

Samsung P500 notebook

15.4-inches of budget Samsung loveliness?

by Stephen Patrick published on 8 September 2008

Samsung is aggressively attacking all sectors of the notebook market at present but none quite as aggressively as the entry-level end of the market.

The P500 takes the standard Samsung approach of a simple design finished in matt black plastic with little or no ornamentation. There is a power button and internet launcher above the keyboard but you won't find anything else. The build quality is good and it feels solid in the hand. There is plenty of padding behind the lid, so you won't find it twisting when packed away in your bag. Overall, for the price it feels like good value for money.

The screen is a standard 15.4-inch widescreen TFT panel. It doesn't have a glossy Super-TFT finish, so images don't look as bright or true to life as you'd expect. However, it does mean that fewer reflections are cast when using it outside or under bright house lights. In use, we found it bright enough for most occasions and it has an even tone across it, which suggests it's a quality display.

Sadly, this sense of quality isn't carried through to the keyboard, as it feels less robust. The keyboard is large and fills most of the main body of the notebook. Keys are equally of a good size but we found they tended to rattle as we typed. That said, they were responsive and quite comfortable to use.

Weighing 2.7kg, this is a reasonably portable machine but is intentionally not designed to be carried around on a regular basis. This can be seen in the rather basic battery life of just 2 hours, which is poor by most modern standards.

When it comes to performance, you'll find a rather basic amount of power under the hood. Powered by an Intel 1.86GHz Celeron 540 processor and just 1024MB of memory, we found this notebook



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loaded Windows XP quickly but when it came to running applications it was sluggish and showed signs of lagging.

If you only want it to run email and for browsing the Internet, a simple memory upgrade will be sufficient. However, if you want to run a variety of applications, this notebook will struggle. The 120GB hard drive is also rather minimal by current standards.

Extras are kept to a rather basic minimum. There is a DVD rewriter built-in and you'll also find an ExpressCard slot, VGA-out port and three USB ports. Ethernet and Wi-Fi are built-in as standard but they comprise nothing out of the ordinary.

VERDICT

The Samsung P500 is a well-built machine that offers decent if not outstanding value for money. The build quality is mixed, with a solid design but the keyboard does tend to let the overall effect down.

However, it's not the most powerful and the rather basic specification means that you won't be able to do as many things as you'd possibly like. We'd suggest raising your budget and opting for a faster machine.

At a glance

What is it?

Budget notebook

Good

Great price, decent battery life

Bad

Basic spec, keyboard rattles

Verdict

A reasonable notebook for the price but it's not the most powerful machine on the market

Price £450

Our score

6/10

Your score

?/10