

Gigabyte P2742G-CF1

EDITOR RATING: **GOOD** 0 COMMENTS

- REVIEW
- COMMENTS
- SPECS
- COMPARE



MSRP
\$1,499.00

LOWEST PRICE
\$1,369.00

Amazon **\$1,369.00**

VIEW ALL 5 PHOTOS IN GALLERY

PROS

Affordable price. Relatively long lasting battery. 17-inch, 1080p display.

CONS

Keyboard is oddly spaced, with no backlight. Limited performance.

BOTTOM LINE

The Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 laptop will get you on the gaming grid, but the overall package isn't the best, even at the affordable price.

BY BRIAN WESTOVER Looking for an affordable gaming laptop? The Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 (\$1,499.00 list) might fit the bill. In a category where prices regularly register in the thousands, it's nice to see a gaming rig that costs less than a used car. While the performance isn't quite as stunning as you'll find in other gaming laptops, the Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 does offer a longer lasting battery than more expensive competitors.

COMPARE SIMILAR PRODUCTS

COMPARE

Gigabyte P2742G-CF1



\$1,369.00

Amazon

Cyberpower Xplorer X6-9120



Asus G75VW-DH72



Maingear Nomad 17 Ultimate



\$2,824.00

Maingear

Design

As with most gaming laptops, Gigabyte didn't make this rig with portability in mind. When closed, it measures 1.92 by 16.3 by 10.9 inches (HWD)—roughly the same size as the [Asus G75VW-DH72](#) [\\$1,899.99 at Amazon](#), and too big to fit into a standard laptop bag. The P2742G-CF1 also has a plastic chassis, but it's no lightweight, tipping the scales at just over 7 pounds (7.05), though it is lighter than the Asus G75VW-DH72 (8.7 pounds). Our review unit is all black—what Gigabyte confusingly calls "svelte black," though the laptop is by no means slim—but it's also available with an orange lid.

The full-size keyboard has the expected chiclet keys, with decent separation between individual keys, but no backlight and no real gap between the keyboard proper and the 10-key numeric pad. As a result, inattentive touch typists might find themselves drifting into the numeric pad with no discernible extra space to distinguish the two bodies of keys. The touchpad is decent sized—1.8 by 3.6 inches—but I did find myself wishing that it used separate right and left mouse buttons instead of a combined button bar.

The 17.3-inch display offers 1,920-by-1,080 resolution, with a matte coating to reduce glare. The resolution and color quality of the display is quite nice, and during benchmark tests and game testing I never saw any blurring or smearing. You may want to use two hands when opening and closing the lid, however, because the plastic lid and bezel flex quite a bit and the hinges are a little stiff.

A pair of two-watt speakers positioned above the keyboard provide decent sound, enhanced by THX TruStudio Pro. They won't equal a dedicated sound system, but they offer good volume and clear sound, with moderate bass. When tested with Silent Shout, by The Knife, the speakers offer richer low end than I had expected, but still can't top the integrated

subwoofers found in the Asus G75VW-DH72 or the Maingear Nomad 17 Ultimate [\\$2,824.00 at Maingear](#).

Features

On the right of the system you'll find two USB 3.0 ports, a combination USB 3.0/eSATA port, HDMI output, and a multiformat card reader (SD, MMS, MS Pro/Duo). On the left, a tray-loading Blu-ray drive lets you watch HD movies and burn DVDs, plus you'll find a single USB 2.0 port, and a trio of audio connections (headphone, mic, and S/PDIF). On the back is a VGA monitor connection and an AC power connector. Gigabit Ethernet will probably be your networking connection of choice, but 802.11n Wi-Fi does the trick without the cable, and Bluetooth 4.0 lets you wirelessly connect an array of devices.

For storage that balances speedy performance with affordable capacity, the Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 is outfitted with both a 128GB solid-state drive (SSD) and a 1TB 5,400 rpm hard drive. That combination provides more than enough space for a large library of installed games and locally stored media, while the SSD ensures snappy performance and rapid start up. With three slots for RAM, the system's 8GB of RAM can actually be bumped up to a whopping 24GB, so there is the opportunity for upgrading in the future.

