



SSD

Western Digital Black SN750 1TB NVMe SSD

WD brings a strong contender.

PRICE \$279

www.westerndigital.com

Western Digital's Black series NVMe SSD's have impressed us in the past, though perhaps they lacked that final edge that put them ahead of the likes of the class leading Samsung 970 series. Fast forward to today, and we have the latest iteration of the Western Digital Black, the SN750. It's targeted at gamers and hopefully irons out a couple of the quirks found in earlier generation models. Western Digital is now fully integrated with SanDisk, meaning WD SSDs are now completely designed and built in house. This means WD joins a small club including Samsung who also have this capability. Can WD now go head to head with them?

The WD Black 1TB is a standard form factor M.2 2280 (80mm length) NVMe drive that makes use of a PCIe 3.0 x4 interface. It uses SanDisk BiCS (Bit Cost Scaling) 64-layer 3D TLC NAND flash memory. This is the same NAND found in the preceding WD Black. We might have expected to find cutting edge 96 layer NAND, though perhaps we'll see that in a WD Blue or Green drive at a later date where affordable capacity is needed more than outright performance. WD also plans to offer SN750 series drives with an optional fantastic looking EK designed heatsink.

WD is using its in house designed and built 20-82-007011 controller. It supports common functions such as S.M.A.R.T. monitoring but like the previous WD Black, there's no support for disk encryption if that is something that's important for you. The drive comes with a 600 Terabytes Written endurance rating and a five year warranty, matching most of the other drives in this class.

WD offers its Dashboard SSD software package that enables users to update the firmware, see S.M.A.R.T. reports, monitoring and performance statistics. New to this generation is the addition of 'Gaming Mode'. This stops the drive from entering a low-power state, meaning you'll get peak performance at all times. This will increase power consumption a tad, which is something to note for laptop users.

As an evolutionary upgrade, we didn't expect the new SN750 model to blow away the older model, though it does offer improved performance. We're just about at the limits of the PCIe 3.0 x4 interface, so there aren't going to be any leaps in sequential read and write performance until PCIe 4.0 drives hit the market. Sequential reads and writes are very competitive compared to its tough competitor, the Samsung 970 Evo.

It's hard to believe that only eight or

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nine months ago, the 1TB WD Black was priced at over \$600! Now we have an improved version that's less than half the price. 1TB class drives are cheaper than ever, and WD's SN750 offers top shelf performance to match. With a quoted \$279 price for the 1TB model, it's simultaneously one of the cheapest and best performing drives on the market. Will the competition be forced to lower prices? WD has hit its stride. With price/performance like this, it's become a very serious player in the SSD market.

CHRIS SZEWCZYK **PC**

- + Competitive price
- + Solid capacity
- + Great performance
- Starting to push the limits of the underlying technology

VERDICT: Samsung has been dominating this space, but WD is making great strides in catching up. If you're on a budget, you won't find much better than this.

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