

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2927/samsung-p520-armani-mobile-phone>

Samsung P520 Armani mobile phone

Is this all style over substance?

by James Osterberg Jr published on 14 February 2008

Italian fashion heavyweight Giorgio Armani is the latest to join an ever growing list of designer and boutique labels getting in on some mobile phone action. So far, Prada, Dolce & Gabbana, Levi's, Ted Baker, Mandarin Duck, Elle and Cath Kidston have all launched ritzy handsets to woo the fickle fashion crowd. Throw in automobile outfits Porsche and Hummer and every Tom, Dick and Harriet is seemingly at it.

Like Giorgio's standing in the fashion world, the finger touch Samsung P520 Armani handset scales the posh end of the mobile phone spectrum. It's incredibly well put together, with a premium stainless steel feel and a rather sophisticated minimalist design.

But unlike its fiercest touch phone rivals, the LG Prada and Viewty, the Armani is amazingly bijou and slimline, measuring a mere 10.5mm thick and giving it an edge in the slinky stakes.

This slender and card-sized frame could throw up all kinds of problems on the touch navigation front but the 2.6-inch QVGA-quality screen surprisingly accommodates your pinkies, no problem.

The Armani phone is officially Samsung's second touch phone and it borrows the Croix (it's French for Cross) user-interface from the F700 handset. Although, not in the same league as the iPhone, the F700's still ranks as one of the better touch -arrangements doing the rounds.

However, on the Armani, the Croix UI isn't so receptive to your finger touches. Your taps are still greeted by a vibrating pulse but response can be fitful and sometimes sluggish to react. Similarly, when scrolling through web pages and menus, the UI doesn't always pick-up your touch and stroke movement.

But the Armani phone isn't 100% touch, with two



...cont.

call keys sitting under the display while a side loaded hold switch is ready to disable the screen and stop any unintentional brushes or prods while inside your clutch bag or the pocket of your skinny jeans.

As we've come to expect from nearly every fashion phone, the Armani is a mixed bag of feature compromises and neat flourishes. For starters, there's no 3G or Wi-Fi; EDGE is the order of the day, so web browsing is disappointingly on the back foot from the off.

Samsung makes up for this boo-boo with a capable 3-megapixel camera. Admittedly there's no auto-focus or flash but it nevertheless takes solid snaps with strong colour reproduction. Video capture is also quite slick, shooting in two resolutions: 320 x 240 pixels at 30fps and 352 x 288 pixels at 15fps.

The Armani's most heinous crime is its tortoise slow memory card processing skills. When it comes to playing music tracks loaded on the hotswappable microSD card, it splutters into life, while skipping tracks takes an absolute age to hit home.

It's a shame because the music player is one of the Armani phone's highlights, with its intuitive menu arrangement similar to most good music phones out there. A four-band equaliser is on hand to ramp up the sound while it also supports stereo Bluetooth, should you dabble with wireless headphones or speakers.

VERDICT

Fashion phones are all about style and the Armani phone has that in spades.

Whip this out at a fashion-week after-show party and you'll turn the fashionista's heads 360-degrees, right off their shoulders.

But look beyond its dashing design and the Armani phone's cool cachet starts to wane.

At a glance

What is it?

Ultra stylish touch fashion-label phone

Good

Ultra-stylish, slimline and compact, well made handset

Bad

Erratic touch sensitivity, slow memory card processing and no 3G or Wi-Fi

Verdict

One of the slinkiest looking handsets on the fashion phone catwalk but an inconsistent touch UI and feature performance trips it up

Price price dependant on contract

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/2927/samsung-p520-armani-mobile-phone>

...cont.

This is another touch phone to fall woefully short of the iPhone's awesome touch UI dynamics while its feature set is a hotchpotch of the good and the bad.

Worse still, Samsung has just announced that you can get the same phone with 5 megapixels instead of 3 without the Armani branding.

That said, if you're a vacuous style-hound who cares little for such feature and usability issues, then the Armani phone should be top of the shopping list.