

Rig of the Month

Hack, Solder, Paint

THIS MONTH: Tower of RagE

When A. Dale McLean—aka, “PS-RagE”—originally e-mailed his Rig of the Month submission, we damned him. “Damn you, RagE!” we cried. “Damn you and your bandwidth-clogging attachments!” His e-mail took so long to download, we thought the digestive tract of our mail server was obstructed by a big wooden canoe. Well, we were wrong. It turns out that RagE’s ROTM candidate is so elaborately detailed, he couldn’t convey the machine’s majesty with just a single, low-bandwidth picture, so he sent us the whole proverbial highlight reel.

We’re glad he did, because this rig has it all: extreme modifications to a Supermicro 750a server tower, an elaborate paint job, an LCD fanbus, and no fewer than 23 internal fans. You can read more about The Tower of RagE at www.onlink.net/houseofrage, but for now, we provide some interview highlights...



1 **MAXIMUM PC:** Does the case artwork bear special significance?

PS-RAGE: The artwork is from Nazareth’s 1979 *No Mean City* album. I’d been using the skeleton dude with the straight razors as a logo in OGL for some time.

2 **MPC:** Does the case truly require that much cooling, or were you just having fun?

PS-RAGE: This case was built around everything I’d learned from building the last one—what worked and what didn’t. Then I kind of amplified everything that did work. However, normally I run with only my primary intakes and exhausts on. That means that I turn on three 80mm side intakes, four 80mm intakes cooling the drive bays, the front-bay blower, and one 120mm YS-Tech, which performs exhaust duties in the back. Meanwhile, four of the 120mms and two 80mms are rarely used.

With just these fans running, my case temps are room-temperature—even after a full night of fraggng. I have a thermal sensor attached to the wall outside the machine to measure the room’s temperature. The only time I find it necessary to run the secondary intakes and exhausts is after I’ve shut down the other fans for a time—usually in order to talk to my wife (smiles). I designed this thing to be the meanest, loudest, air-anking mofo going.

3 **MPC:** Please tell us about the hand-built fanbus [a device that simplifies the wiring and activation of multiple fans within a case]. Where did you get the plans, or did you design it yourself?

PS-RAGE: Any fanbus/baybus has to be credited to Cliff Anderson of Fanbus.com. The original concept was his. That said, however, I designed and built this one from scratch. The LEDs are bi-colored. When the switch is turned on, they change from red to green to indicate the status of the fan. Heh—like you can’t tell from the sound.

4 **MPC:** You say your rig is running “Ryan ‘Uller’ Myers LCDriver.” What exactly is this?

PS-RAGE: Ryan Myers is an active participant in the [H]ard!OCP Cool Cases Forum. He’s a computer science student and a SysOp, and has contributed an incredible amount of his own time to help fellow case-modders with cool software-driven gizmos. The LCDriver is just that: a Windows driver for LCD displays. I’m using it to show *MotherBoard Monitor* stats, but it can display other things, like *Winamp* stats. It is free for download from <http://lcdriver.pointofnoreturn.org>.

5 **MPC:** A lot of cables seem to have been rounded or modified in some way. Details?

PS-RAGE: The ATA/33 and floppy cables have indeed been rounded. They and the power cabling are encased in wire loom. This is like a thin-walled, nylon, vacuum hose, split down the middle, used to pro-

tect cabling, typically in automotive or industrial applications. I use it mainly for looks, as it hides the gray ATA/33 cables and the multi-colored power runs. I tried to round the ATA/100 cables but they are just too stiff due to the wire density. I found it much more efficient and eye-appealing to just lay them flat against the case walls. ■

