

By ~~September 2007~~ Zatu, Hardware Editor

Sapphire HD 3850 ULTIMATE Edition Is Here!

Featuring 256MB of GDDR3 memory, the card is allegedly the fastest passive cooled graphics card in the world

Sapphire Technolog have just announced the industry's fastest graphics card to feature passive cooling. The new video card runs at 828MHz (1.66GHz effective) and has a core clock speed of 668MHz. The 256 MB of GDDR3 should suffice for mainstream use. The card comes with the ATI Avivo Technology for crisp and clear images, while the built in UVD (Unified Video decoder) allows hardware-accelerated Blu-Ray media decoding, which sensibly reduces the CPU load. The video card incorporates ATI's CrossFireX technology with two high speed connectors on each card allowing 2, 3 or more graphics cards to be chained together to maximize output performance. The number of cards that are allowed in a CrossFireX link is given by the maximum number of videocards that can be added to the system. The card also provides an HDMI adapter for true audio and video output transmitted along one cable. Like all the Sapphire products in the 3800 series, the HD 3850 ULTIMATE combines a unified shader architecture with support for Shader Model 4.0 connected via the PCI-Express Gen 2.0 interface. The GPU is energy-saving and includes 320 stream processors, the 512-bit internal ring bus memory controller, multiple rendering units and a programmable tessellation unit. Sapphire's HD 3850 ULTIMATE Edition card is passively cooled. The reference cooler has been stripped off in order to maintain a low noise level inside the case. The 55-nanometer RV670 graphic chip is maintained at low temperatures with an aluminum heatpipe-equipped passive cooling system. Apart from the cooling solution modification, the ULTIMATE edition provides the same old features as the 3800 series. Since silence has a price, the unit will bear a somewhat more salty price tag than the predecessors, but if low noise is a must, then this is the right video pick. The foot soldier of the Radeon HD 3800 series, the 3850 is selling well and offers a good price/performance ratio but manufacturers want it more attractive. One good selling point might be the noise output of the card so Sapphire has decided to cut that down to zero with its latest offer, the HD 3850 Ultimate Edition. This card replaces the reference cooler with a heatpipe-equipped passive cooling system that should do a good job in keeping the temperature of the 55nm-built RV670 at acceptable levels.