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Acer Aspire 6930G-583G notebook

Premium features without the premium price?

by Stephen Patrick published on 30 March 2009

We were particularly impressed with Acer's high-end Aspire 6920G when we tested it last year, but there's no getting away from the fact it was a pricey laptop. The range has since been replaced by the 6930 and 6935, which proves to be an update rather than a comprehensive overhaul. You'll still find the same Gemstone Blue styling and an HD Blu-ray optical drive, but you'll now be able to purchase one at an affordable price.

Our review sample - an Aspire 6930G-583G - comes in at just £500. As with other more expensive models, the 16-inch screen features a 16:9 aspect ratio. Some users will love it because it'll natively play back movies, often without the intrusive letterbox style black bars at the top and bottom, while others will hate it for the relatively low vertical pixel count.

As a budget model, the 6930G-583G has a resolution of 1366 x 768 pixels. While it lacks the sharpness of the high-end models, it's fine for everyday use. You won't be able to take full advantage of high-definition Blu-ray movies on the move, but there's an HDMI-out port to hook-up an external HDTV.

We found watching films on this machine a pleasure, aided by bright backlighting, efficient sound reproduction and a host of touch-sensitive media hotkeys below the display. Acer is keen to highlight its Dolby Home Theater integrated surround sound technology as a key selling point of this machine; sound quality is good, but with a built-in subwoofer we were expecting it to be a little more atmospheric.

The 6930G is similarly styled to the machine it replaces, with a glossy dark blue lid, and hard wearing grey plastics inside. It's a cohesive and reasonably stylish design, but it's a lot bulkier than many of its rivals, weighing in at 3.2kg. You'll



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find details such as the power jack and a Kensington lock hidden neatly in the edges of the cylindrical hinge. Unlike more expensive models in the range, the Aspire 6930G-583G omits Acer's fussy-looking Cinedash control panel - a circular arrangement of touch sensitive media keys. Instead, you'll find neater media buttons placed above the keyboard.

The keyboard offers excellent comfort, with soft -touch plastics that are tactile and hard wearing. The board is fixed around the edges, however, and flexes considerably in the centre, letting down quality. That said, it's still a quiet and responsive board to type on, and better than many we've seen at this price. The 16-inch chassis allows plenty of space for large keys, and there's also a full-sized numeric keypad on the right.

The spacious and responsive touchpad aids usability, along with big touchpad buttons. There's a fingerprint scanner between the buttons, letting different family members log on at the swipe of a finger.

Along with an impressive feature list, the components inside this machine are also more than a match for more expensive laptops, with a 2GHz Intel Core 2 Duo T5800 processor and 3072MB of memory. Performance proved reasonable, with enough power to multi-task without any problems. The battery life of under 2hrs and 30mins is disappointing however, even at this price.

The biggest difference between the Aspire 6930G-583G and more expensive models in the range, aside from the lower-res screen, is the Nvidia GeForce 9300M GS graphics card. It's not as powerful as the GeForce 9600M GT sported by some of its siblings, but it's still fine for all but the most intensive gaming. We were able to run older games with ease, and it also coped fine when running Adobe's CS4.

The integrated Blu-ray drive is read-only, so you

At a glance

What is it?

Entry-level Blu-ray laptop

Good

Excellent value for money, great usability, lots of features

Bad

Bulky, poor battery life

Verdict

An incredible amount of multimedia laptop for the money, and one of the cheapest Blu-ray laptops on the market

Price £500

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10

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won't be able to back-up data to blank Blu-ray discs. You'll still be able to burn regular DVDs and CDs, however. Other features include a 250GB hard drive, 802.11n Wi-Fi and Gigabit Ethernet. Bluetooth lets you transfer files wirelessly, and there are four USB ports dotted around the chassis.

VERDICT

The most surprising aspect of this machine is just how much it offers for the money. We were already impressed with the high-end models, but now it's also possible for those on a budget to get an incredibly well-specified multimedia centre. Mobility still remains a low point, with a very poor battery life and bulky chassis, but it's well worth a look if you're after an affordable Blu-ray laptop.