



TOP OF THE RANGE

Gigabyte U2442T



£920 | \$1,319 Gigabyte packs value and style into the 14-inch touchscreen U2442T notebook

Screen
14in

Weight
1.7kg

Battery
297
mins

There'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 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 managed five hours on a single charge. If you need more disk space you can add a 1TB hard drive alongside the speedy 128GB SSD that has it starting up in under eight seconds.

Along with a smattering of handy ports and a decent screen, it's hard to really fault the Gigabyte U2442T.





Hotlist

The 12.5-inch Gorilla Glass screen is the main draw of the Twist

REVOLUTIONARY

Lenovo Thinkpad Twist

£850 | \$990 The classic convertible tablet design is back, and it's better than ever

Screen
12.5in touch

Weight
1.6kg

Battery
219 mins

It might not be the sexiest hybrid laptop we've ever seen, but Lenovo's Thinkpad Twist is a very versatile machine. The screen can be rotated so it faces away from the keyboard, making it ideal for using as a tablet, or giving presentations.

The 12.5-inch Gorilla Glass screen is the main draw of the Twist, and boasts a native resolution of 1,366 x 768. It's good for movies, but what makes the Twist even better is that it's ideal for more practical tasks, thanks to the roomy keyboard and versatile options for mouse control, including a touchpad and TrackPoint inputs. And it's a touchscreen, of course.

A Core i5 processor, 4GB of RAM and a speedy 500GB hard drive round off the hardware side of things a treat.

www.lenovo.com



WINDOWS 8 PRO

Microsoft Surface Pro

£719 | \$899 You can take it all with you if you pick up the world's best tablet PC

Screen
10.6in

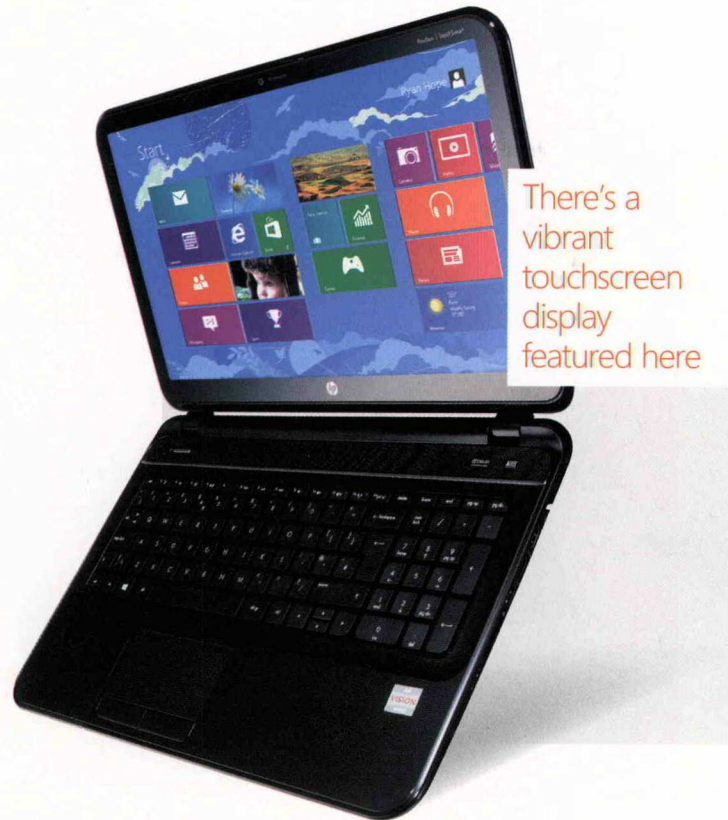
Weight
910g

Battery
158 mins

If you're familiar with the original Surface RT, the Surface Pro has almost all of its advantages and more. It has the same sturdy but sleek case and an even better screen; the details are crisp and the 1,920 by 1,080 resolution is ideal for enjoying movies. The resolution could even be a bit too high for Windows 8's desktop view but, cleverly, software and web pages on the desktop are magnified automatically. The screen responds quickly and accurately to touch input, and you can also tap with up to 10 fingers at once in games or apps, and write with the digital pen.

The Surface Pro can run Windows Store apps and normal PC software, as well as any peripherals you need. It's also powerful, but battery life suffers a little.

www.microsoft.com



EVERYDAY COMPUTING

HP Pavilion TS Sleekbook

£450 | \$550 Can the TS Sleekbook 15 really cut it against its mainstream rivals

Screen
15.6in

The HP Pavilion TS Sleekbook 15 gives you a lot of laptop for you money. Sure, you'd hardly call it slender (at just over 2cm thick) or portable (it weighs 2.1kg), and it doesn't have an optical drive, but what the Sleekbook does have is a vibrant touchscreen display, a decent AMD dual-core processor with some gaming capabilities and a whopping 8GB of RAM.

