

Gadgets: Even in a recession, you gotta have tunes

June 3 2009, By Gregg Ellman

Back in the mid 80's I bought my first component stereo system, which included Klipsch speakers. To this day they perform as well as the day I got them.

Using a new set of Klipsch Image S4 headphones gives me the same feeling, that they're the last set I'll ever need.

The in-ear headphones are available with what Klipsch calls a \$79 recession-proof price point and are designed with comfort in mind as well as precise, clear and consistent sound.

While the design doesn't really matter as much as the sound, they do look cool and are made for long-term wear with their patent-pending oval ear tips. The tips give the user passive noise-cancellation while blocking out some of the ambient noise. That gives the user a nice consistent sound.

Unlike dozens of other headphones I've tried, these did wear with comfort. During a recent cross-country flight, the only thing that got me to take them off was the flight attendant.

Several different tips are included with the set, which ensures the right fit for most any user.

Reading a recent press release on the [earphones](#), this is how Klipsch described the sound: "Additionally, the Image S4 and S2 are moving coil

designs with controlled damping, allowing them to deliver smooth, full-bodied sound that is similar to a balanced armature."

If you understand what that means, then read no further but if you want a translation Â- they sound great, with a nice amount of bass, which is often missing in headphones and a very clear sound.

In addition to the Image S4, Klipsch also has a new S2 model (\$49), which will be available in July.

Both have the industry standard 3.5mm headphone jack, which work with most portable media players and include a two-year warranty.

Details: www.klipsch.com

Kodak's new Zx1 Digital Video Camera is a true point and shoot device for those who want a pocket-sized camera to take High-Definition (HD) video.

The camera shoots 720p HD video in either 60 or 30 fps modes and includes easy editing tools to get your video posted to web sites like YouTube in minutes. In addition, the camera will shoot 3-megapixel still images.

It didn't matter if the camera was in low or bright light; I found it was able to adjust on its own to most any environment. Kodak rates the camera as water and dirt resistant but I didn't test that. Generally, I would think this is for emergency only but users should expect it to hold up well if caught in a quick rain shower while filming.

The pocket-sized HD video camera has a 2.0-inch LCD screen, which is

used for not only filming but also for editing with the included ArcSoft Media Impressions software.

I preferred to edit on my laptop and downloading took seconds with a USB 2.0 cable (included). I can't help but wish the camera had a pop-out USB connector like some of its competitors, but maybe a future model will have this. Video clips downloaded as .mov files, which instantly played in Quicktime on my MacBook Pro.

While it doesn't have the connector, it does have the ability for unlimited memory with its expandable SD/SDHC memory card slot. The camera can handle cards up to 32 GB (not included), which will each hold up to 10 hours of HD video.

Nevertheless, once the videos are downloaded, it's kind of crazy how good the quality is from such a simple device. Nothing seemed to be difficult from start to finish.

Other features include a built-in mono microphone, 128 MB of internal memory, a 2X digital zoom lens and (2) AA rechargeable batteries are included.

Details: www.kodak.com , \$149.95; available in black, blue, pink, red and yellow.

Jitterbug cell phones are designed for those who want an easy-to-read keypad, along with ease of dialing with its large and bright display. Now the company has announced a revalued Jitterbug J cell phone with some new consumer-friendly features and services.

The redesigned phone has a cool slim look, retaining its original features

of a noise reduction ear cushion, backlit buttons and easy-to read text.

Other new features include an easier-to-use interface with new main screen navigation. Users can personalize the ever-popular ring tones, which have been tested on the phone to work in all ranges of volume including for people with a hearing loss.

Also new are a speakerphone button and a battery with 30 percent longer life on stand-by -- up to 4 hours continuous talk time before needing a charge.

New services include MyCalendar, where customers can manage their calendar and phone book either online or with a Jitterbug operator. Users can store up to 50 names and numbers.

SimpleText is just that; a simple text messaging program to help customers learn the text messaging system in different levels. Also new is the LiveNurse service, providing unlimited access to a registered nurse 24/7. Included is access to a health information library with information on hundreds of health related topics

A new package of services called Jitterbug Complete Care includes LiveNurse, Jitterbug Roadside Assistance, and "No questions asked" handset replacement for \$9 a month.

Details: www.jitterbug.com , MSRP is \$147 for the phone; monthly rate plans start at \$14.99, available at select Sears, CVS, Shopko and Radio Shack locations.

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