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Sony VAIO VGN-SR19VN notebook

Does Sony's new portable impress?

by Stephen Patrick published on 1 September 2008

When you think of fully-featured ultraportable notebooks, the first company that comes to mind is Sony. After all, it produces more small and portable machines than just about any other company.

This latest VAIO weighs in at 1.9kg and is aimed at the user who needs a lightweight machine that can be used as their sole computer. The reality lives up to the aims as we found this a highly comfortable notebook to use.

The design will raise mixed opinions as the lid and base are made from magnesium-alloy, while the rest of the body is made from plastic. The body is finished in silver and the keys, which individually protrude from the body, are finished in black. The hinges are built into the end of the casing and give it a rounded look. We found it worked well but was a rather awkward looking design.

Considering this is such a lightweight notebook, Sony hasn't scrimped on the performance. Powered by the Intel Core 2 Duo P8400, this 2.2GHz chip is part of Intel's Centrino 2 technology, so comes with a faster Front Side Bus of 1066MHz and better chipset than previous versions. Supported by 4096MB of memory, you'll find that Windows Vista Business Edition loads and runs smoothly. The base specification is rounded out by a high-performance 200GB hard drive.

We found this a powerful and impressive notebook to use that never once showed signs of lagging, even when running multiple applications. Using it out and about also proved effective, making it a great machine for busy business professionals.

It's not only the base specification that gets an overhaul, as Sony has opted to fit the ATI Mobility



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Radeon HD 3470 graphics chip. This delivers great performance in a compact space. You won't be able to play games but you can edit video and run mainstream tasks, as it offers twice the usability you'll find from an integrated solution.

The screen is a 13.3-inch LED panel that comes with Sony's X-Black technology. We found images looked pin sharp and with a native resolution of 1280 x 600 pixels images look crisp. We found our test DVD looked simply flawless on this screen and with a battery life of well over 4 hours, you can work on the train and then sit back and watch a movie in peace.

All of this technology doesn't come cheap but at £1150, the SR19 delivers a good deal of performance. Sadly, this doesn't carry on to the connections offered. For such a new design we would have expected a little more in the way of digital connections. However, instead of HDMI or eSATA ports, we're limited to using the VGA-out port for connecting to analogue devices. What's worse, there are only two USB ports and even they are grouped together, making it impossible to add multiple peripherals. There is a biometric fingerprint reader for the more security conscious though.

VERDICT

For all its lack of connections, the Sony VAIO VGN-SR19VN is an impressive business notebook. It takes the latest Centrino 2 technology and uses it to great effect. If you're looking for a stylish and powerful business tool, this makes more than just a statement.

At a glance

What is it?

Ultraportable notebook

Good

Powerful, lightweight design, good battery life

Bad

Pricey, awkward design

Verdict

The look and finish of this notebook will split opinion but there is no denying this is a powerful ultraportable

Price £1150

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10