Labs

RAID arrays under £1000

ProAvio EditBox 8PM

DATE: May 07

COMPANY: Planet Video Systems

PRICE: £1050(£894 ex VAT, 8 x 250GB)

RATING: 🏵🏵🏵🏵🏵🏵

Enhance's ProAvio range of arrays is aimed at demanding video and audio work, and squeezes in at the upper end of our price range. While the EditBox 5PM is all but identical to the Sonnet Fusion 500P, it's priced competitively when filled with enterprise-quality disks such as the Seagate Barracuda ES - the EditBox 8PM really is something else.

The biggest and heaviest of all the enclosures tested, its styling and build quality are similar to the Sonnet/ProAvio five-disk models, but it's twice their size. This places the ample power supply and massive cooling fans far behind its stacked disk trays.

Although thankfully slightly smaller than a Mac Pro case, the EditBox 8PM doesn't pale when sat beside one. This should fill you with confidence that the eight Barracudas locked behind its front door will be nurtured lovingly, but Enhance could perhaps invest in some aerodynamic design to reduce fan noise. This becomes particularly important with larger eSata systems, as their cables can be no longer than two metres: wherever your Mac goes, so goes the EditBox and its rush of cooling air.

The secret behind the 8PM's incredible speed is that it has dual eSata interfaces. Married to a Sonnet E4P (PCI Express for late G5 and Mac Pro models) or X4P (PCI for older G5 and earlier models) card, it read and wrote 330-360MB/sec, and peaked at an amazing 457MB/sec when writing. This should provide plenty of performance margin for even the most demanding raw HD video.

Despite its high-quality construction, enormous capacity and blistering performance, the ProAvio EditBox 8PM is little more expensive than Enhance's five-disk arrays. Starting at just over £1000 for 2TB in Raid level 0, a 4TB dream system equipped with enterprise-quality drives costs less than £1800 before VAT.

By Howard Oakley