LG takes the wraps off its “Velvet” smartphone, priced in Korea at $738



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- The LG Velvet, in many colors.
- A front, back, and side view.
- You get slim bezels, a front camera notch, and oddly shaped corners that don’t follow the display curve.
- The cameras aren’t in the typical camera-block configuration like on a Samsung or Apple phone.
- The bottom features a USB-C port and the endangered headphone jack.
- The phone supports Wacom Stylus pens.
- Here you can see the top, the minimal camera bump, and the curved side.

After lots of teasing, LG has officially announced its next "flagship" smartphone for 2020: the LG Velvet. The Velvet represents a major change for LG in that it's officially a replacement for the LG "G" line—this would have been the LG G9. This phone also is a bit more downmarket than other flagships—it has a Snapdragon 765G instead of the Snapdragon 865 in most high-end devices. This phone has leaked all over the place, but the big news today is a full spec sheet and an official price (in Korea at least): ₩899,800 or ~$738.

For specs, we have a 6.8-inch, 2460×1080 OLED display, 8GB of RAM, 128GB of UFS 2.1 storage, and a 4300mAh battery. For extras, there is nearly everything you could want: a MicroSD slot, NFC, wireless charging, a headphone jack, IP68 dust and water resistance, stereo speakers, and an in-screen fingerprint reader. For cameras, there is a front 16MP camera and three rear cameras: a 48MP main camera, an 8MP ultra-wide, and a 5MP depth camera.

One unusual extra is pen support—not a dockable, passive pen like on early Galaxy Notes but straight-up Wacom Stylus support. Pick from the many Wacom Stylus pen options and you'll have 4,096 levels of pressure and 60-degree tilt detection in supported apps. We're mostly picking though a Korean-language LG site for this post, so in-depth questions like "What Android apps support a Wacom pen?" are not things that can be answered at this time. I would guess the number is very small, but this "Nebo" app was given as the one example.

The display is curved along both edges, like a Samsung or OnePlus phone. There's really no point to this, as it leads to glare and distortion along the edges of the display, but OEMs keep doing it. The back is curved, too, and made from a delicate glass. The front camera lives in a display notch, while the rear cameras are all individual lenses embedded in the glass back. It's an uninspired design but mostly fine.

Snapdragon

The Snapdragon 765G is the most interesting part of the phone. We've yet to actually get our hands on a phone running Qualcomm's cheaper SoC, but it looks like a good option for someone who absolutely needs to buy a phone in 2020 and is looking for a lower-priced option. This is an eight-core, 7nm SoC with two Cortex A76 cores and six Cortex A55 cores. This is going to be a bit slower than the Snapdragon 865, which has four newer A77 cores and four A55 cores. It's not an across-the-board downgrade though. While the Snapdragon 865 has 5G and 4G connectivity on a separate, more power-hungry chip, the 765G is Qualcomm's first chip with an integrated 5G modem. The fastest form of 5G, mmWave, is optional on all of these 5G phones, so you always have to check for it. LG's site doesn't say anything about mmWave connectivity, so "5G" probably means sub-6GHz only.

LG's problem has always been OK-ish phones that don't stand out in any way and are slightly worse than the competition. And the question I have for any potential buyers is "Would you rather buy a OnePlus 8?" Both phones are about $700. In OnePlus' favor, you have a Snapdragon 865 instead of the 765G, faster UFS 3.0 storage, and a 90Hz display. In LG's corner, you have IP68 water resistance, a headphone jack, a MicroSD slot, and wireless charging. Potential toss-ups, depending on your personal preferences, are LG's pen support and the display sizes, which are 6.8 for the Velvet and 6.55 for the OnePlus 8.

There's no word yet on a US launch or pricing, but we imagine that will happen soon.

Listing image by LG

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