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Hands-On Review

A week with the HP Spectre x360 13

The HP Spectre series is a display of style and substance going hand-in-hand under the most elegant chassis. That much remains true for the HP Spectre x360 13 2-in-1 laptop which doubles down as a tablet. The laptop, for lack of a better word, is edgy. But unlike the sharp edges you'd find on a gaming laptop, the Spectre x360 features a regal diamond shape cut which signifies its class. Despite being a laptop with a hefty price tag, and which on paper isn't very powerful, boasts its premium price in more ways than one once you get under the hood.

Performance and Build

As I began to unwrap the package and unwind to see what this machine is capable of, I found it relatively difficult to find the power on button. Conventional wisdom says that it's either on the left or the right with all the ports or in proximity to your keyboard or touchpad. It was however in none of these locations but rather tucked away behind the laptop on the left, locking in slickly with the diamond cutaway. Fair play, I thought to myself because it looked rather elegant with where it was. The Spectre x360 features two Thunderbolt 3 ports on the other side with a micro SD card slot and a headphone jack. There is also a tiny and easy to miss slider which lets you disable the webcam. Intel's 8th generation Core i7 is a no frills processor which will honestly never let you down. A notebook is a notebook for note keeping and other lightweight work and the Spectre x360 shines in that scenario thanks to its overpowered processor, additional SSD support and a screen which gives due diligence to people who want a great battery life.

Tablet Mode

It would be unfair to the laptop's "2-in-1" portfolio if we didn't get into the 2 that makes the 1, that is, yes the Tablet mode. Tablets get a bad name these days but I genuinely think the Tablet form of this laptop is outstanding. But it's not due to any merit or hidden features of the tablet mode but rather of the screen itself. The 1080p 13-inch screen is truly a delight and watching YouTube videos on it and browsing the web feels very comforting. The screen produces very warm colour gradients so using it as a Tablet in close proximity for two hours didn't feel like a burden for my eyes. The laptop's touch screen was as expected, it was responsive and quick. Upon folding the screen back up on its two hinges, it will prompt you if you want to go to tablet mode. Once you do, you're greeted by the familiar Windows 8 home screen which is now Windows 10's tablet layout. Everything else remains as it is – you can run YouTube from Google Chrome, read your E-books and browse the web. If you want to type out your manifesto or finish your novel in tablet mode then the Spectre x360 will pop up an on-screen keyboard for you.

SPECS

Processor: 1.8GHz Intel Core i7-8565U (Quad-Core, 4MB cache, up to 4.6GHz)
Graphics: Intel UHD Graphics 620
RAM: 8GB DDR4
Storage: 512GB SSD (PCIe, NVMe, M.2)
Display: 13.3-inch FHD (1,920 x 1,080) touch panel (WLED, IPS)
Weight: 1.33 Kg
Webcam: HP TrueVision FHD IR webcam
Operating System: Windows 10 (64bit)
Price: Tk 155,000/- (approx.)

But fair warning as it is hardly the most ideal position to type in. And typing is made more difficult given that it is a chunky laptop halved into a tablet.

VERDICT

The HP Spectre x360 13 is a real showcase of elegance. The insane battery life will last you anywhere between 14 to 22 hours depending on your use. Its fast and responsive touch screen makes using it as a tablet blissful as well. While typing is hard and holding it in two hands can be cumbersome, it is a really light Ultrabook and the beefed up processor makes it a breeze to use without having to worry about slowdowns.

Battery

While, I didn't get to do intensive tests, I did however binge watch Netflix on it one night. And many hours later, I was still left with 30 percent battery life. Where I've learnt to expect very little from laptop batteries, with the Spectre x360 I had no qualms or worries. And turns out it does have a beastly battery life as a little bit of investigation led me to find that it can churn out 4K videos for you for 22 hours, claimed by HP themselves. The battery life really makes the device come together, providing style and a hefty amount of substance all during the duration of one transatlantic flight.

WORDS AND PHOTOS: ASIF AYON

Best product showcases from IFA 2019

IFA 2019 is Europe's premiere annual tech event. Being equivalent to CES, the Internationale Funkausstellung Berlin is home to some of the best tech reveals ranging from laptops, PC components, smartphones and everything else in between. With that out of the way, let's take a look at some of the best products that were unveiled at IFA 2019.

DELL XPS 13 2-IN-1 LAPTOP

Similar to the Spectre x360 laptop on display above, the XPS 13 2-in-1 laptop promises to be a full-fledged Laptop-tablet hybrid. Its real appeal however lies underneath as it will rock Intel's 10th generation Ice Lake processors. The original Dell XPS 13 was a great laptop and the latest iteration is looking like it will improve upon its predecessor. Dell showcased the new laptop's ability to edit 4K HDR videos at this year's event making it a delectable choice for content creators who are on the go.

INTEL CORE I9-9900KS ANNOUNCEMENT

While the i9-9900KS has been in the works since May, Intel announced that its most powerful desktop processor will be available in October at the event. Unlike the i9 9900K which can be manually boosted to 5GHz, the new processor's cores can boost to 5GHz straight out of the box. While the new processor is a bit of an overkill, possessing very few distinguishable features from its predecessor, it did turn a few heads with the amount of raw power the 9900KS can output on paper.

