

Gadgets: Sonos S5 makes your music wireless

June 11 2010, By Gregg Ellman



The Sonos S5 music system is advertised as an all-in-one device for home use and after trying it, I can say it is just that.

With the free SonosController [iPhone](#) App, users can stream digital audio from online music sources like [satellite radio](#), iTunes and Pandora through an iPod Touch or iPhone.

Many iPod docking systems provide basic sound but with the Sonos S5 the sound is above and beyond without having to dock your player.

The desktop stereo speaker system measures about 14-by-5-by-9 inches

and sounds awesome at any volume level. The controls on the speaker itself are limited to volume and ports, with everything else being done via your hand-held device.

Packed into the unit is a 5-driver speaker system and each speaker has digital amplifiers. In addition, there are two tweeters, two mid-range drivers and a bass driver.

For those who don't have a handheld Apple media player, you're still in luck; the unit can be controlled by purchasing a Sonos touch-screen controller.

Instead of a wireless control, the system comes with software to control the music from a Mac or Windows system.

Once a single unit is set up with a wired Ethernet connection, get your credit card out because you will want put one in every room to create a true household wireless music environment.

Multiple units can broadcast identical music or different choices on each.

If you're setting up your initial Sonos in a room where a wired Internet connection is not available, Sonos again has the solution with the optional Sonos ZoneBridge. This enables the initial unit to function wirelessly.

While my review unit was built in a white enclosure with the gray screen front (very Apple looking) Sonos announced just last week that it's also available in black.

Details: sonos.com, \$399

The best recently got better while the look is the same.

The newly released Adobe Creative Suite CS5 software package has everything graphic designers and web builders need, including upgrades for Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Flash, Dreamweaver and more.

Photographers have been using the Photoshop software for 20 years and to celebrate that, Adobe has loaded the new CS5 version with some great features.

Manipulating images is now easier than ever to produce outstanding results.

It doesn't matter if you are taking an unwanted object (or person) out of a family reunion image or fine tuning images for clients.

Adobe has added more than 30 features to help photographers of every level improve their daily digital imaging workflow.

New features include automatic image straightening, rule-of-thirds and the ability to save 16-bit images as JPEGs.

I've always been a fan of the Clone Stamp Tool, and a new feature in CS5 called Content Aware Fill takes this to a new level.

Users can paint over anything to remove it from the image, and the software will fill that area with matching pixels sampled and chosen from the surrounding area.

Also new: a Mixer Brush that blends an unlimited amount of colors on a single paintbrush tip and then choose Bristle Tips to make lifelike brush strokes.

Puppet Warp lets users straighten objects in photos such as horizon lines or anything else that's bent or warped and needs a straighter perspective.

Photographers working with high dynamic range (HDR) capabilities can combine the images with speed and accuracy to preserve the highest quality.

Details: adobe.com, \$1899 for the suite; prices vary for individual programs.

The Empire Brands Wicked Audio line headphones have four new earbuds.

They are the top of the line Wicked Empires, which I tested along with the Wicked Little Buds, Jaw Breakers and Metallics.

What makes these different, in addition to the consistent sound, is that each features a design on each earbud with choices of an ace of spade, an eight ball, a skull or a star and knight symbol.

The Wicked headphones have a 10mm drive, 160hm and a frequency of 20-20.00 Hz along with a cord just short of 4-feet.

The custom fitted earbuds come with three sizes to make the right fit for any user.

Each earbud is made with high-quality construction. Since they are in-ear style, they are noise isolating, blocking out a good amount but not all of your surroundings.

Details: empirebrandsinc.com, Wicked Empire WE-8800 Earbud - Ace is available online for \$22.85

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