**Hyperkore Gaming Systems With Style**

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## Introduction

True case modders keep an eye open for that extra bling bling.  You know what I mean, something like LED lighting tricks, new bay devices, and things of this nature.  I've been looking for a company to make a custom laser-etched window in a size that I wanted, with a picture that I supplied.  A few weeks ago I placed an order with Hyperkore (http://www.hyperkore.com) because I found they offer a series of laser-etched and custom laser-etched windows.  Hyperkore offers three types of laser-etched windows, the standard one (clear), the Blackout Series v.1 (translucent), and the Blackout Series v.2 (opaque).  More on these later.

I had not heard of Hyperkore before stumbling upon their web site in a Google search.  After I did some investigating, I learned that they are known for making extreme gaming machines, and there are numerous awards for the performance levels they have achieved.  If you look around their site though, you'll soon notice the laser-etched windows – both custom and pre-made windows can be had in several shapes.

My order arrived in about one week.  Hyperkore was off to a good start in my book!

## Packaging, Contents, and Other Stuff

I carefully opened the nicely wrapped package that arrived safely at my home.  In figure 1, you can see the package, and in figure 2, you can see how my custom laser-etched windows were nicely wrapped.  Each window was wrapped in several layers of cellophane, and nothing was chipped or scratched.  I ordered two custom laser-etched windows, at a cost of just over $110.  We are talking between $50 and $55 per window here (this includes shipping however), and in a few minutes you will see that you get what you pay for.

Figure 1: Click to enlarge picture.


Figure 2: Click to enlarge picture.

You must be curious to see my second window, since you can see the first one above in figure 2.  By the way, this AMD logo was downloaded from the AMD web site, and by the time you finish this review, you shall see how I used it.  The second custom laser-etched window is my own creation – the "Big Al's Computers" logo.  You can see it in figure 3.  This is the first time I've tried to put this logo onto a laser-etched window, and I do believe it turned out great.  The guy I was dealing with at Hyperkore (Thomas) said that he did a test etching first, and then talked about rasterizing the image.  This is why

some custom laser-etchings take more time to complete, and also why they aren't going to be cheap. I wasn't sure why this was needed, so I did some more searching on Google:

*Rasterize: To prepare a page for display or printing. Rasterization is performed by a raster image processor (RIP), which turns text and images into the matrix of pixels (bitmap) that will be displayed on screen or printed on the page. Various conversions may take place. For example, the mathematical coordinates of vector and outline fonts as well as vector drawings must be converted into bitmaps. Existing bitmaps may have to be scaled into different-sized bitmaps.*

*Unless output is printed on a vector graphics plotter, which literally draws the illustration with pens, all text and graphics must be rasterized into a bitmap for display or printing.*

Now we understand what he was saying, but the real proof comes when we install these bad boys. Since Hyperkore knew I was going to review these windows, they threw in a bonus of sorts – a small Blackout Series v.2 black and white photograph-like window. You can see this in figure 4. You can see that light won't pass through this laser-etched window.
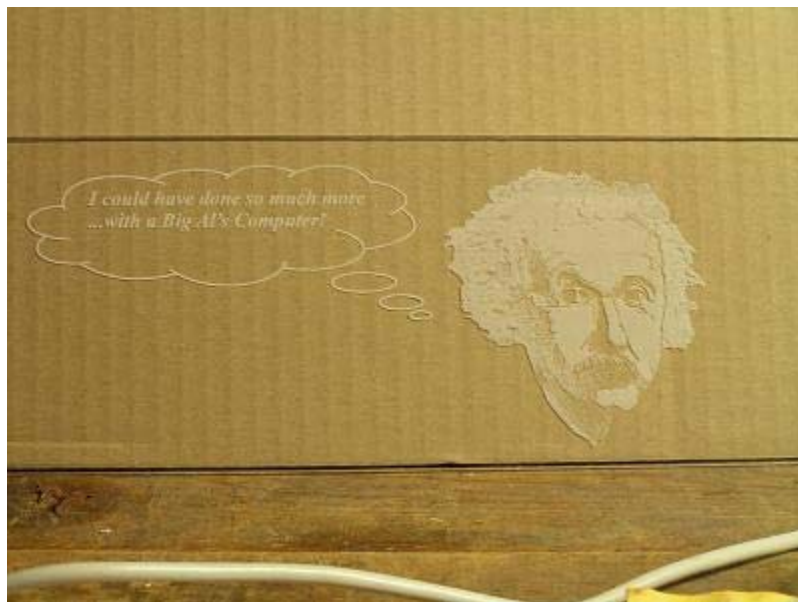

Figure 3: Click to enlarge picture.

Figure 4: Click to enlarge picture.

