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## Sony VAIO VGN-FW11ZU notebook

High-end notebook worth the high price?

by Stephen Patrick published on 22 September 2008

Sony is better known for its ultraportable notebooks but its multimedia machines are also growing in popularity. The VAIO VGN-FW11ZU has been designed to take advantage of the latest in high-def entertainment, so you'll find a widescreen display and a host of multimedia software pre-loaded.

The look follows Sony's new design ethic, with the silver coloured plastic only being offset by the black of the keyboard. The keys protrude individually through the plastic of the body. This allows for more space between keys but also makes them far more comfortable to use.

The trend for notebooks is increasingly to move to 16:9 aspect ratio screens, so you can watch movies in their native format. Fitted with such a panel, images look great on the 16.4-inch display. It has a native resolution of 1600 x 900, which is fine for HD Ready quality but doesn't qualify for Full HD.

The quality of this screen is amazing. It uses Sony X-black technology, so is perfect for movies but tends to look less impressive when you use it outside. ATI's Mobility Radeon HD 3650 handles graphics, which is great for mainstream multimedia but isn't so good for games.

Considering the size of the screen we were surprised to find the VAIO only weighs 3kg. Sure, this is no ultraportable machine but it does mean you'll be able to carry it around with relative ease.

As you would expect from Sony, a Blu-ray drive is fitted as standard. Unlike most vendors, Sony Blu-ray drives can write to disc as well as just read from them, so you'll be able to back up to 50GB of data to disc.



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It's not just watching and using media this notebook has been designed for, as it's also powerful enough to create it to. At this price you can expect the latest in components, so you'll find Intel's latest Core 2 Duo processor in place, which runs at 2.53GHz. With a 1066MHz Front Side Bus and supported by 4096MB of similarly specified memory, this is a fast and reliable machine. The 300GB hard drive offers plenty of space for storing media files and programs.

With this much power on offer we weren't expecting too much from the battery life of this system but we managed to get 3 hours, on average. This isn't great but it'll allow you to use the VAIO around the house without too many limitations.

When it comes to extras, you won't find this machine wanting. Gigabit Ethernet and Intel's latest 802.11n wireless LAN adapter offers the best in connectivity. There are also three USB ports, as well as FireWire, and the ExpressCard slot and HDMI port allow you to quickly add external digital devices.

## VERDICT

Overall, we were impressed with what this machine has to offer. The Sony VAIO VGN-FW11ZU is a neat design and performance is simply stunning. If you're looking for a notebook for creating multimedia as well as just watching it, this is the one.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

Multimedia notebook

### Good

Powerful, 16:9 screen

### Bad

Pricey, poor battery life

### Verdict

A great looking and powerful machine but it's a little on the pricey side

**Price** £1299

**Our score**

**8/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**