

VERDICT

A powerful Ultrabook with dedicated

graphics, but the screen lets it down

are still few and far between, but the

ULTRABOOKS THAT CAN handle games

Gigabyte U2442V shows you don't have to

It looks very similar to its more expensive

cousin, the Gigabyte U2442F (see Reviews,

thinner, and instead of a two-tone interior,

the bezel and the keyboard tray. The

Ultrabook we've seen.

INNER STRENGTH

U2442V's black Chiclet-style keys hint at

personality, but it's far from the prettiest

Look at the U2442V's components, though,

and there's plenty to get excited about. Unlike

many Ultrabooks, the U2442V has a dedicated

2GB Nvidia GeForce GT 640M graphics chip as

well as the integrated graphics built into its

U2442V sail through our Dirt Showdown

graphics benchmark, producing a smooth

51.9fps with graphics set to High quality at a

1,280x720 resolution. This is very impressive

for a light laptop, and only a few frames shy

Disabling anti-aliasing raises the frame rate

further, but you'll have to reduce the graphics

settings if you want to take advantage of the

screen's 1,600x900 resolution. We managed a

smooth 40.8fps with graphics set to High

quality at 1,600x900, while reducing the

settings to Medium produced an average

The laptop struggled with our more

frame rate of 54.7fps at 1,600x900.

of the more powerful U2442F.

processor. The GeForce GT 640M helped the

Shopper 305). Its 18mm chassis is a fraction

silver plastic now extends all the way round

sacrifice portability to get a powerful laptop.

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HOT CHIP

The U2442V is no slouch when it comes to raw power, either, with a 1.9GHz Intel Core i7-3517U processor that can Turbo Boost to 3GHz when cool enough. We were a little disappointed that it didn't have a more recent Core i7-3537U processor or one of Intel's newer Haswell chips, but it scored a respectable 50 overall in our multimedia benchmarks. This is one of the fastest scores we've seen for this type of processor and is only a couple of points behind newer Core i7 Ultrabook processors.

Typing on the U2442V was pleasant, if a little noisy. Its backlit Chiclet-style keys are well spaced but we'd have liked more travel. This didn't affect typing accuracy much, though, and we were up to full speed within minutes.

We were less keen on the touchpad. Its textured surface makes it feel very responsive and its button bar has plenty of travel when pressed, but we kept catching it with a wrist while typing, which was frustrating.

The U2442V's battery is also below par and managed just four hours and 16 minutes in our light-usage test with the screen set to

> half brightness. We expect at least five hours from an Ultrabook, and it certainly can't match the near six-hour battery life of

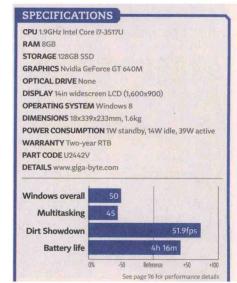
the U2442F.

We were pleased to see a good selection of ports, though. As well as its two USB3 and two further USB ports, you'll find VGA and HDMI outputs, an SD card reader, a Gigabit Ethernet port and separate headphone and microphone jacks.

As with the U2442F, though, the screen is the weakest part of this laptop. Its 1,600x900 resolution looks very sharp, but its image quality leaves a lot to be desired. Reds, greens and blues all looked very dull in our solid colour image tests, and blacks and whites were positively grey. This also affected our high-contrast test image, where colours really lacked depth and vibrancy. This is partly due to the screen's matt finish, which helps to reduce glare and reflections, but its contrast levels were also quite poor as it struggled to reveal detail in areas of dark shadow. With all this, plus some very narrow viewing angles, there's plenty of room for improvement.

This is a shame, as we quite like the rest of the Gigabyte's U2442V. It may not have the best battery life, but if you're looking for a slim laptop that can run 3D games and you're not too bothered about the quality of its display, the U2442V is a good choice. Otherwise, we recommend the Best Buywinning MSI CX61 instead (see *Group Tests*, *Shopper* 305).

Katharine Byrne



demanding Crysis 2 test, producing an average frame rate of 15.3fps at 1,600x900 with graphics quality set to Ultra. Lowering this to High produced a much more promising 39.3fps, so it should

handle many 3D games if you

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