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Gigabyte U2442F review

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TechRadar rating 4/5

- FOR**
- Strong GPU performance
 - Great native resolution
 - Plenty of RAM
 - Impressive battery life
 - Fast SSD

- AGAINST**
- Limited storage capacity
 - Uninspiring construction
 - Relatively expensive

Gigabyte U2442F

Price at launch: £999



Gigabyte U2442F review

An Ultrabook designed for gamers

By Alan Dexter(/author?searchTerm=Alan Dexter) 16 hrs ago 0 COMMENTS

PAGE 1 OF 3 Introduction

Intel's third generation Core processors may dominate the laptop landscape right now, but they have one weakness. This weakness is particularly obvious to a certain exacting section of the laptop community - the gamer. Intel's processors aren't the be-all and end-all when it comes to modern gaming. The Gigabyte U2442F seeks to rectify this.

To be fair, Intel has made some big advances on this front with the last few generations of its chips, thanks in part to moving the graphics subsystem into the CPU itself. And sure enough the latest iterations of its CPUs are capable

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enough when it comes to handling older titles - managing playable experiences in the likes of *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* and *Team Fortress 2*. Even so, these chips still struggle if you want to play anything released in the last year or two.

There's a change coming, though, and that is with the release of Intel's fourth generation CPUs, expected later this summer. This new CPU architecture, that goes by the codename of **Haswell**([news/computing/intel-haswell-everything-you-need-to-know-1096616](#)), won't offer any serious shake ups on the straight CPU side of things.



But the new graphics engine looks like it could offer double the frame rates of the HD4000 graphics engine found in the current Core i5 and Core i7 processors. At least it will if the sneak peeks are to be believed.

In other words, games should be playable without having to turn to AMD and Nvidia graphics arms for discrete polygon pushing silicon. Silicon that not only adds to the thermal considerations of your laptop, but that also has a fairly substantial impact on the cost of such a machine as well.

Intel's next CPUs aren't quite ready yet though, and we don't know for sure just how well they'll perform in the latest games - it has promised significant improvements before, and has never quite delivered where it counts.

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Best Ultrabook: top thin and lights([news/mobile-computing/laptops-best-ultrabook-18-top-thin-and-lights-1054355](#))



That means that anyone looking for a decent gaming laptop needs to factor in a decent discrete GPU as well. This is something that Gigabyte has done with the U2442F, its gaming Ultrabook. It has called on the services of Nvidia's GeForce GT 650M to provide the PC with the gaming muscle necessary to play the latest games.

The Gigabyte U2442F isn't just about throwing a decent graphics core inside a laptop, though. Gigabyte has set out to produce a capable system on many levels, with a high resolution screen, next-generation storage and put it all together in that most sought after of form factors, the Ultrabook.

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AU\$1,499.

Specification



Some systems can trip up before they even get going, and here Gigabyte does come a little unstuck - mainly due to the chassis being a little unimpressive, especially for the cash.

Maybe we've been spoilt by the likes of the **Asus Zenbook**(/reviews/pc-mac/laptops-portable-pcs/laptops-and-netbooks/asus-zenbook-u500-1093861/review) and the **Apple Macbook Air**(/reviews/pc-mac/laptops-portable-pcs/laptops-and-netbooks/macbook-air-2012-1087300/review), but this simple plastic casing does little to stimulate our aesthetic taste buds.

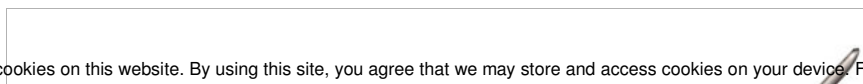
Gigabyte has at least got an idea of what it needs to do on this front, with a brushed aluminium cover, but a quick tap shows that such looks really are only skin deep, and the rest of the chassis makes grabs for plastic over hard-wearing metals.



Bounce your finger off the laptop when it's open and the lack of strength of the chassis really does reveal itself. If you're looking for a workhorse of a gaming machine that you can take out on the road with you, then this isn't going to be the best option, despite the components that can be found throbbing away inside.

The key components of the Gigabyte U2442F are the Intel Core i7 3517U processor and Nvidia GeForce GT 650M. Gigabyte has equipped the Ultrabook with 8GB of DDR3 RAM, although it's worth noting that the GPU has 2GB of memory too.

When it comes to the storage on offer in Gigabyte's U2442F, it's very much a laptop of its time. While many manufacturers are returning to spinning drives in order to keep prices down and capacities high, Gigabyte has stayed true to its Ultrabook form and installed a 128GB SSD.



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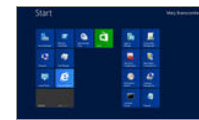
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Unfortunately this doesn't quite make for the perfect dream. The problem here is that while it is really fast, it doesn't give you a whole lot of room when it comes to your games - especially when you consider that some games are weighing in at anything up to 30GB a pop, and **Windows 8** (</reviews/pc-mac/software/operating-systems/windows-8-1093002/review>) itself is hardly svelte in storage terms. So you'll soon find yourself facing off against the limits of that storage.

There is an option to get this laptop with a traditional hard drive alongside the SSD, and given who this is aimed at, we would recommend that this is the way to go.

The 16:9 screen ratio has quickly become the norm in the world of laptops, but it's a little rarer to find a 14-inch laptop boasting such a high native resolution as that which you'll find on the Gigabyte U2442F - a rather impressive 1600 x 900 pixels.



Gigabyte has picked a TN screen for the heavy duty work here, which brings some highs and lows to proceedings. The fact that it is TN means that the pixel response is great, which means that the screen can keep up with the action taking place on the screen.

Conversely, though, the viewing angles aren't great. This isn't too much of a problem when you're gaming straight onto the screen, but it is less impressive the moment you try to enjoy a film.

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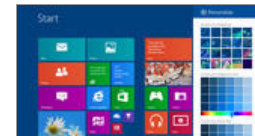
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