



Gigabyte P35v3

PURE GAMING POWER FROM GIGABYTE

Times have changed for gaming laptops. As one of the strongest growing segments of mobile computers, we've seen the back-breaking, battery-devouring, plastic-encrusted beasts of the past evolve over the last couple of years into thinner, lighter, faster creatures that could easily be mistaken for the tool of a businessperson. Gigabyte's P35v3 is the perfect example of how far gaming laptops have come, though the powerful hardware within means it's not the kind of machine that can roam all day without a power plug in sight.

Measuring just 21mm at its thickest, and tipping the scales at 2.3kg, it's dramatically skinnier and lighter than the heavyweight bruisers of the past. It's still relatively large thanks to the 15.6 inch display, which crams in a seriously high resolution of 2880 x 1620, but this is an optional extra; a more affordable version uses a 1920 x 1080 display instead. While we love the crisp image provided by this display at the desktop, it's problematic when it comes to games. The P35v3 packs some serious mobile GPU power, but even twin desktop GTX 980s will struggle with such a high resolution. This makes the 1080p option arguably the better buy for those who plan to spend more time playing Call of Duty than answering emails in Outlook.

The chassis is built primarily from aluminium, with a plastic base, and feels reassuringly solid. It does tend to get a little warm while gaming, but that's to

be expected when you're packing top of the line hardware in such a slim package. The keyboard feels nice and stiff, and has backlighting for use in dim gaming dens, while the touchpad is accurate and responsive.

A huge range of I/O ports adorn each side, with twin USB 3.0 ports backed up by another two USB 2.0 ports. Three video options are provided in the form of HDMI, D-sub and a Mini-DisplayPort, allowing this thing to power basically any external display imaginable. An SD card reader is also included, along with headphone and microphone ports. Finally, Gigabit Ethernet is supplied via the single RJ-45 port.

Heading into the guts of the machine reveals why it can command such a premium price. At the heart is Intel's i7-4710HQ CPU, a quad-cored, HyperThreaded brute that ramps up to 3.5GHz when the going gets tough. This is paired with 16GB of DDR3 memory running at a brisk 1866MHz, more than enough for even the most demanding applications. Long term storage is similarly impressive, with the base model including twin 128GB SSDs in RAID 0 mode, backed up by a sizeable 1TB mechanical drive spinning at 7200RPM. There's even a DVD burner that can easily be removed to install other devices in its bay; just unlock the locking mechanism and it slides right out.

So far so good, but it's this laptop's GPU that is of most interest. Nvidia's shiny new GTX 980M GPU is tasked with driving

the behemoth of a display, and it's based on the latest Maxwell architecture. This comes with 1536 CUDA cores along with 64 ROPS, fed by a 256-bit memory bus. This places it somewhere between a GTX 960 and GTX 970 desktop part, more closely to the latter.

As we know from the desktop piece, this is a powerful piece of hardware, as borne out by our benchmarks. Due to the sheer power on offer, we ran our usual gaming benchmarks with desktop settings instead of the usual lower-detail laptop options, as this machine has the grunt to handle it. We also ran them at the native resolution of 2880 x 1620, which showed that this machine doesn't have quite the muscle to deliver a stable 60fps with all settings maxed at such a ludicrously high resolution, hence our recommendation to go with a 1080p display.

There is a price for this performance, with relatively loud fan noise whenever games were played. Gigabyte's software allows this to be tamed, but doing so will decrease performance. Battery life is also not this machine's strongest point, measuring just 165 minutes. It's the price to be paid for having so much power on tap.

Despite the low battery life, this laptop really is hard to fault. The inclusion of a cutting edge GPU is backed up by equally impressive specs across the board, all presented in a slim, subtle case.

Bennett Ring

KEY SPECS

\$2799 • www.gigabyte.com.au
 i7-4710HQ CPU (to 3.5GHz) • 16GB DDR3 • 2 x 128GB SSDs • 1TB 7200rpm HDD • GTX 980M GPU • 2.3kg • 15.6inch 2880x1620 display

PCMARK 8

Home Accelerated Benchmark: **3429**
 Home Accelerated Battery Benchmark: **165 minutes**

OVERALL