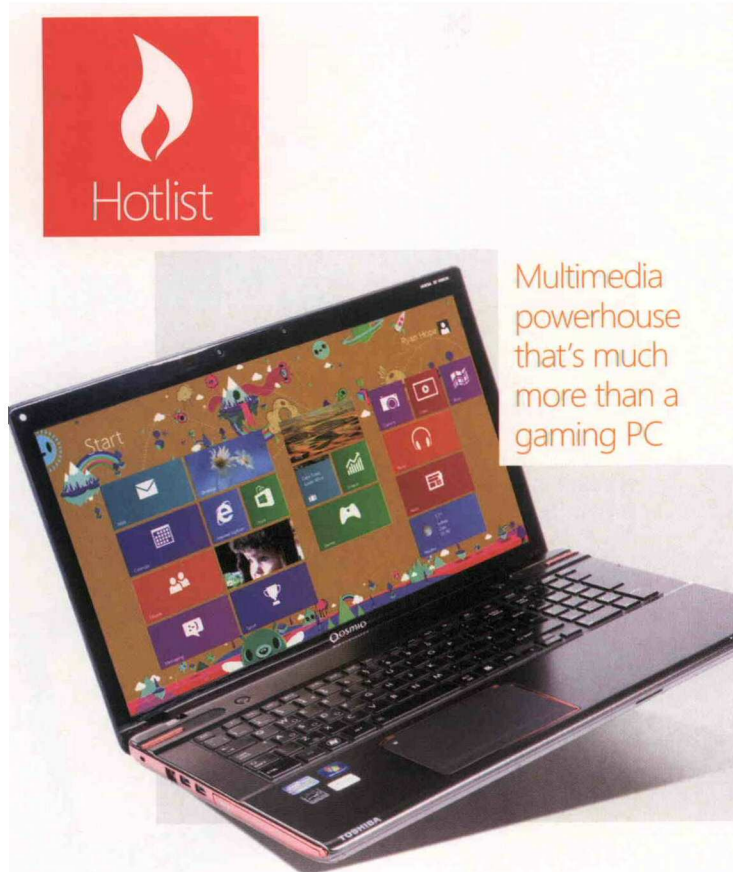
Weight
2.1kg

Battery
462 mins

You also get an equally big 1TB hard drive to store all your files on. The Altec Lansing speakers are very impressive for movies and music too.

Battery life in the region of five to seven hours is certainly not to be sniffed at, and connectivity is very well represented too, with two fast USB 3.0 ports, an HDMI output and more.

www.hp.com



BIG SCREEN LAPTOP

Toshiba Qosmio X870

£1,430 | \$1,500 Monster laptop with impressive gaming credentials and a nifty 3D display to boot

Screen
17.3in

You don't need to be a serious gamer in order to fully appreciate the impressive specification sheet of the latest big-hitting Qosmio. Toshiba has created a monster laptop that fully lives up to the tag of desktop replacement.

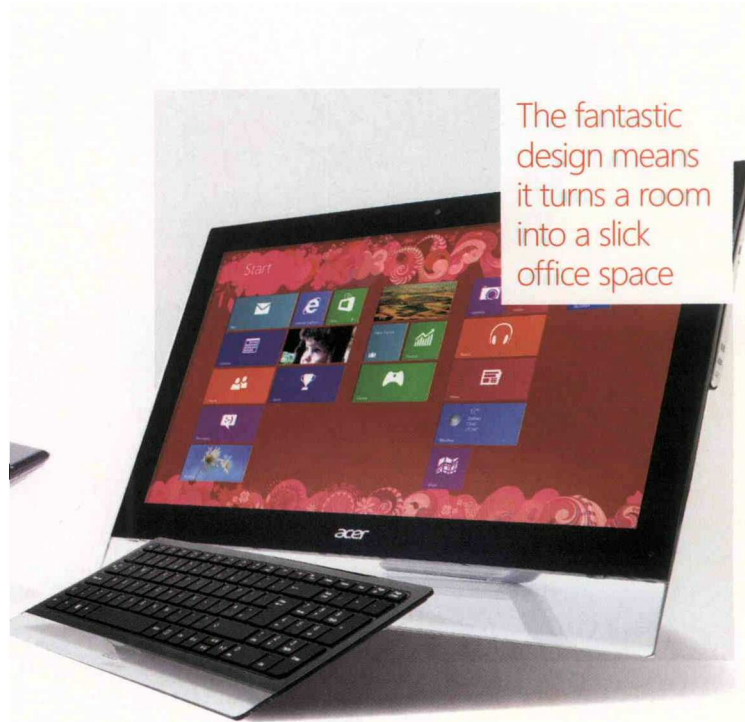
Weight
3.4kg

The 17.3-inch, Full HD 3D display is perfect not only for high-octane gaming, but also for watching Blu-ray movies or editing your high-resolution images. On the media front it also helps that there's a stereo speaker setup from audio expert Harman Kardon on board.

Battery
41 mins

Storing your data shouldn't prove tricky either, as there's a whopping 1TB of hard drive space on offer, along with a 128GB SSD for super-fast boot up times and extra-quick access to those essential files.

www.toshiba.com



STYLISH DESKTOP

Acer Aspire 5600U

£849 | \$1,497 With a sleek design and a great display, this is a true family media centre

Screen
23in

This is a slim machine that has more in common with a modern TV than a traditional desktop PC. The screen measures 23 inches, has an HDMI input for your DVD player or games console and, crucially, looks great when playing HD content.

