Aura 15

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This is the Aura 15. It is a 15.6" Linux-based laptop from Tuxedo Computers in Germany.

I've been wanting to get my hands on a new laptop for a while and so I reached out to the folks at Tuxedo Computers. I was thrilled when they asked me to spec out a system to be built for my needs.

Of course part of me wanted to go all out on a custom build, but I knew that it wouldn't be practical for my needs. I've got a desktop that I can game on and do that sort of things, so what I wanted was something reliable that I could pack around with me on the go.

My System's Specs

I went with 16GB of RAM, but it SUPER easy to upgrade later if I decide to do that.

It has a Ryzen 4500U with Radeon Graphics with a base clock of 2.3 GHz and a max boost clock of 4GHz. It also has a default TDP of only 15 watts.

I went with a 500GB Kingston NVMe drive that, again, is super easy to upgrade later.

Also, I added a Huawei 4G LTE SIM Card option for mobile data if I ever need it.

All of this can be had for 973.00 Euros or about 1100 USD.

The frame and overall construction is solid due to the Aluminum chassis and display lid. The Screen bezel and wrist rest are both plastics, but look great and match the aesthetic very well.

The I/O consist of

- 1 USB 3.2 Gen2 Type C port that supports DisplayPort 1.4 and DC Charging
- 1 USB 3.2 Gen 1 Type A port
- 2 USB 2.0 Type A ports
- 1 HDMI 2.0 port that supports HDCP and 4k30hz on Linux and 4k60hz on Windows
- 1 full-size gigabit lan port
- 1 Kensington Lock
- 1 microSD card reader
- 1 nano Sim card slot

The Display

As I mentioned, the screen is a 1920x1080 IPS display panel that looks great. I was actually glad to see that they didn't even offer a 4k option as it's just unnecessary on a 15.6" screen.

The keyboard feels great and has RGB backlighting on it with the option to to change the color of the background to a few pre-defined color options or you can just turn the backlight off entirely. Also, the keys feel great and have a decent looking font on them.

Also, I love that they put their logo on the key where the Windows key would be on most other keyboards.

Battery Life

The Aura 15 comes with a 49 watt hour battery that they claim is good for about 9 hours of battery life at 1080p with the screen dimmed a bit and up to 15 hours with minimum screen brightness, and WLAN, Bluetooth, and keyboard backlight turned off.

It also comes with a 65w charger and the system supports something called FlexiCharger, which the Tuxedo website says:

> With FlexiCharger activated, your TUXEDO Book can be operated exclusively via the alternating current connection without affecting the battery charge. This prevents unnecessary micro charging and discharging, which reduces the battery life. This is especially useful when your TUXEDO Book is connected to the power supply for a longer period of time.
>
> FlexiCharger can be deactivated in the BIOS at any time.

Overall battery life hasn't really failed me. I've used it for a few hours at a time browsing the internet and updating/managing servers via SSH and it just does what I need it to do.

Using the Tuxedo control panel you can use the pre-configured power plans or build your own. Building your own power plans allow you to do things like control the fans, disable CPU cores, set minimum and maximum frequencies of the CPU and even do things like disable the webcam.

Performance

While I mentioned that I didn't want it for gaming, I *was* able to install Steam on it and I played a few games including CS:GO and Dirt Rally. Playing both games worked pretty well even on Linux and framerates were respectable for a mobile CPU with onboard graphics.

The fans only really kick on under load and can be noisy if left on the default settings. I also noticed that they kick on while I'm recording video tutorials on it, so I've decided to put it on a laptop pad with larger fans to help keep the fan noise to a minimum while still keeping the system running cool.

Webcam and audio

This is where the system let me down a bit. The webcam is a 1 megapixel 640x480 camera which is underwhelming to say the least.

There are 2 downward firing speakers that will let you know there is sound, but if you want to enjoy what you're watching or listening to, you'd be better to plug in some headphones or speakers.