

AUDIO

# Plantronics GameCom Commander

Built for competition

PRICE \$348  
www.plantronics.com

Plantronics has been making expensive business-oriented commercial headsets for years, so it's interesting to see what it can pull off when building a PC gaming set. It's stuck with the high price tag and incredibly robust build quality, but a couple of issues hold the GameCom Commander back from greatness.

You won't need a soundcard for these cans, as they come with a USB digital sound processor (DSP) that supports Dolby Headphone Surround. Sadly, there's absolutely zero software, so you can't tweak the surround effect or equalise your audio. If you use this USB DSP you're stuck with the default sound, a very crisp and clear soundscape that's sorely lacking in the low and mid-range. This is perfect for the intended audience, professional eSports players, where clarity is more important than ambience, but for

average punters the 40mm drivers simply aren't up to snuff. It's especially noticeable when played off against the 50mm drivers found in Creative's new range, not to mention our beloved Audio Technica ATH-A500X cans. It's a shame, as the surround effect is excellent – if only it had a bit of energy and warmth we'd be in love.

If you are a pro LAN-er, the rugged build quality will inspire confidence, able to handle years of abuse. A thick carry case makes them easy to transport, while the superb microphone delivers crystal clear VOIP.

Pro-gamers will appreciate the Commander's crisp audio and precise directional audio, not to mention their ability to withstand a tactical nuke blast. For the rest of us, the sterile tone and limited feature set make these an overpriced niche product.

BENNETT RING 



- Clear audio
- Built like a brick shithouse
- USB DSP with Dolby Headphone

- Lacks in mid and low-range
- No configuration options

**VERDICT** Plantronics needs to aim a little wider than pro eSports players if it wants to justify such a stratospheric price tag.

7

CASE

# Antec GX700

Ready for war

PRICE \$79  
www.antec.com

When you buy a budget PC mid-tower, it's wise not to expect anything flashier than a removable fan filter. You pay for what you get... unless you're buying this new case warrior from Antec. As the photo shows, this is not your average budget battler.

The most distinctive feature has to be the striking militaristic styling. From the weapon launch button that is actually a fan speed controller, to the face plate straps that look like ammo cases, this is the perfect looking box for any dedicated virtual soldier. Even the top-mounted USB and headphone ports look kind of awesome.

It's not merely a good looker; the GX700 builds on Antec's reputation for delivering some of the best cases on the market. Two huge 140mm fans vent warm air from the top, while another 120mm jobbie sucks it out the back. Plastic is used sparingly



throughout, with most of the case built from thin metal. It's a little too thin for our liking, but at this price something had to give. With room inside for seven PCIe slots, along with 293mm of clearance for uber-graphics cards, there's plenty of space for a well-stocked gaming box.

Whether or not you like the style of the GX700 is purely a matter of taste, but we're pretty sure it'll prove a hit with virtual weekend warriors. And once they get past the interesting design, they'll see there's a decent armoury backing up the good looks.

BENNETT RING 



- Cool design
- Metal construction
- Well laid out

- Metal is a little thin
- Styling not to everybody's tastes

**VERDICT** With great looks, an excellent feature set and solid build, Antec has smashed our budget expectations.

9 