

GET A CHANCE
TO OWN!



A TP-Link
TL-WDR4300 N750
Wireless Router!

IN THIS
MONTH'S
CHALLENGE

An Olympus
SZ-10 Super Zoom
Digital Camera!



HMM

PHILIPPINES

JANUARY 2013 // PhP 150
Vol. 9, Issue 2

THE POWER TO DECIDE
HardwareZone.com.ph



Multi-Test + Feature

THE TRINITY COMETH

Taking A Closer Look At AMD's Second Generation APU Platform



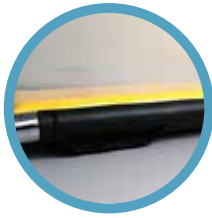
WHO NEEDS MIRRORS?

Affordable Mirrorless Compact Camera Shootout

ISSN 1656-5649



01



Gigabyte designed this notebook to have two rear vents (one for the CPU and another for the GPU) to exhaust heat.



The P2542G isn't your usual bulky and rigid looking gaming notebook as it sports an exquisite finish both inside and out.



TEXT // MARTIN JAMES DAVID

Gigabyte P2542G

RENEWED GAMING NOTEBOOK LOOK

Joining the ranks of gaming notebook manufacturers is Gigabyte as it adds its 15-inch entry, the P2542G, to the market. This Intel and NVIDIA-powered notebook's main goal is to give gamers that immersive and wonderful gaming experience through gorgeous visuals and outstanding audio performance while not sacrificing its utility and usability.

At first glance, the P2542G doesn't look like your usual gaming notebook thanks to its vibrant yellow lid and not so bulky body. It's a gaming notebook that went on a diet as it doesn't have that usual gaming notebook or desktop replacement heft to it thanks to its somewhat mainstream notebook weight at 2.6kg and 32.1-38.3mm thickness.

For its size, it seems to be lacking USB ports as it only has a total of three (two USB 3.0 and one USB 2.0 via eSATA/USB combo) but they're more than enough as not everyone will be needing more than two. It also has the standard

notebook ports like HDMI, VGA, Ethernet, Mic and Headphone jacks, and a 4-in-1 card reader and a Blu-ray R/W drive.

A notebook won't be complete without its keyboard and touchpad. We have a full keyboard layout and even with its crammed numpad it still remains easy to use. The keys felt fine as we typed on them. As for the touchpad, its surface is textured which provides better accuracy and traction as you glide your fingers through it. The placement of the touchpad at the middle of the wrist rest makes it hard for your palm to accidentally touch it while you type and the ample space provides great comfort.

Equipped with an Intel Core i7-3630QM and NVIDIA GeForce GTX 660M, the P2542G delivered solid scores across our benchmark run as it logged P2577 and X845 marks for 3DMark 11 and 5160 marks for PCMark 7. We weren't able to run PCMark Vantage due to compatibility issues with Windows 8, however. Regardless, with

scores like these, this notebook will be able to run practically anything you throw at it. As for our battery life tests, it managed 98 minutes on PowerMark and 168 minutes for our loop test. NVIDIA Optimus really does make a difference in prolonging a gaming notebook's battery life.

Gigabyte wants to renew how gaming notebooks are perceived with its P2542G. Adding in impressive architecture and style to its body while still giving that amazing gaming experience with its performance and quality sound and display, the P2542G is definitely a force to be reckoned with in the gaming scene.

AT A GLANCE

PROCESSOR

Intel Core i7-3630QM (2.4GHz)

DISPLAY

15.6" Full HD LED-backlit (1920 x 1080)

MEMORY

8GB DDR3

STORAGE

256GB SSD

PRICE

Php 75,590

SPECIFICATIONS GRAPHICS Intel HD Graphics 4000/NVIDIA GeForce GTX 660M // **OPERATING SYSTEM** Windows 8 // **CONNECTIVITY** Wi-Fi b/g/n, Bluetooth 4.0, 2x USB 3.0, eSATA/USB 2.0 Combo, HDMI, VGA, Ethernet, Headphone-out and Mic-in jacks, 4-in-1 Card Reader // **DIMENSIONS / WEIGHT** 392 x 263 x 32.1-38.3mm / 2.6kg // **WEBSITE** www.gigabyte.com



Verdict:

8.5



PHYSIQUE: 8.5
FEATURES: 9.0
USER-FRIENDLINESS: 8.5
PERFORMANCE: 8.5
VALUE: 8.0

VERDICT SCORES ARE OUT OF 10.

GIGABYTE F2A85X-UP4

Initially seen at Computex last year, **Gigabyte's** entry for this shootout comes in the form of the **GA-F2A85X-UP4**. While the motherboard sports a simple layout, it is a capable implementation which makes full use of the A85X chipset. The motherboard isn't too flashy with its black PCB with gray accents on its DIMM slots and heatsinks. We don't see chunks of metal on top of its power circuitry aside from the one found left of the CPU socket.

The GA-F2A85X-UP4 is equipped with four dual-channel DIMM sockets which are capable of supporting up to 64GB DDR3 at 1866MHz. Seen adjacent to the DIMM slots are onboard switches for clearing the CMOS, resetting power, and turning on the board. Apart from the complete set of video output connectors, which seems to be a standard across A85X-based motherboards, the board also has six USB ports (four USB 3.0 and two USB 2.0), PS/2, eSATA 6Gbps, Gigabit Ethernet, and audio jacks. Additional USB connectors can be established by maximizing the platform's onboard headers.

Being an ATX board, the GA-F2A85X-UP4 has a lot of room for expansion through its PCIe slots as it has three PCIe 2.0 slots that can support a CrossFireX setup. The board also comes with three PCIe x1 slots and a single PCI slot. The A85X chipset's SATA controller allows for eight SATA 6Gbps ports. The implementation found on the board has seven SATA 6Gbps connectors and one eSATA port on the back panel.

One factor that makes the GA-F2A85X-UP4 stand out from other A85X-based boards is Gigabyte's Ultra Durable 5 design. Following this philosophy, the board

employs special components like IR3550 PowIRstage ICs, 2x copper PCB, and high current ferrite core chokes rated up to 60A for reliability and stability. For its BIOS, Gigabyte uses its UEFI DualBIOS which has a 3D mode for a fully interactive and illustrative GUI, and Advanced mode for a more comprehensive environment for overclockers and power users. Gigabyte also adds a nifty feature called On/Off Charge technology for charging your Apple devices regardless if your PC is turned on, in standby, or even turned off.

The GA-F2A85X-UP4 is also bundled with LucidLogix Virtu MVP. With switchable graphics as its key offering, this utility enables users to dynamically switch between onboard graphics and a discrete graphics card depending on the system's workload. This capability is useful when one's into gaming or content creation.



Onboard switches are situated just above the board's DIMM slots.



Gigabyte has equipped the board with a pair of physical BIOS ROMs.



The Virtu MVP utility features Virtual Vsync and Hyperformance.



MEMORY
4x DDR3 Slots,
64GB Max

FORM FACTOR
305 x 244mm,
ATX

AUDIO
Realtek ALC892

PRICE
Php 6,430

NETWORKING
Realtek
Gigabit LAN