**Time to Mod – Installing the Custom Laser-Etched Windows**

Since you saw the AMD custom laser-etched window first, let's go ahead and install this into my holiday project – the OsbornAgain. You can see what the OsbornAgain is all about by looking in our forums right here (http://www.velocityreviews.com/forums/t958-long-term-project-osborne-executive-mod.html) If you don't have the time to read through that forum topic, let me just say that I'm rebuilding an old Osborne Executive CP/M computer (circa 1983) into a modern gaming machine, complete with an AMD dual-core CPU and an Nvidia 7800 GT videocard. What better place to use some custom laser-etched windows?

The AMD custom laser-etched window represents a special series available only from Hyperkore; this is the Blackout Series v.1, and it basically has a black coating on the back of the window that blocks light pretty well. Light still comes through the "clear areas", and I say that with quotes because the clear areas are really translucent. As you can see in figure 5, you don't have a clear view into the keyboard cavity. In fact, I later installed a hard drive in there, and you can barely make out the hard drive label below the AMD logo.
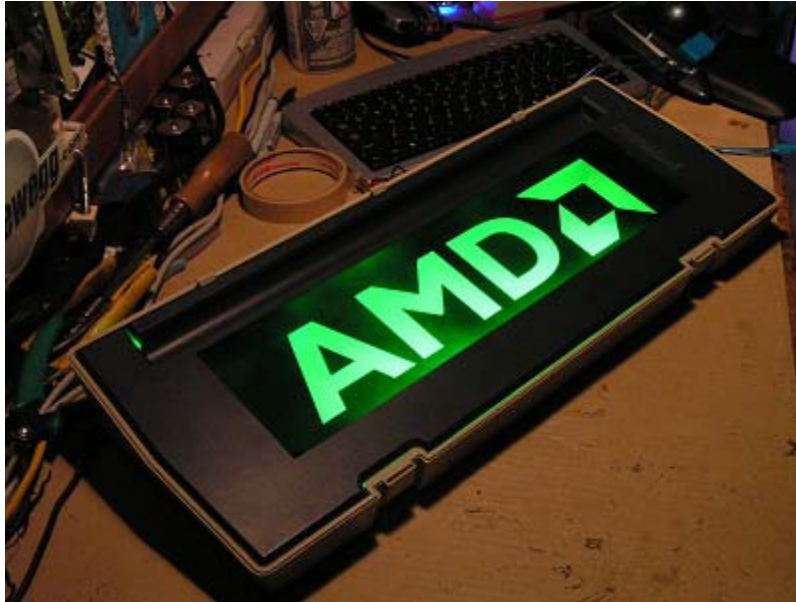
Figure 5: Click to enlarge picture.

I am impressed with the quality of the lettering, and the look of the Blackout Series v.1. However, please be aware that the backside coating can be scratched if you press too hard, and I managed to mark it a bit with my handmade clamping brackets. Once I noticed the small marks, I took the brackets off and touched up the blackout area with a black permanent marker. Then I used some soft pads on my clamps to prevent further damage. I don't blame Hyperkore for my mistake. See the result in figure 6. The window looks great and I don't notice the spots that I fixed.

This brings us to the topic of mounting kits for the laser-etched windows. Thomas at Hyperkore told me they were thinking about different mounting hardware configurations, but they were not prepared to offer mounting kits at this point. I know it's going to be difficult to offer a single mounting that will be useful for all buyers. In my situation, I needed some custom designs with my own mounting clamps that could take advantage of the existing keyboard support brackets. I have no problem buying windows without any mounting kit. To be truthful, I prefer to get the bare windows and save money on a mounting kit that I probably wouldn't use anyway. I suggest that Hyperkore offer a generic mounting kit at a small additional charge (say $5).
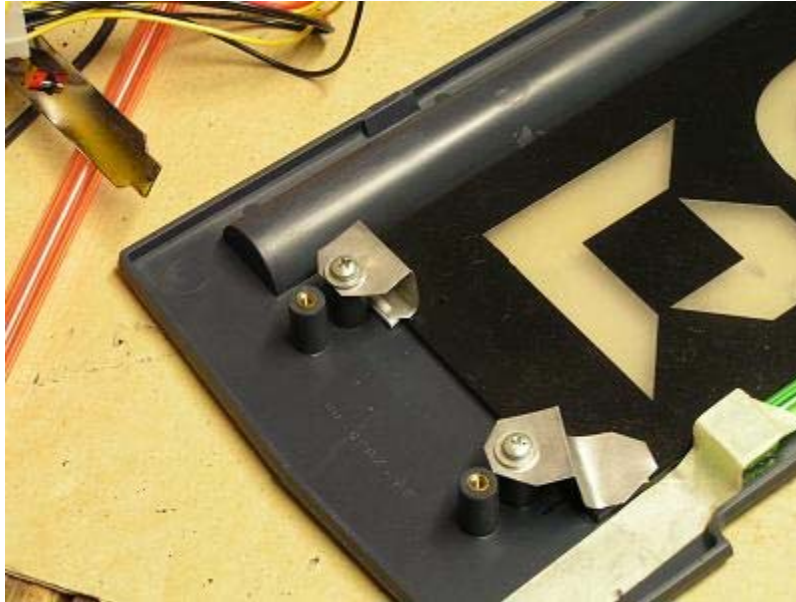
Figure 6: Click to enlarge picture.

