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Acer Aspire 5735-583G16Mn notebook

Looking for a 16:9 budget machine?

by Stephen Patrick published on 12 January 2009

Towards the end of 2008 we saw several high-end multimedia laptops featuring ultra-wide 16:9 aspect ratio displays. Love 'em or loath 'em, they're here to stay, and the Acer Aspire 5735 is proof of this.

It's the first budget model we've seen with a 16:9 screen, and although some users will lament the loss of vertical pixels, there's actually a lot to like about it. The Acer's 15.6-inch display has a resolution of 1366 x 768 pixels, and it looks a lot sharper than an average 15.4-inch 1280 x 800 pixel panel. It's also great for watching films, with the usual letterbox effect minimised.

We were also impressed by the colour reproduction on the 5735, with vivid images and great contrast. At this price point, it's one of the best screens we've seen to date. As with most consumer laptops, it does feature a Super-TFT coating though, so try before you buy if you're seeking a machine for use on the road, as it does suffer with reflections in direct sunlight.

In addition to looking sharper, the screen also has a positive effect when it comes to Acer's interface. At 3kg, the chassis is similar in weight and portability to a regular 15.4-inch machine, but you'll find there's a lot more space for the keyboard and other controls.

The keys are large and responsive, and there's enough space for a full numeric pad without any compromises in size - the first time we've seen this on a semi-portable laptop. A slight flex to the board when typing highlights the Acer's budget price tag, but it doesn't take anything away from the comfort on offer.

The touchpad offers excellent precision, with a friction-free surface and support for gesture control. It's similar in practice to Asus' Eee PC, allowing you to pinch your fingers to zoom. The



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Acer also enables you to twirl your finger to scroll, something that we found completely pointless as there's a scroll bar several millimetres to the right.

Unsurprisingly for a budget system, you'll find an integrated graphics card in place. It's Intel's mainstream GMA 4500M chip, offering enough performance for everyday tasks. You'll have to spend more money if you want to play 3D games though. Despite being more power efficient than a dedicated GPU, a battery life of around 3.5 hours is no better than average.

Office performance is surprisingly good, and the inclusion of a 2GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor is a welcome and unusual addition on a sub-£400 laptop. With 3072MB of memory also on board, we were able to multi-task with relative ease, and the system ran far more smoothly than the Intel Celeron or Pentium Dual-Core equipped machines often found at this price point.

Storage space is adequate, at 160GB, although those with large media collections may need to upgrade the hard drive. 802.11n Wi-Fi is built-in - another nice touch for a bargain-basement laptop, as is Gigabit Ethernet. The 5735's biggest problem is a lack of ports - you'll find three USB ports but they're all on the same side of the chassis, and too close together to use several bulky peripherals at the same time. You will find a 5-in-1 memory card reader and a dual-layer DVD rewriter, however.

VERDICT

At this price, it's incredibly difficult to fault the 5735. The chassis doesn't feel like it's built to a low cost, and nor is it a design that's tumbled in price due to age. It just happens to be great value for money.

The user interface is excellent, although the keyboard could be a little sturdier. Performance is also better than average, and this machine could easily compete with laptops costing £100 more. If

At a glance

What is it?

Budget laptop with a 16:9 aspect ratio display

Good

Excellent screen, great specification and comfort for the money

Bad

Lack of ports, flexible keyboard

Verdict

The first 16:9 widescreen laptop we've seen under £600, and offering truly fantastic value for money

Price £391.48

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

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you're in the market for a budget laptop, there are few that can compete with this widescreen wonder.