We tried to hold Acer’s giant new Nitro Blaze 11 handheld

The PC handheld space continues to grow, and the biggest of all is Acer’s new Nitro Blaze 11. As soon as I saw it announced at CES, I knew I had to try and get it in my hands, at least for the sheer curiosity of “Will this thing even *fit* in my hands?” The answer is yes — though kind of just barely.

I brought a Steam Deck OLED with me for a quick size and feel comparison. One of the first things I noticed is that it’s much more precarious to pick up the Blaze 11 the way I’m used to grabbing the Steam Deck: by gripping it on the top and bottom edges. My fingers just barely stretch far enough for this position. Once in hand, the 2.3-pound Blaze 11 actually feels lighter than you’d expect, making it not too unwieldy if you do most of your “portable” gaming at home on the couch like I do. (Playing it in bed may be a hazard to your face.)

While the Blaze 11 isn’t as heavy as I feared, the Steam Deck OLED’s 1.41 pounds feel like a featherweight in comparison. The Deck also feels a little more solidly built. Acer’s handheld isn’t flimsy, but it did seem cheaper.

But credit where credit’s due: playing games on such a big screen in your hands is a treat, and the kickstand felt solid for propping it up in tablet mode with detached controllers, which the Steam Deck can’t do. Acer also gets points for using Hall effect sticks and triggers.

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*The Steam Deck OLED’s*

screen is 7.4 inches, compared to the 10.95 inches of the Blaze 11.

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*Acer’s launcher looks and feels a bit spartan. It sits atop Windows, while Valve’s SteamOS is Linux-based.*

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*The top of the Blaze 11 has dual USB 4 ports, a USB-A 3.2 port, a microSD card slot, and a 3.5mm headset jack. On the left is a sliding switch that, as the above quote from Acer indicates, does not yet have a function.*

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*The rear feels like a wall of black plastic.*

a:hover]:text-black [&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-black dark:[&>a:hover]:text-gray-e9 dark:[&>a:hover]:shadow-underline-gray-63 [&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-13 dark:[&>a]:shadow-underline-gray-63″>*The Blaze 11’s tablet mode. With a screen this big, it actually seems fairly usable in this configuration.*