Installing my Big Al's Computers logo custom laser-etched window took a bit more work.  There was more surface area to cut out of my Osborne Executive case. And I had to be careful of where I placed the window so I avoided interference with the components below it (CPU cooler, PSU, etc.).   I chose the same size for both my windows so I could mount them in either of the two areas that I had in mind when I started this project.  I used the whole area of the AMD logo custom laser-etched window in the keyboard tray, but in the OsbornAgain case, I am only using about half of the window area.  See figure 7, and you'll notice the pencil tracing that extends on both sides of the area I'm cutting with a Dremel tool.  The Big Al's Computers logo doesn't extend across the whole window, and I have a good use for that extra window area – it's my mounting surface with the addition of some household cement.  This solves two problems I was facing.  First, any mounting brackets holding the window down would possibly interfere with the components inside the case.  Secondly, I didn't want to drill any holes into the top of this case.  Also, I needed to add two four-inch cold cathode lights, one on each end of the window.  I just used the household cement to mount those too.  Simple and effective.  Only thing is – you can't remove it later on!  I made sure those cold cathode tubes worked before gluing them to the top of the case.  You can see how it turned out in figure 8, and this also shows the effect of mounting cold cathode lights along the edge of the custom laser-etched window.

Figure 7: Click to enlarge picture.


Figure 8: Click to enlarge picture.

**Final Thoughts**

The Hyperkore pre-made and custom laser-etched windows look great.  They do an excellent job of placing your image on a window size of your choosing.  They offer a standard window, a Blackout Series v.1 that permits light to come through the transparent area, and they also offer a Blackout Series v.2 that stops all light from passing through (opaque).  Their production and shipping were excellent, and considering that it's the holiday season, they probably have tons of stuff to ship to their customers right now.

The custom laser-etched windows ordered from Hyperkore turned out great in my opinion.  My project isn't complete, but as you can see in figure 9, it's getting there.  Be sure to check the forums at www.velocityreviews.com before 2006 arrives, and I'm sure you see how the OsbornAgain turned out.
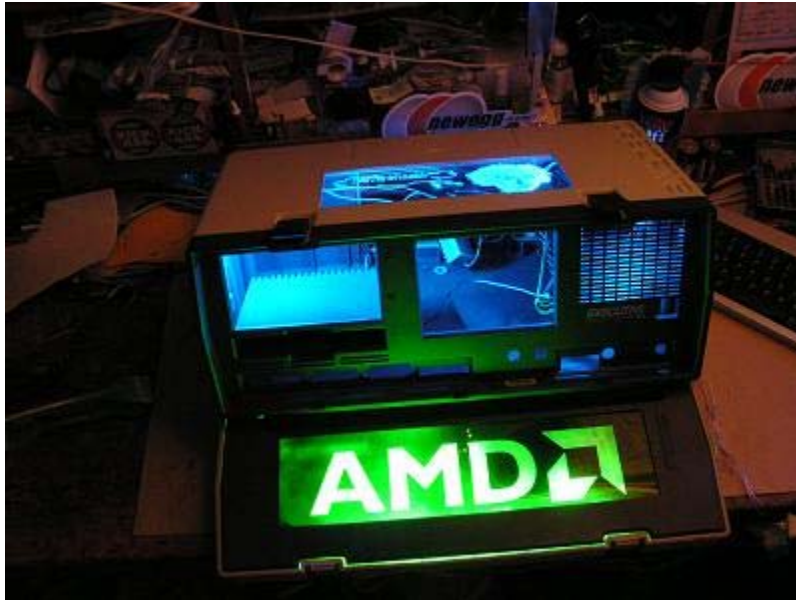


Figure 9: Click to enlarge picture.

**Assessment**

Pros:  high quality, able to produce custom designs, prompt shipping

Cons:  above average cost

Score:

- ✓ Features: 9 (three types of laser-etched windows are available)
- ✓ Quality: 10 (I haven't seen a better laser-etched window)
- ✓ Price: 7 (on the high side)
- ✓ Service: 9 (production and shipping were quick and nothing was damaged)
- ✓ **Overall: 9**