

GRAPHICS CARD

HIS HD 4850 IceQ 4 TurboX

PC ADVISOR
RECOMMENDED

£152 inc VAT

Contact

- hisdigital.com
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- tinyurl.com/5g9ada

Specification

ATI Radeon HD 4850;
512MB GDDR3 RAM;
685MHz core clock;
1.1GHz memory clock
(2.2GHz DDR effective);
400MHz Ramdac;
256bit memory interface;
800 stream processors;
PCI-E interface;
TV-out; DirectX 10.1;
DVI (HDMI adaptor);
one-year warranty

Features: ★★★★★

Value: ★★★★★



The standard ATI Radeon HD 4850 was launched five months ago, but within weeks Sapphire had unveiled an improved version – the Toxic Edition – that built considerably on the basic 4850 (tinyurl.com/6n5kva). In the Toxic, the default core clock speed had been upped from 625MHz to 675MHz, while the memory clock speed had jumped from 993MHz (1,986MHz DDR effective), to 1,100MHz (2,200MHz effective).

These increased speeds were partly the result of Sapphire replacing the basic cooling system with a sophisticated Zalman cooler. Not only did the latter do a better job of cooling but, importantly, its quiet operation meant less noise.

The Toxic Edition of the Sapphire is hard to come by now, but HIS has released its own take on the original 4850. Using the IceQ designation (reserved for the firm's best versions of its cards), the HD 4850 improves on the specs of the Sapphire Toxic. This card increases the core speed



from 675MHz to 685MHz, while the cooling system works beautifully using a mix of heat pipes, enhanced and isolated heatsinks and a dual-slot design that efficiently channels hot air out of the case.

The 4850 is a decent graphics chip in its own right. Its 800 stream processors and 256bit memory interface allow for good framerates, and ATI's support for DirectX 10.1 continues to be an improvement over nVidia's DirectX 10.0.

On performance, the IceQ is the fastest version of the 4850 we've seen yet – although the difference between this and the Sapphire is

never more than 2fps. The 4870 remains about 10 to 15 percent faster, although that card costs 33 percent more. The HIS, on the other hand, is just £2 more expensive than the Sapphire Toxic, and remains an excellent card for achieving good framerates without a high price tag.

Verdict

The HIS HD 4850 IceQ 4 TurboX is slightly faster than the Toxic Edition of the Sapphire, which isn't easy to get hold of in any case. Since it's also the best card available for the money, that makes this a pretty impressive product. **Robin Morris**