

Why buy Asus ROG Ally instead of Steam Deck OLED?

The OLED Steam Deck has dominated the portable gaming market, but those who pick up the Asus ROG Ally in 2024 will be seriously impressed. It's more than just an alternative; here's why you should consider this new product.

1. Better performance



Both devices are designed for gaming, so performance is key. While the Steam Deck was impressive when it first launched, the refreshed OLED Steam Deck doesn't offer much in the way of improvements. It's still based on AMD's old Zen 2 architecture, which is starting to show its age in many new games — and the outdated RDNA 2-based GPU doesn't help matters either.

On the other hand, the ROG Ally has the AMD Ryzen Z1 or AMD Ryzen Z1 Extreme, both of which are based on AMD's Zen 4 architecture. Both have higher core counts. If you're considering the Ally, you should go for the Z1 Extreme version as it offers a significantly more powerful GPU.

While you can expect a 10% to 40% increase in gaming performance on the Ally depending on the game and settings, the biggest advantage is the ability to hook it up to a monitor and comfortably play most games at 1080p resolution.

On a 7-inch screen, the difference between 1280x800 and 1920x1080 may not be a big deal, but when you connect it to a larger screen, the higher resolution makes a significant difference in overall image quality.

2. Has a 120hz screen

The ROG Ally also has a significantly better gaming display, with a 120Hz refresh rate compared to the Steam Deck OLED's 90Hz. This makes a big difference as games appear noticeably smoother at higher frame rates. It also supports Variable Refresh Rate (VRR), which allows the display to dynamically adjust its refresh rate to reduce screen tearing and stuttering, improving the overall gaming experience.

The Steam Deck OLED has a maximum resolution of 800p, while the Ally offers a full resolution of 1080p, meaning your games will look much sharper on the Ally. However, as the name suggests, the Steam Deck OLED has an OLED display, which offers much better contrast and deeper blacks. This makes a huge difference in visuals, especially in darker scenes.

If you're someone who primarily plays single-player games where response times aren't as important, you'll probably find the Steam Deck's OLED display much more vibrant and visually appealing. But for everyone else, the Ally's higher refresh rate and resolution are more important.

3. Wider game compatibility



Because ROG Ally runs Windows 11, it offers one of the best experiences when it comes to gaming compatibility. You can easily access any game launcher — whether it's Steam, Battle.net, Epic Games, or others — just like you would on a regular PC. If you're considering ROG Ally as a launcher to complement your existing gaming setup, you'll likely find the experience familiar and intuitive.

However, the Steam Deck OLED, which runs on SteamOS, a Linux-based operating system built on Arch Linux, is not. While SteamOS is capable in its own right, you may run into issues with certain games, especially those that rely on anti-cheat features, such as Valorant, Call of Duty: Warzone, and many other competitive games.

The biggest issue is that there is no Xbox Game Pass on SteamOS. While you can stream games via Xbox Cloud Gaming, installing and running games locally via Game Pass can be quite inconsistent and unreliable on Linux.

Since Steam is the primary launcher on the Steam Deck OLED, using other game launchers can also require a bit more effort. While the Steam Deck can be a desktop replacement like the ROG Ally, if you're used to Windows, you might have a bit of trouble adjusting to SteamOS.

4. Lighter and smaller

Since both devices are designed for handheld use, comfort and portability are key factors in why people choose the Asus ROG Ally. The OLED Steam Deck weighs about 32 grams more, which may not sound like much, but it makes a difference during long gaming sessions. The ROG Ally is also slightly smaller and more comfortable to hold.

If you have small hands, however, you may find the Steam Deck OLED easier to hold. The more pronounced curves on the back make it easier to hold. This isn't an issue with the ROG Ally.

The Steam Deck OLED has a lot of benefits as a gaming machine. For someone who primarily works on a Mac but occasionally needs Windows, the ROG Ally is a better fit.

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