HP Victus 15 review: an $800 laptop that can game

I have been searching far and wide for a budget gaming laptop that I could recommend for shoppers looking in the sub-$800 range. I was hoping and praying that the HP Victus 15 — which has been one of Best Buy's most popular products this year — would be it.

My takeaway, having been gaming on the Victus ($799.99 for my Core i5/8GB/512GB/GTX 1650 model) for the past few days, is that it's not the slam dunk I hoped it would be. The low price is quite attractive (and will be even more so if you can find it on sale), but the dated GPU inside our test model is not delivering the frame rates that I'd hope to see from a modern gaming laptop. That doesn't mean that the Victus is a unilaterally bad purchase — just that, as is often the case with budget gaming laptops, you should go in with realistic expectations.

7 Verge Score

Victus 15

$ 599.99

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The Bad

- Comes with bloatware preinstalled
- Stiff touchpad
- Plasticky, fingerprint-prone build
- Dim screen

The Victus has an unobtrusive design. My review unit is almost entirely black with modest backlighting and a simple “V” on the lid (which, as you may notice in the photos, picked up a mess of fingerprints quickly). It’s more of a “could bring to the office” device than a “chaotic mess of RGB that will not leave the basement” device. At 5.06 pounds, it’s fairly portable (for a gaming laptop) but certainly not a lightweight device.

Ports include most of what you’ll probably need — two USB-A, one USB-C, one audio jack, one HDMI 2.1, one Ethernet, and one full-sized SD reader in addition to the charging port. There’s no Thunderbolt 4, which is worth noting (even though Thunderbolt 4 isn’t a requirement at this price point). My one note about the chassis is really the touchpad. Not only does it pick up fingerprints easily, but it has quite a stiff click.

Ports include most of what you’ll probably need

Of course, this is a gaming laptop, and the gaming performance is what matters. I would call my results in that area “acceptable” for the GTX 1650 inside. You can certainly game on this thing, but I don’t see the bang for your buck as exceptional here.

a:hover]:text-black [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black text-gray-13″>*It’s a decent device, but $100 more will get you much further.*

The HP Victus 15 is an $800 laptop that can game

Ultimately, the HP Victus 15 is an $800 laptop that can game. That fact alone is enough to recommend it to some degree (again, *especially* if you see it on sale).

But it is worth considering a few alternatives. For example, the Victus 15 with an RTX 3050 (which we’d expect to deliver a better experience on those AAA titles) MSRPs for $969 but is on sale for $697 as of this writing. Acer’s staple Nitro 5 with that RTX GPU is currently available for $899 (just $100 more than my test model), as is Dell’s G15 with an even more powerful RTX 3050 Ti. My point is that if you can pay just $100 more, can find a good discount, or are willing to buy used, there are all kinds of options available for close to this price that can really nail AAA games.

At the end of the day, this is a budget laptop with budget laptop frame rates — and if you’re in a position to do so, you can get much more gaming power for not too much more money.

Photography by Monica Chin / The Verge

a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin [&>a]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-highlight-franklin dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-white md:text-40 lg:-ml-100″>**HP Victus 15 Accessibility**

- The letter keys are 0.6 x 0.6 inches with 0.06 inches between them. All keys are backlit. Caps Lock, Power, F11/touchpad, and F5/microphone have indicator lights. The power button and volume keys are 0.6 x 0.2 inches. The keys are grey with white text and take a small amount of firm force force to depress.
- The speakers reached an average of 75 decibels in my testing.

- The lid can be opened with one hand. It can be tilted back to 140 degrees.
- The screen is 15.6 inches with a 1920 x 1080 resolution. It reached an 1190:1 contrast ratio in my testing. There is a touchscreen.
- The touchpad is 4.9 x 1.2 inches and takes firm, dedicated force to depress.
- Setup involves turning the device on and clicking through several menus.
- The Victus does not support fingerprint or facial logins.