

Gadgets: Truly great sound from Brick dock

August 6 2010, By Gregg Ellman



Typically, when a brick and an expensive media player are combined, it's not a great combination.

Aluratek, Inc., has succeeded with the recent addition to the crowded iPod/iPhone speaker dock world with the Brick.

Like most of this type of unit, the Brick docks and charges any Apple media player, along with having an input to support playing any other MP3 player.

The universal dock itself accepts any [iPhone](#), iPod Touch or any iPod

with a click wheel.

Many of today's docking units advertise that they have great sound, when they should really say they just have sound.

After powering up the Brick it was easy to hear the great sound it produced along with exceptional clarity.

What helps set the Brick apart from many of the others is it's made with a built-in amplifier making it a great choice for any tabletop, nightstand or kitchen counter.

The unit features a speaker with 23W (RMS) output power along with a 15W downward firing subwoofer and 4W on each L/R channel. All of this produces sound with Harmonic Distortion of less than 2 percent.

If [FM radio](#) is still your thing, it does have a built-in FM tuner, along with an [alarm clock](#). All of this can be controlled from a remote.

Details: aluratek.com, the suggested price is \$149 but it can be found for as low as \$119.72 at Amazon.com.

Kidz Gear headphones are just that headphones designed for kids age 2 and up and are available in wired or wireless models.

The construction has soft padded ear cups, which swivel for comfort and are uniquely designed for kids' smaller ears.

An adjustable plastic headband connects the two speakers.

The wired model has a cord about 4-feet long with a standard 3.5-inch input jack to connect to just about any device. A volume control is on

the cord.

A volume-limiting device works with the wired unit. This will plug into the headphones and the media device allowing parents to limit the upper range of volume available to kids.

If you choose the wireless model, a transmitter must also be purchased to connect to the device and the wireless model requires three AAA batteries.

To control the wireless [headphones](#), an on/off switch and volume controls are located on the ear cup.

Details: gearforkidz.com, wired \$16.99, wireless \$29.99, IR Transmitter \$14.99

The Jabra Extreme with extreme noise cancellation and dual microphone technology is a great choice for those wanting to go hands-free with Bluetooth technology.

Pairing it with my BlackBerry was simple and supplied excellent sound quality from multiple callers.



Since these are advertised with the extreme noise cancellation, I chose to make a few calls with the car windows open.

While the call was still manageable I found the performance was obviously much better with the windows up.

For those on the other end of the conversation, these have advanced automatic volume control, which automatically adjusts my voice to the environment and your conversation to ensure proper levels.

The Jabra also has Multiuse technology, which allows it to be paired with two different devices.

Once a pairing connection is made, the on/off switch and volume

controls are easily accessed on the unit, which is nicely designed in gunmetal gray on the front and black.

To answer calls, simply press a multi-function button on the front of the piece.

This Jabra Bluetooth unit is built with Ultimate-fit Eargels and fits with comfort. Also included are ear hooks in small and large to ensure they properly hook around your ear.

Each Jabra Extreme kits comes with the headset, two sets of eargels, two ear hooks and chargers for car, USB and AC. Also included is a headset holder to store the headset and charger.

Once charged, users can expect more than 5 hours of talk time and 10 days of standby time.

Details: Jabra.com, \$79.99 at the company store, \$55 at other online sites

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