apc HOT PRODUCT

GAMING LAPTOP

$2,199 | WWW.GIGABYTE.COM.AU

Gigabyte P57

It's what's on the inside that counts.

LABS   BENCHMARK RESULTS

General performance

PCMARK 8	HOME (ACCELERATED)
GIGABYTE P57	3818
MSI GS40	3515

0   1000   2000   3000   4000   5000

Gaming performance

3DMARK	CLOUD GATE - OVERALL SCORE
GIGABYTE P57	21,033
MSI GS40	19,877

0   4000   8000   12,000   16,000   20,000

METRO LAST LIGHT	1080P, VERY HIGH (AVG FPS)
GIGABYTE P57	55
MSI GS40	54

0   20   40   60   80   100

TOMB RAIDER	1080P, ULTRA (AVG FPS)
GIGABYTE P57	89
MSI GS40	86

0   20   40   60   80   100

Battery life

PCMARK 8	HOME BATTERY (ACCELERATED)
GIGABYTE P57	2:58hr
MSI GS40	2:48hr

0   1   2   3   4   5

Though it might not always be obvious, there's a distinct difference between subtlety and flat out boringness, and if we were to be frank about the exterior design of Gigabyte's gargantuan new 17-inch P57 gaming laptop, it definitely sits in the 'drab' camp.

True, it has speed stripes but not only are they limited to a millimetre-thin strip on the edges, they're also a burnt-orange colour that is so faded it actually looks brown. As you would expect from a gaming laptop, the WSAD keys are highlighted in the keyboard layout, but instead of using a blood red backlight or palpably different key materials to illuminate this gaming focal point, there's just a drab set of uniform white squares around them — distinct enough to be discernable, but about as enticing as a touch typing lesson.

Despite the P57 having a full keyboard with a number pad, it's slotted right up next to the regular keyboard, making the Enter, Backspace and directional arrow keys a little harder to find than we're used to. That said, the backlit, anti-ghosting, chicklet keys and the smooth trackpad feel great and are easy to use.

If you strip it back to hardware and performance, though, the P57 is very competitively priced, with a spec sheet that can take on higher-priced systems, such as MSI's 14-inch GS40 (see *APC 425*, page 49). In fact, the P57's Intel Core i7-6700HQ CPU, 16GB of DDR4-RAM and Nvidia GeForce GTX 970M GPU are the same core components that make up that GS40. Using this almost identical array of hardware, the P57 reliably outperformed the GS40 by a small margin in general work and home tasks, and even achieved fractionally better gaming performance on most of the titles we tested — something we'd put down to having a bit more space for integrated cooling.

There are a few glaring differences between these two gaming laptops, though. Firstly and most obviously, the P57 has that 17-inch display, notably bigger than the GS40's 14-inch screen. And though both these laptops have 1TB hard drives and additional solid state drives for faster critical storage, the P57 has a 256GB SSD, double the GS40's 128GB SSD capacity. While MSI chose to go for a bolder design with its impressively thin GS40 chassis, Gigabyte has opted for a bland but sturdy black case in the P57. That's much less tantalising to write about, but the P57 allows the fans to be integrated in a way that provides better cooling, while also making around half the noise. It'll probably last a lot longer than the more scantily-clad GS40, too.

Battery life is good here, netting close to three hours in our notoriously hard battery test, meaning you should get close to a working day's lifespan with more sedate use. There's also an optical drive that can be swapped for an additional hard drive bay, HDMI 2.0, USB 3.0 and 3.1, an SD card slot, Gigabit Ethernet, a mini-DisplayPort socket and VGA output connections.

Since the P57 not only has a bigger screen, a larger SSD, has better performance and is $200 cheaper than the GS40, it's hard not to get worked up about how good this is for an entry-level gaming laptop. Its superior performance doesn't change the fact that it looks like the side of a bus, but it does make you feel a bit shallow for caring about that.
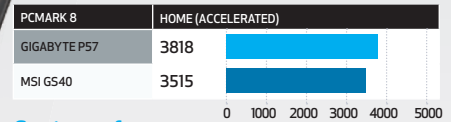■ **Joel Burgess**

Verdict

Features	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

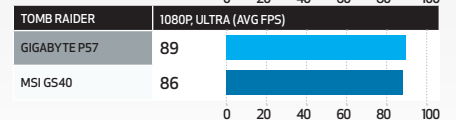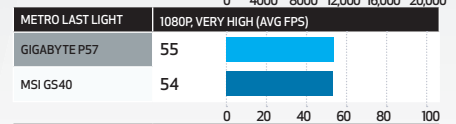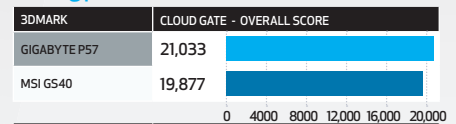**This ugly duckling glides when it comes to gaming performance — just keep your eyes on the screen.**

★★★★½