

# Power with a touch of style

Gigabyte packs value and style into the 14-inch touchscreen U2442T notebook

**T**here's no shortage of slender laptops that run Windows 8 well and give you a touchscreen for easy access to your favourite apps.

However, few come with the gaming-class graphics and massive storage that Gigabyte (perhaps better known for its range of motherboards) has packed into the 14-inch U2442T.

The pink-gold brushed metal finish stands out, and the overall look is on the stylish side of industrial. The size and weight are towards the upper limits for an Ultrabook; this isn't a super-thin machine that you could mistake for a tablet, but it's not chunky or heavy either. The chassis is solid and sturdy, although the isolated keys do let things down with their rattling, plastic feel. The backlit keyboard is certainly a plus. The screen on our review unit was glossy and reasonably bright, with a standard 14in resolution of 1,366 x 768. If you want to watch movies, plump for the cleaner, crisper HD+ resolution of 1,600 x 900.

Gigabyte makes the most of the available space with a full set of ports and connections; you can plug in anything from a full-sized HDMI cable to your digital camera's SD card. There are two fast USB 3.0 ports, plus two USB 2.0 ports, and they're all arranged neatly out of the way on the sides of

the case. The extra large trackpad supports the Windows 8 gestures, so you can swipe and scroll without reaching up to touch the screen all the time. Press the right trackpad button when the laptop is off and it cleverly uses the five indicator lights as a battery charge indicator.

## For your lap only

You can't fold the touchscreen back on itself and use it like a tablet, but it's still very useful. If you're reading a web page, you can swipe your finger down the screen to scroll and tap on buttons. You can do the same in desktop applications; if you're sending email in Outlook, the big 'Send' button is easy to tap with your finger. In fact, it's easier than moving your hand to the

trackpad, wiggling your finger so you can see the cursor, moving it up to the mouse button and clicking it. Trackpads feel natural because you've probably used them for years; the touchscreen soon feels more intuitive, and it's not tiring to move your hand up to the screen occasionally and then back down to the keyboard.

If you want to use the screen without the keyboard – doodling in FreshPaint or playing a touch-friendly game like Angry Birds – just pull the notebook further onto your lap that usual, balance your arms over the keyboard

and you'll find that the screen is at

quite a comfortable angle to tap, swipe, paint and fling birds around. We also found that was quite a good way of dealing with the glare on the bright, but very reflective screen.

## Ready to play

But it's what inside the case that really distinguishes this laptop. The Core i5 and 8GB of memory would be speedy on their own, but you also get an Nvidia GeForce graphics adapter that kicks in when you're playing more demanding games, or running hefty image and video processing tools.

This is a lot more power than you'll find in most Ultrabooks, and you get it without sacrificing too much battery life. We kept an animation looping continuously on-screen for five hours on a single charge. If you need more disk space to go with it, you can add a 1TB hard drive alongside the speedy 128GB SSD that has the notebook starting up in under eight seconds.

You can nitpick about the feel of the keyboard, the quality of the speakers or the glossiness of the screen, and adding all the extra options will put the price up, but if you want a touch notebook that really delivers, it's hard to fault the U2442T. ■



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Nothing is perfect, but the spec of this touchscreen Ultrabook is impressive with its extra graphics, generous storage and optional HD screen – and it's still not too pricey.  
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