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Review: Gigabyte P2742G

by **Parm Mann** on 15 March 2013, 12:30

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1 - Introduction

Introduction

Gigabyte might have jumped on the **Ultrabook bandwagon** but the Taiwanese outfit's bread and butter remains [high-performance](#) components aimed at the ever-present gaming crowd.

And though the industry as a whole appears to be moving toward thinner, lighter and smaller computing solutions, there are plenty of consumers who're unwilling to sacrifice overall performance for the sake of mobility. The challenge for manufacturers such as Gigabyte is to strike the right balance between power and portability, and going by specification alone, it's hitting many of the right notes with the new P2742G.



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The name doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but the system is making its way to UK retailers priced from £929 and for the fee Gigabyte's laptop isn't short on hardware capability. Some of the highlights include a third-generation, quad-core Intel Core i7 processor, dedicated Nvidia GeForce graphics, 8GB of memory, at least 750GB of storage, Blu-ray optics and a 17.3in display. The P2742G has some pedigree, there's no doubt about that.

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Design

Piling powerful components into a portable machine is no longer problematic - modern-day processors are smaller and more [efficient](#)  than ever before - but marrying gamer-grade performance with sleek aesthetics remains a hurdle that various manufacturers continue to trip over.

Ensuring that it doesn't fall foul of going overboard, Gigabyte keeps the P2742G simple by employing a slightly modified Clevo W370ET chassis. The end result is a 3.2kg, all-black machine that's pleasantly subtle - for a 17.3in machine, at least. Gigabyte's aesthetic approach is more stealth fighter than race car, and while the P2742G is never going to fare well at most beauty contests - it's simply too chubby at 49mm at its thickest point - it's also highly unlikely to offend.



The less-gaudy approach is certainly appreciated, yet chassis build quality leaves something to be desired. Construction is mostly plastic, and as a consequence the P2742G doesn't feel like a near-£1,000 machine. There's a lot of flex in the display cover and the lack of rigidity is felt throughout - the palm rest has too much give for our liking, and the keyboard tray will bow with the smallest amount of pressure.

This isn't the sturdiest chassis we've ever come across, however the shortcomings in overall refinement are, for the most part, obscured by underlying speed.

Specification

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Let's be honest, [style](#) and build quality aren't the primary reasons for considering the P2742G. Anyone in the market for a laptop such as this will be enticed by the amount of performance-per-pound.



Unsurprisingly, this is the area in which Gigabyte is at its strongest. At the time of writing, two P2742G models are heading to UK retailers - the CF1 and CF2, priced at £929 and £1,059, respectively - and both are suitably well-equipped.

At the heart of the machine is a third-generation Intel Core i7-3630QM processor that runs at speeds of up to 3.4GHz, and in addition to the chip's integrated HD 4000 graphics, Gigabyte has added an Nvidia GeForce GTX 660M discrete GPU that provides extra graphics [horsepower](#) as and when required.

The CPU and GPU components are solid for a gaming laptop at this price point, and Gigabyte offers plenty of trimmings. A single stick of 8GB DDR3 memory is included as standard (the chassis itself offers three DIMM slots, allowing the user to upgrade to a potential 24GB), though it makes little sense why Gigabyte hasn't opted for two 4GB sticks for dual-channel operation. A Blu-ray combo drive is on hand for high-definition optical duties, and a high-capacity eight-cell battery should keep it all going for a reasonable amount of time.

Gigabyte P2742G-CF2 specification	
Processor	Intel Core i7-3630QM (up to 3.40GHz, 6MB cache, quad-core, 45W)
Memory	8GB DDR3 1,600MHz
Integrated Graphics	Intel HD 4000
Discrete Graphics	Nvidia GeForce GTX 660M 2GB
Display	17.3in - 1,920x1,080
Battery	Eight-cell, 76.96 Whr
Dimensions	413mm x 278mm x 18-49mm
Weight	3,200g
Wireless	Realtek RTL8723AE (802.11n)
Storage	128GB Lite-On LAT-128M3S SSD 1TB Toshiba MQ01ABD100 HDD
Optical Drive	Blu-Ray DVD Combo Drive
Operating System	Microsoft Windows 8

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Putting all of the hardware to good use is a 17.3in matte display that offers a full-HD, 1,920x1,080 resolution. There's no touch capability, despite Windows 8 being the default operating system of choice, but all the basics are here; including a two-megapixel webcam, stereo speakers, [Bluetooth](#) and Wi-Fi connectivity.

The port selection is well-stocked, too. The laptop's left edge provides a Kensington lock slot, a single USB 2.0 slot, three audio jacks and a tray-loading optical drive. On the right side you'll find a card reader, three USB 3.0 ports (one of which doubles as eSATA), HDMI output and Gigabit Ethernet. Around back, there's a VGA output and a connector for the bundled power brick.





Gigabyte's specification is well-thought-out, and the Clevo chassis' dual storage bays are used as a means of differentiating the two available models. The base P2742G-CF1, priced at £929, comes equipped with a single 750GB hybrid hard drive that uses a built-in 8GB solid-state cache. For users who prefer the response of a dedicated solid-state drive, the £1,059 P2742G-CF2 (pictured) includes a 128GB Lite-On SSD as the system disk as well as a 1TB Toshiba hard drive as a secondary storage device.

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