

Suggestions for motherboard in cocktail cabinet

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Okay, here's a question that may have been asked before in many different ways, and some posts may have gotten quite close to the answer I'm looking for, but not quite. Feel free to reply with links to other threads that may be helpful, but I haven't found a definitive answer so it seemed starting a new thread was the only way to do it.

I've been absent from the MAME scene for years, but will soon have the opportunity to get going again on two different cab projects, a cocktail table (formerly a Popeye) and a mini-upright (formerly an Omega Race). My biggest question is the choice of motherboard. I currently have an AMD K6-2 300MHz that was fully installed in the cocktail table until I needed to put it to use as a general-use PC. I no longer need it for that purpose, but as it's several years later it's quite outdated so I'm seriously considering buying something new.

My first instinct is to use a mini-ITX motherboard, although a fanless system is not necessarily the goal. I've seen WinterMAME, so it seems possible, but he ended up having to use an add-on sound card, which is something I'd prefer not to do.

My basic question is whether I'd be better off buying a "regular" motherboard that just happens to have Ethernet, sound, and TV-out on the board so I don't have to use any cards at all. I rigged up a bracket for the cocktail table that supported the sound card and video card I have on the K6-2, but I'm thinking that if an all-in-one board will actually work, why not? I seem to recall that the sound card in WinterMAME was required because of a lack of "legacy sound support" on the VIA mini-ITX motherboard, but if I could use a regular ATX board (or whatever the form factor is nowadays) and have legacy support, then that's what I'll do.

Speaking of legacy, it seems that I already have a very good setup for running MAME, if perhaps a little slow. I was using a SoundBlaster AWE64 sound card (ISA if you can believe that) and an ATI Xpert@Play video card (PCI), so I definitely don't want to ditch these very MAME-ready cards in favor of a faster processor if it means A/V hardware that may not do as well. After all, the video and sound is what arcade games are all about, so I'd rather not make any compromises

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there.

The mini cabinet obviously doesn't have the space limitations of the cocktail, but I'd still prefer to have everything on the motherboard instead of having to build a bracket to support add-on cards. I will definitely need a fast processor in the mini-cab though, since it'll be used for newer games and emulators like Daphne, PinMAME, etc. as well as hopefully running the 3D frontend I've seen (the name escapes me for the moment).

I suppose the advice I'm looking for is what to use in each cabinet that will be problem-free in terms of showing many different resolutions, playing all the necessary sounds, and being able to interface with a Hagstrom keyboard interface or whatever the current gadget is now for hooking up controls. If necessary, I could stick with the legacy hardware in the cocktail table and use more modern methods like USB in the mini cabinet, but I really don't want either project to give any hint that it's a PC in an arcade cabinet, whether in operation, on-screen graphics, or construction.

If it helps, I plan to run the latest DOS version of MAME I can find, since I hope to create a custom front-end running under Windows 2000 Professional that will execute MAME via command lines. The cocktail table will have a 14" raster monitor connected via an S-Video connector, and the mini cab will have a 14" SVGA monitor that should be capable of most resolutions necessary for both older and modern games. Vector games will not be played on the cocktail table, but will on the mini. If any other information might be pertinent to the choices I'll need to make, please ask.

Thanks in advance for any advice! :)

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