

Toshiba Satellite A300-177 notebook

Does the gloss take the shine off the price?

by Stephen Patrick published on 26 May 2008

When it comes to stylish laptops, Toshiba isn't at the top of the list. However, it is currently re-addressing that idea by overhauling many of its consumer notebooks with a far more appealing touch.

The Satellite A300 takes the current rounded look of the Satellite range and gives it a high-gloss finish. This looks great and certainly makes it look more appealing. However, the finish does soon attract smears and fingerprints and we found ourselves constantly having to wipe it clean.

It's the same with the keyboard, which has the same style of finish. The keys are of a good size and it is comfortable to use, but we'd have preferred a matt finish. There is even a reassuring click as you type, so you know you've struck the key correctly.

The screen is a typical 15.4-inch Super-TFT screen that is great for movies as well as surfing the web or simply getting that report or homework finished. As is common at the budget end of the market, the graphics are integrated, so you won't be able to play games but it's more than quick enough for daily tasks.

Weighing 2.9kg, this is a standard sized machine that offers a degree of portability. We managed to run it for just over 3 hours from a single charge, which is average for this class of machine.

The A300 is powered by an Intel 1.83GHz Core 2 Duo T5550 processor and is backed by 2048MB of memory. Rounded out with a 200GB hard drive, we found the base specification more than reasonable for the asking price. This chip isn't the fastest Intel release and we found the system would slow when pushed, but for every day tasks there is plenty of power to be had.



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Shipping with Windows Vista Home Edition, we found it loaded quickly and performed reasonably well. If you only want to watch a movie or listen to music, you can drop into Toshiba's own EasyMedia software, which is similar to Media Centre.

When it comes to extras, you won't find anything out of the ordinary. Wireless LAN comes in the form of 802.11g, while the Ethernet is the faster Gigabit standard. However, external monitor connections are rather basic, being a VGA-out port instead of supporting digital connections, such as HDMI or DVI-out. The four USB ports are scattered around the sides of the case and the optical drive is a DVD rewriter.

VERDICT

The Toshiba Satellite A300-177 is an attractive notebook and on that level, Toshiba has succeeded. However, we do feel the high-gloss finish is a little too much to live with every day. If you can overcome the finish, this is a good all-round machine that offers genuine value for money.

At a glance

What is it?

Budget notebook

Good

Looks good, great price, good performance

Bad

Attracts fingerprints

Verdict

A great machine for the price but the high-gloss finish, while looking great, will soon annoy the average user

Price £499

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10