significant gap between Intel and both Ryzen 7 3700x and Ryzen 9 3900x.

At this point, the ball is in Intel's court and they simply must revise their prices. And over on the graphics card front, Nvidia should take a long look at the Radeon 5700 and need to reposition themselves in the budget card game.

ASIF AYON

The wonders of Chromecast

The Google Chromecast is a casting device for any and all TVs with an HDMI port. While it has existed for quite some time now, the nifty device has gone pretty unnoticed, especially for those with Smart TVs. But for everyone else, the Chromecast is a wonderful way of appreciating the television once again.

A 3rd generation Chromecast can be found for BDT 3,900/- while a 4K supported version is available for BDT 7,000/-. If you pair it with any regular budget TV with an HDMI port, you can basically have a budget Smart TV setup. All you need is the Google Home app

and a bit of setting up later, you can cast your YouTube videos, Netflix, Photos, etc. all on your television.

Chromecast doesn't however limit you to a laundry list of apps but it can also be used to mirror your Android devices as well. This will let you watch movies on your big screen and if you're into it then you can also play Crossy Road on your TV.

A Chromecast is also a great addition to your luggage for when you are traveling. Simply look for the HDMI port on the back of your hotel TV, connect to Wi-Fi and there you go. You can even adjust your streaming quality from the Google Home app if you're getting a slow connection.

If you happen to own a smart TV or can afford one then a Chromecast is not for you. A Chromecast is a very affordable option for those who want a smart TV setup at a fraction of the cost and it comes loaded with most features you would find on a smart TV.



Is it what it is?

Got the new Jabra 25e as the latest running mate for my nightly jogs. It's a neckband style earphone with a thick, weighted curved centre section that rests on your, well, neck. No surprise there.

Does it fit?

The ear pieces are oval shaped which help fit quick and snug. My previous earphones all were so far circular and usually they would pop out during workouts. Not these. They stay put. The device comes with two extra pairs of earphone covers in small and large sizes while the medium comes preinstalled. It has the usual volume up/down and double-press radial buttons on the right side of the band. Although the power button (also for answering calls) requires a hefty press to get it to do things. There is also a dedicated button for summoning Siri or Google Assistant.

One complaint - during normal walking the neckband stays firmly around your neck but during jogging, the weighty unit has a



habit of falling back. The only way it stays put is if you have a collar and then tuck it inside.

Does it boom-boom-pow?

Yes. It's actually quite bass heavy. Clear, deep lows without barely any distortion even at high volumes. This is perfect for EDM and house music.

How long does it run?

They say 18 hours but I managed an average of 12. You can see the battery percentage on the phone so you never head out without knowing how long you've got till you go quiet.

Verdict

Strong, clear, heavy bass that can be overpowering for subtler music but that can be solved by adjusting your equaliser. Feels robust and the IP54 rating means it can take on runs in the rain sort of. Don't get it soaked though. Also comes with an app offering you more controls.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