Aside from Windows 8 and a few media utilities (for virtual surround sound, audio enhancement, and volume optimization) Gigabyte doesn't add any software to the Gigabyte P2742G-CF1. What it does add, however, is a two-year warranty covering the laptop against defect and a one-year warranty on the battery and power adapter.

Performance

The P2742G-CF1 is equipped with a 2.4GHz quad-core Intel Core i7-3630QM processor paired with 8GB of RAM. It's the same processor found in the MSI GT70 One-609US Dragon Edition [\\$2,799.99 at Amazon](#) and the Asus G75VW-DH72, but with half the RAM. The resulting performance is on par with other similarly equipped systems, as seen in PCMark 7, where it scored 4,564 points, falling between the Cyberpower Xplorer X6-9120 (4,446 points) and the MSI GT70 One-609US Dragon Edition (5,182 points).



Performance Tests

	Processor	Graphics chipset	Battery Run-down ▲ hr: min	Heaven ▲ Mid quality 1,366 x 768 4X/4X
Gigabyte P2742G-CF1	Intel Core i7-3630QM (2.4GHz)	Nvidia GeForce GTX 660M	4:22	38
MSI GX60 1AC-021US	AMD A10-4600M (2.3GHz)	AMD Radeon HD 7970M	3:51	72
Cyberpower Xplorer X6-9120	Intel Core i7-3610QM (2.3GHz)	Nvidia GeForce GT 640M	3:15	N/A
MSI GT70 One-609US Dragon Edition	Intel Core i7-3630QM (2.4GHz)	Nvidia GeForce GTX 680M	4:12	123
Asus G75VW-DH72	Intel Core i7-3630QM (2.4GHz)	Nvidia GeForce GTX 670M	3:02	70
Maingear Nomad 17	Intel Core i7-3840QM (2.8GHz)	Nvidia GeForce GTX 680M	1:06	139

▲ Editor's Choice. N/A—Not applicable: The product could not complete the test, or the test was not compatible.

The difference in RAM led to significant gaps in Cinebench, where the P2742G-CF1 scored a respectable 4.75 points, but fell well behind both the MSI GT70 One-609US Dragon Edition (6.41) and the Asus G75VW-DH72 (6.44), despite the fact that all three utilize the same model of processor. Similar differences were seen in multimedia tests, where the Gigabyte finished Handbrake in 40 seconds and Photoshop CS6 in 4 minutes 56 seconds, as compared to the MSI GT70 One-609US Dragon Edition and the Asus G75VW-DH72, which both completed Handbrake in 36 seconds and Photoshop in 3:32.

The Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 is outfitted with an Nvidia GeForce GTX 660M with 2GB of dedicated memory. The single GPU offers playable performance in our gaming tests, offering 50 frames per second (fps) in Alien vs. Predator and 38 fps in Heaven, but only with resolution dropped to 1366 by 768 and detail settings dialed down. Competing systems, however, offer better graphics thanks to higher-powered GPUs—the MSI GT70 One-609US Dragon Edition, for example pumped out 35 fps in Aliens vs. Predator and 58 fps in Heaven, but did so at full 1920 by 1080 resolution, with all the eye candy turned up. Bottom line: You'll be able to play all of your games, but the overall performance will take a hit. That's the compromise you'll have to accept for the lower price.

While the performance isn't earth-shattering, the battery life is better than competitors are offering, lasting 4 hours 22 minutes in our rundown test. That's 10 minutes longer than the longest lasting competitor, the MSI GT70 One-609US Dragon Edition, over an hour longer than the Asus G75VW-DH72 (3:02), and nearly four times as long as the Maingear Nomad 17 (1:06). Battery life is generally the Achilles heel of gaming laptops, but because the Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 backs off on performance, the 77Wh battery stretches farther than most.

Conclusion

Lower prices in gaming laptops are almost always accompanied by reduced performance, and the Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 is no exception. Aside from the lower performance scores, however, the P2742G-CF1 still offers playable performance at medium graphics settings, and lasts longer than more expensive gaming rigs, making it a good choice for the gamer that prizes affordability and portability over raw performance. While the slightly more expensive Asus G75VW-DH72 remains our Editors' Choice for mid-range gaming laptop due to its better graphics performance, the Gigabyte P2742G-CF1 is still worth a look.