ASUS'S PROART STUDIOBOOK LAPTOPS

ASUS's ProArt StudioBook promises to be the best in class with the state-of-the-art Nvidia Quadro RTX 6000 graphics card and an Intel Core i9 processor. It also comes with a crazy 15-inch 4K 120Hz display, making it one of the best workstation laptops to look forward to. There is also a 17-inch variant of the ProArt family which will most likely feature the top of the line RTX 6000x card while the 15-inch laptop will feature an RTX 5000x card. They'll drop in October, with a heavy price tag to boot.

ACER'S 300HZ REFRESH RATE LAPTOP

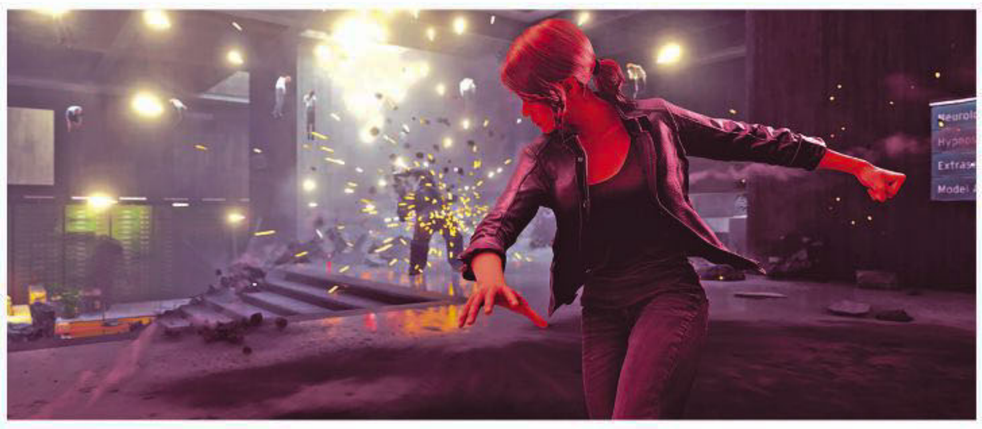
Most manufacturers release laptops with 120Hz displays and call it a day but the Acer Predator Triton 500 dropped at this year's event with a whopping 300Hz refresh rate display. With a display so fluid that it'll make your head spin, the laptop will feature a 15.6-inch 1080p display and will be available in December for $2,800. While it is nowhere near as being a cheap laptop, it was definitely Acer's most classy reveal at the event minus of course the $14,000 gaming setup which is a chair.

55-INCH QLED 8K TV FROM SAMSUNG

Samsung showcased its 55-inch 8K TV at the event and while it will most definitely burn a hole in your pocket, it will however be a more feasible 8K option for consumers. The TV displays HDR10+ and it can also upscale lower resolution to 8K and like its big brother, it too features a Quantum AI processor. The TV is currently available on Samsung's site for $2,499.

Exciting recent game releases

2019 has been a rather mute year in terms of ground-breaking game releases but it hasn't been without its fair share of excellent titles. With that being said, here's a look at some exciting new titles which dropped recently.



Control

Platform: PlayStation 4, Xbox One
Price: $59.99 (Ps4)
Genres: Third-person shooter, Action-adventure game

Control is a graphically rich game and the story is enticing as well. The game has received critical acclaim, drawing comparisons to Alan Wake for its dark atmosphere. Control also features some of the best voice-over and facial movements you'll find in a video game. Shame that it's a console exclusive.

Remnant: From the Ashes

Platform: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Microsoft Windows
Price: $39.99 (Steam)
Genres: Third-person survival action shooter

"If Dark Souls had guns" I cringe but I can't deny that it is what it is. The game features over the top bosses and difficult mobs that you have to mow down either in solo play or with a couple of your mates in online co-op. This game has been a real surprise and looks to be a really solid experience.

Ancestors: The Humankind Odyssey

Platform: PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Microsoft Windows
Price: $29.99 (Epic Store)
Genres: Third-person open world survival

This game has had a polarizing release but as a concept, it is truly unique. You start as a basic hominid, an ape for simplicity's sake, and you must adapt, evolve and overcome your surroundings and gradually get through 8 million years. For fans of strict survival games, this can be quite a rewarding experience.

World's first blockchain smartphone to be launched in BD

World's first Blockchain enabled smartphone is going to launch in Bangladesh. The Switzerland based Sirin Lab's smartphone, known as Finney, will be one of the most secure and expensive smartphone on the market. Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has cleared this smartphone for import this August 27. Imported by Index, this phone is set to release this October in the local market.

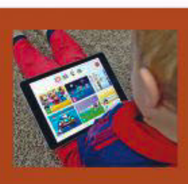
First showcased in 2018, this dual screen smartphone garnered many accolades thanks to its security features. The phone has been designed and manufactured by Chinese electronics giant Foxconn Technology Group. The phone comes with a built-in intrusion system, secured communication, crypto wallet, decentralized application ecosystem, etc.

TECH BITS

Security flaw in Samsung, Huawei, LG, Sony and other Android-based phones leaves users vulnerable to advanced SMS phishing attacks

Samsung is expected to launch the Galaxy Fold on September 27 in the US

Google Maps on iOS gets important updates ahead of Android such as live detailed weather

Facebook data on 419 million users found on a database, reportedly on an unprotected server

YouTube will stop selling personalized ads on videos aimed at children in regulation with FTC settlement