



Gigabyte U2442T

£920 | \$1,319 www.gigabyte.com

Extra graphics, generous storage and an optional HD screen

There's no shortage of slender Windows 8 laptops out there, but few have the gaming-class graphics and massive storage that Gigabyte has packed into the U2442T.

The 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, but it's not chunky or heavy either. The chassis is sturdy, although the isolated keys do let things down with their rattling, plastic feel. The screen on our review unit was glossy and bright, with a standard resolution of 1,366 x 768. If you want to watch movies, plump for the 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, and fling birds around. We also

found that was quite a good way of dealing with the glare on the bright, but reflective screen.

Ready to play

But it's what inside the case that 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 play demanding games, or use 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 powerful notebook, it's hard to fault the U2442T. ■

This laptop offers a solid case and solid performance, plus all the ports you could want.

 **Windows 7**
Help & Advice

Verdict





