

## Alienware Sentia

by Stephen Patrick published on 11 October 2004

If you have any interest whatsoever in computer games, at one time or another you will have come across Alienware. They specialise in producing high-end machines with a distinctive look for the gaming enthusiast. Therefore, it comes as something of a surprise to find that the company is aiming the Alienware Sentia at the mobile professional who is looking for something unique from their laptop. Yes, the visual appeal of the Alienware brand is in full-effect; from the finned grills and alien decal, which lights up, on the lid of the laptop, to the unique desktop interface - referred to as the AlienGUI. Weighing in at 1.8kg, this is a slim and light laptop designed for life on the road. The Alienware lid helps protect the notebook in transit. The 12.1-inch TFT panel takes advantage of a widescreen format, with a native resolution of 1280 x 800 pixels. Being a widescreen panel, you won't have to put up with black stripes above and below the screen when watching DVDs. However, what makes this screen really stand out is the use of an enhanced panel similar to that of Sony's X-black technology. At first appearance it looks like glass but the lacquer on the screen means that the screen offers better contrast - perfect for watching movies or playing games. An instant-on button means that you can watch DVDs or listen to music without the need to boot into Windows. This is an increasingly popular feature and only adds to the notebook's usability. Sadly, one thing to stress with the Sentia is the lack of 3D acceleration. While Alienware has built a reputation for gaming-specific systems, the Sentia comes with integrated graphics, which offers 3D performance at a minimum system level. So, if the Sentia isn't designed with the gamer in mind, who will make the most of it? We'd like to say the businessman, but we found that the quality of the keyboard and the touchpad were actually below par. While this notebook looks the part, there are certainly more user friendly machines out there. In terms of specification, the Sentia offers outstanding performance from its 1.8GHz



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Pentium M 745 processor and 512MB of memory and 60GB hard drive. This is cutting-edge by any means but in such a small form factor its more than impressive and is certainly quick enough for most tasks. As you would expect from a portable machine, battery life is more than acceptable - we found that we could get three hours from the Sentia with ease. This means that watching that DVD on the train, or if you need to, getting that important document finished, can be achieved anywhere. If you need to hook up to any Wi-Fi hotspots, Alienware even throw in the faster 802,11g adapter as standard.

## VERDICT

This isn't a cheap laptop, but few things in life often are. If you need to make the right impression, then the Alienware Sentia will certainly make it. We were impressed with its battery life and processing power but less so by how it actually handled. Overall, we were satisfied but not impressed by the Alienware Sentia.

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## At a glance

### What is it?

The gaming specialist introduces its first ultraportable notebook

### Good

The unique look makes for the ultimate fashion statement

### Bad

Let down by a poor keyboard and hefty price tag

### Verdict

Satisfying but not impressive

**Price** £1545

**Our score**

**6/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**