

Review: Sabayon 19.03

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Created 20/05/2019 - 9:10am

Submitted by Roy Schestowitz on Monday 20th of May 2019 09:10:40 AM Filed under [Gentoo](#) [1] [Reviews](#) [2]

Sabayon's claim that it is a "beginner-friendly" distro that is "bleeding edge" and "stable and reliable" is a bit of a stretch. I doubt "beginners" will comprehend the instructions for what to do after installing Sabayon - and that is assuming inexperienced users will find the information in the first place. Similarly, the systemd and GNOME versions are rather old for a distro that claims to be "bleeding edge". That said, I did find Sabayon's GNOME edition to be stable and reliable, bar a few minor issues (such as the notification about the VirtualBox kernel service not running).

I don't think it is entirely fair to ask if Sabayon lives up to the bold marketing slogans on its home page. Personally, I see Sabayon as a friendly and interesting distro for tinkerers and distro-hoppers, and a very good one at that. I should also mention that, in general, Sabayon's use of language is refreshingly informal; both the graphical Rigo package manager and the wiki put a smile on my face more than once. Even Equo has some jokes built in - the command equo moo prints an ASCII cow that says "Entromoooo!".

Sabayon does still has some way to go to become the sophisticated operating system it wants to be. With 19.03 the distro switched from the Anaconda to the Calamares installer which, to my mind at least, is a good decision. However, contrary to what is claimed in the release notes, the disk encryption issue has not been resolved yet and the wiki still talks about how to find your way through the Anaconda installer. Work on the new wiki announced in the release notes seems to be at a very early stage.

I also couldn't fail to notice that Sabayon's forums are rather quiet. Lively forums don't necessarily equate to a thriving community, but the overall feeling I got is that Sabayon could do with a bit more momentum. That shouldn't discourage you from giving Sabayon a try though. On the contrary, if you are a Linux-loving tinkerer then Sabayon might be the distro for you.

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