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Review: Venom Blackbook 15x

by [John Gillooly](#) | Thursday 6 June 2013 | [Comment Now](#)

Rating

Overall:

★★★★★

One of the best 15in OEM builds we've seen.

Performance:

★★★★★

Features & Design:

★★★★★

Value for Money:

★★★★★

Price

\$3899 AUD

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Specs

Core i7-3630QM • 32GB RAM • 4GB GeForce GTX 680M • 256GB SSD • 480GB SSD • 1920 x 1080 screen • Blu-ray writer

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The 15in version of one of our favourite 17in model shows us the right way to make an OEM laptop.

We first encountered the Venom brand a couple of months ago when we looked at the company's 17in gaming laptop, the Blackbook 17. We were so impressed by it that we have gotten the absolute top of the range 15in model in to test.

The Blackbook 15x isn't for the faint of heart, frail of build or the light of wallet, but what a monster it is. With an Intel Core i7 3630QM, 32GB of Corsair Vengeance DDR3, 4GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 680 GPU and two SSDs, a 256GB Crucial mSATA boot disc and an Intel 520 series 480GB storage drive, it packs a seriously high-end punch. But anyone can pack such monstrously powerful hardware into any old chassis; where the Blackbook 15x really comes into its own is what Venom has managed to build with this combination of hardware.

ut this chassis is configured to its highest specification, with a gorgeous 15.6in 1920x1080 LCD screen. And what a beautiful screen it is, with excellent colour reproduction and viewing angles. We initially thought it to be an IPS model until we were informed that it was a standard TN panel.

Add to this a Blu-ray writer, Onkyo audio system, backlit keyboard with a soft touch surround and responsive touchpad and you have one heck of a machine. There is also a fantastic array of ports to be found, with DVI, eSATA, FireWire, HDMI, Optical Audio, 3.5mm headphone and microphone jacks, four USB 2 and 3 USB 3 ports covering pretty much any eventuality, and rivalling the number of inputs and outputs seen on some desktop machines.

The result is something special, a true desktop replacement, a gaming and workstation machine that you wouldn't want to cart around for long due to its sheer heft. But as an object of tech lust it is perfect, delivering sumptuous gaming graphics and Blu-ray playback that sounds superb as well.

In our benchmark suite we saw it deliver a very respectable real world test score of 0.95, slightly behind what we would expect from a Core i7-2600K based desktop. Its gaming performance was similarly excellent, with the GeForce GTX 680 helping it to a very high detail Crysis score of 44fps. Even more importantly, on an intangible level the high colour gamut screen helps this to deliver some of the best gaming visuals that we have seen on a laptop.

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"Tahiti XXL" oh come on. Hawaii perhaps?

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All of this awesome does come with some downsides, however. The first is weight, with the laptop itself coming in at 3.26kg and the power brick adding a further 1kg. It also isn't cheap – the pricetag of \$3899 is one of the highest that we have encountered over the years, and while the high end nature of the components and chassis mean you are getting good value for money, the simple size of the pricetag will keep it out of the hands of mere mortals.

The final downside is, unsurprisingly, battery life. You'll want to never be too far from a power outlet, with the Blackbook 15x lasting a mere three hours and five minutes in our light use battery test and a mere two hours and six minutes under heavy usage.

There is very little to fault with the Venom Blackbook 15x. It isn't cheap, which will instantly dissuade many, but it is very much a case of you get what you paid for. There has clearly been a lot of love and attention to detail put into the design of the laptop and choice of componentry. Ultimately we still prefer our A-Listed 17in model, if only because we feel that if you are spending this much on a laptop you will appreciate the extra screen size, but if you are after a heavy-lifting 15in model then it is incredibly hard to go past this beast.

This Review appeared in the June, 2013 issue of PC & Tech Authority Magazine

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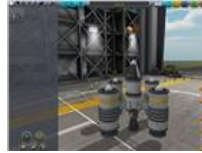
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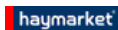
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