

Alienware netbook is out of this world

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Alienware M11x netbook

Some people are lusting after the sleek, stylish iPad. But the only portable gadget in my heart right now is the Alienware M11x netbook, a computer that's about as refined and subtle and awesome as a chain saw-juggling grizzly bear. The M11x is a gaming netbook.

That contradiction is resolved with surprising flair.

The machine looks like no other netbook you've ever seen.

The funky angles and explosive neon lighting oozing from every seam definitely exemplify Alienware's famous extraterrestrial styling, but this is more than just a coffee table display piece.

Under the hood is a stunningly powerful collection of hardware that

makes this laptop a hard-core gaming machine.

On my review unit (\$1,087), an Intel Core 2 Duo U7300 processor, 4 gigs of RAM, Nvidia GeForce GT 335M and Windows 7 Home Premium 64-bit were mated with a super-sharp 11.6-inch display at 1366x768 resolution.

In other words, this little netbook packs more heat than most desktops.

To test out the gaming credentials, I fired up the recently released (and fantastic) game Just Cause 2.

The explosive romp through the fictional banana republic Panau is a lush visual treat, and the M11x chewed it up and spit it out.

On the native 1366x768 resolution, with details turned up to "high" or "medium," the computer cranked out a more-than-respectable 32.5 frames per second.

Generally, anything under 25 frames is jittery and choppy.



The M11x did get pretty warm after a few minutes, so your lap is probably not the best perch.

The biggest missing feature on the M11x -- as with almost every netbook -- is a DVD drive.

While you can connect an external drive, lugging an extra component defeats the purpose of a netbook.

Fortunately, downloadable gaming is fairly advanced in the PC world, so probably the first application you'll run after booting up is the popular Steam game download service.

Still, hard-core gamers considering the M11x will need to do their homework on whether the software they want to use is convenient to install.

But any true gamer who spends even five minutes with this superb device will start mentally justifying the purchase.

Let the artistes and hipsters have their iPads.

For those who truly want a magical experience, the M11x might be the best netbook ever assembled.

ALIENWARE M11X

Pros: Distinctive visual style, horsepower to burn and a keyboard big enough for true touch-typing make the M11x the coolest little computer I've ever used.

Cons: As with almost every other [netbook](#), there's no DVD or CD drive, a big drawback for gamers with catalogs of disc-based games.

Bottom line: The M11x is the most impressive piece of portable firepower since the invention of the suitcase nuke. I want one of my own.

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