HP Elite Dragonfly review: Luxurious, professional, expensive

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There are more ultra-mobile professionals now than ever before, which is why OEMs are developing increasingly thin-and-light laptops that will appeal to those users. No one wants to add heft to their bag, regardless of whether they're going off on a 10-hour flight or a 10-minute commute to work, thus increasing the appeal of thin-and-light laptops. But the most mobile among us will only go as thin and light as our performance needs allow us to—if a laptop isn't powerful or efficient enough to help you get work done, its svelte characteristics won't make up for that.

Enter the HP Elite Dragonfly two-in-one laptop, which is HP's answer to this problem. It's an ultra-slim laptop with a MIL-spec-tested design that weighs just 2.18 pounds, and it has the power and security features of one of HP's Elite series laptops. HP is betting on the idea that professionals will choose the thinnest and lightest laptop possible that doesn't compromise the performance or battery life they need to get things done regardless of their location—and that they'll pay top dollar to get it. We spent a few days with the Elite Dragonfly convertible to see how well-designed it actually is

and to see if taking thin and light to the extreme hinders any necessities.

Look and feel

Specs at a glance: HP Elite Dragonfly two-in-one laptop			
As reviewed	**Lowest**	**Best**	
Screen	13.3-inch FHD (1920×1080) touchscreen	13.3-inch FHD (1920×1080) touchscreen	13.3-inch 4K (3840×2160) touchscreen
OS	Windows 10 Home	Windows 10 Home	Windows Pro 64
CPU	Core i7-8665U	Intel Core i5-8265U	Core i7-8665U w/ vPro
RAM	16GB	8GB	16GB
HDD	512GB PCIe SSD + 32GB Optane Memory	256GB PCIe SSD	512GB PCIe SSD + 32GB Optane Memory
GPU	Intel UHD Graphics 620		
Networking	Intel AX200 Wi-Fi 5 (2×2), Bluetooth 4.2		
Ports	2 x Thunderbolt 3, 1 x USB-A, 1 x HDMI, 1 x nano SIM, 1 x lock slot, 1 x 3.5mm headphone jack		
Size	11.98×7.78×0.63 inches (304×198×16mm)		

Weight	2.5 pounds (40 ounces)	2.18 pounds (34.0 ounces)	2.5 pounds (40 ounces)
Battery	56.2Wh battery	38Wh battery	56.2Wh battery
Warranty	1 year		
Extras	Fingerprint reader, IR camera, optional vPro, optional LTE, TPM 2.0, absolute persistence module, power-on authentication, HP DriveLock and Automatic DriveLock, HP Sure Click, HP Secure Erase, HP Sure Start, HP Sure Run, HP Sure Recovery, HP Sure Sense, HP BIOSphere		
Price	$2,169	$1,549 (available at this price point soon)	$2,369

HP Elite Dragonfly laptop

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Design and durability

Being part of the Elite family, the Elite Dragonfly laptop had to adhere to certain durability and performance standards that users are accustomed to from that line. We'll get to the performance chops in a bit, but from a design perspective, the Elite Dragonfly surprised me.

Typically, laptops that pride themselves on being thin and light above all else tend to feel only a bit more durable than a precious heirloom that your kids aren't allowed to touch. The Elite Dragonfly feels sturdier than most laptops that I've used that share the same size and weight class. Measuring 16mm thick and weighing between 2.18 and 2.5 pounds, it's an easy backpack companion, and I was happy to see that neither its chassis nor its lid flexed at all when put under pressure.

That may be due to the extra layers of magnesium used in the laptop's keyboard area, cover, and bottom portions that reinforce its design, along with other internal structures that keep it steady and durable. The Dragonfly passed 19 MIL-STD-810G tests, and HP placed particular emphasis on testing the machine for drops, shocks, and vibrations.

Many flagship laptops aren't MIL-spec tested, or they only pass a limited number of tests, but this type of testing is standard for HP's Elite line. While these are not "rugged" laptops by any means, adding this level of MIL-spec durability means that you can accidentally drop this or leave it in a precarious situation and it will most likely return to you unharmed.

The Elite Dragonfly gets its name from the "dragonfly blue" finish that coats its chassis. For now, the machine is only available in this color, which will inevitably make some users scowl. It's most similar to navy blue but with a pleasant brightness that subtly comes through whenever light hits it. Whether the blue finish speaks to you or not, it's a welcome change from the sea of silver, barrage of black, and plethora of pink consumer electronics that dominate the market now. The entire chassis is made from magnesium, but HP also integrated post-consumer recycled plastic (including some ocean-bound plastic material) into the speaker box. That's not something that users will be able to see with their eyes, but it's an effort on HP's part to be a bit more eco-friendly.

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