

Gigabyte P2542G

Part-time gamer

PRICE \$1,000
www.gigabyte.com



This laptop intends to prove us wrong about our claims that a gaming laptop needs to be huge, hot and heavy. Weighing just 2.7kg it's still no Ultrabook, but it's definitely a lightweight compared to the brutes of the gaming business. After all, an owner could feasibly take this laptop out of the house on a regular basis without needing a steady supply of steroids. So what has Gigabyte had to cut to keep the weight down, but the power up?

The first thing we noticed is the average build quality - to be blunt, this laptop's all-plastic construction feels a little flimsy. The Lamborghini yellow face is certainly an eye catcher, but silver highlights that add glamour without looking gaudy. Keyboard flex is obvious during heavy typing sessions, although nowhere near as bad as the Sony laptop reviewed later. The screen also warps with a minimum of force, so if you're going to take the P2542G out on the road we'd highly recommend a padded bag.

Building the laptop around a 15" display also helps to keep the size down, but any smaller and you'd have to squint. Thankfully it's still

packing a true HD resolution at 1920 x 1080, and the image quality is uniformly excellent, with the brightness especially noteworthy. Props to Gigabyte for using a matte finish on the screen. It might not look so sexy when the laptop is powered down, but it also means it doesn't double as a mirror in brightly lit areas. The included Blu-Ray drive combines nicely with the HDMI out, allowing the laptop to act as a portable Blu-Ray player.

Under the hood is a reasonably powerful mix of hardware. Intel's Core i7-3610QM hits a top speed of 3.5GHz, and the addition of a 128GB SSD helps boost overall system performance. Sadly, our sample was so bogged down with bloatware that most desktop actions took ages to complete, so a full reformat will be in order if you do purchase. Twelve gigs of DDR3 memory is more than enough, but the NVIDIA GTX 660M isn't exactly the most powerful GPU on the market. This is a severely hobbled variant of the Kepler architecture used in the desktop GTX 670 part, and, despite their close proximity in the naming scheme, their actual performance couldn't be further apart.

As our benchmarks illustrate, the hardware combo within powered the P2542G all the way to second last place, so we must conclude that playing today's hottest DX11 games with eye-gouging detail simply isn't possible on this laptop. However, back off the detail to medium and run slightly older games and the experience is vastly improved, so it's all a matter of setting your expectations. While this laptop will never replace your dedicated gaming machine, it's a decent example of a portable productivity PC that can double as a gaming box during your time off. **CS**

• Delivers solid first gaming laptop
• Excellent screen
• Crippled battery

• Let down by the CPU
• Heavy build quality

VERDICT It might not be up to snuff as a dedicated gaming machine, but this mobile laptop has enough oomph for after-hour shenanigans.

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