

STORAGE

Vol. 8 No. 10 February 2010



Disks and Disk Subsystems

gold: 3PAR Inc. InServ F400 Storage Server



3PAR's InServ enterprise data storage systems have always won high marks for their thin provisioning and management features, but the vendor's midrange offerings never gained much respect until the F-Class came out last April. The InServ F-Class Storage Servers have the same architecture and ASIC as the InServ T-Class enterprise system that launched in late 2008. That includes mesh-active quad-controller technology, thin provisioning ASIC and management software. The only difference is that the F-Class doesn't scale as high.

The F400 is the larger of the two F-Class arrays, with four controllers and 16 drives. 3PAR was a thin provisioning pioneer, and its latest ASIC with "Thin Built In" technology includes Thin Conversion and Thin Persistence features to help convert fat volumes to thin and keep volumes thin over time.

Our judges were impressed with the F400's features for a midrange system, giving it high scores for performance, ease of use and functionality despite finding it a bit pricey (starting at \$86,000 for 2.3 TB of capacity).

"A good quality system that extends 3PAR's line somewhat downward ... good functionality with some innovation," one judge said.

Another added: "Expensive for mid-tier but a nice upgrade from their older [midrange] line. Still in many ways a leader in the thin storage market."



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