Weight
13kg

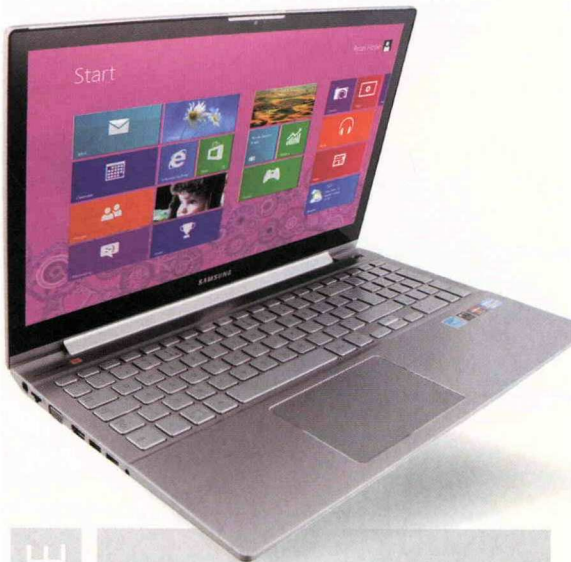
There's a DVD drive, 4GB of RAM and 500GB of storage, which is more typical of an entry-level laptop than a desktop computer. The i3 processor isn't suitable for gaming, and it will struggle with any demanding creative software.

Battery
N/A

At this price you'd expect twice as much RAM and a Blu-ray player – the storage is more than enough for most needs. The pay-off for the steep price is the excellent design, and the Acer could easily be either an office PC or a small TV in the corner of a room.

www.acer.com

Solid case and solid performance, plus all the ports you could want



TOP ALTERNATIVE

Samsung Series 7 Chronos
£1,299 | \$1,550

For those of us who want power, performance and comfort, this is ideal. There's an Intel Core i7 3635QM processor, 8GB of RAM, and an AMD Radeon HD 8800M graphics chip for improved gaming performance, too. The Chronos also has a full-sized keyboard and a Full HD screen. Battery life is shorter than average, though, and it's heavy at 2.5kg.
www.samsung.com

Screen
15.6in
Weight
2.5kg
Battery
327 mins

TOP ALTERNATIVES

Asus Taichi £1,000 | \$1,290

The Asus Taichi is just 3mm thick at its thinnest and weighs 1.3kg, but what's really amazing is that it has two 11.6-inch Full HD touchscreens packed into the lid – front and back. It also has a brilliant sound system from Danish audio expert Bang & Olufsen – ideal for music.
www.asus.com

Screen
11.6in touch
Weight
1.3kg
Battery
197 mins


94

TOP ALTERNATIVES

Acer Iconia W510 £549 | \$750

The W510 is a great Windows 8 tablet that slots neatly in between the current choices, with an Intel Atom processor, which offers a good amount of power and battery life. It's a well built device that's versatile, too. We wouldn't recommend it over a full-size laptop for serious tasks, but it would make a great companion to your main PC in the home.
www.acer.com

Screen
10.1in
Weight
1.26kg
Battery
310 mins

<p>Screen 11.6in</p> <p>Weight 1.4kg</p> <p>Battery 462 mins</p>	<p>HP Envy X2 £699 \$649</p> <p>The HP Envy X2 isn't the most powerful of laptops, and it's better to think of it as an 11.6-inch tablet with an added keyboard. The 64GB of flash storage means there's no moving hard drive to add noise and weight. Battery life is excellent and the keyboard and trackpad are great, making it easy to use on the move.</p> <p>www.hp.com</p>	
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<p>TOP ALTERNATIVES</p>	<p>Screen 17.3in</p> <p>Weight 3kg</p> <p>Battery 195 mins</p>	<p>Samsung 5 550P £670 / \$940</p> <p>Quad-core Intel Core power, a vivid 1080p display, impressive audio – via the JBL stereo speaker and Max Boost subwoofer setup – and Nvidia graphics make this one of the best pound for pound laptops we've seen.</p> <p>It looks pretty swish as well, and the isolation style keyboard is as good as we've seen.</p> <p>A tidy little package.</p> <p>www.samsung.com</p>	
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<p>Screen 27in touch</p> <p>Weight 11.6kg</p> <p>Battery N/A</p>	<p>Lenovo IdeaCentre A720 £1,399 \$1,750</p> <p>The A720 is slim, with a frameless 27-inch touchscreen, an integrated Blu-ray drive and a generous 1TB of hard disk space. Power comes courtesy of a meaty quad-core Intel i7 processor, 8GB of RAM and Nvidia graphics. The A720 is equally good whether you need a high-performance workstation for the office or a good-looking living room media centre.</p> <p>www.lenovo.com</p>	
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Screen

The standard resolution is 1,366 x 768, so if you want more detail go for the HD+ resolution version, which is 1,600 x 900.

Hardware

There's already a lot of power underneath the hood, but if you want a little more space you can always add a 1TB hard drive at a later date.

Control

The extra large trackpad supports Windows 8 gestures, so you can swipe and scroll easily without having to reach up to the screen.