

Bowers & Wilkins C5 Headphones

Grace Robinson January 4, 2012

Ever since Bowers & Wilkins extended its high-end audio offerings to general consumers, standout products like the Zeppelin Air have set the bar high for its future releases. As such, the company's C5 in-ear headphones have big shoes to fill; the headphone market is a fiercely competitive arena that demands great things from its contenders in order to survive.

In our testing, we found the C5 sat comfortably atop the 'food chain', with obvious power, capability and style.

Unboxing this beauty was a pleasure; the C5s combine striking design with minimalist ease. And with a price tag of \$249, you're getting great value for money.

The main body of the earpiece looks a bit like a bullet, capped with a silicone tip for the ear. Four different-size tips are included so you get a proper fit.

The C5s feature a section of rigid cabling that loops around to form a P-shaped frame, if you will. The loop can be resized to fit within your ear for a more weighted, secure position. It's a clever feature, but it's not optimal for everyone.

I didn't find this particularly comfortable, or simple to adjust – luckily you can re-route the cable to sit downward, or up and over the ear. The headphones also come with a three-button inline remote for volume and play/call functions. The C5s handle sound in varied environments superbly our testing took place in an aeroplane, on a busy street and at our desk and we were equally pleased with the performance in each scenario.

Key among the headphones' capabilities is their Micro Porous Filter that acts as a sonic diffuser to enable a more expansive performance, limiting noise bleed and blocking external sound.

The C5s – in our experience – don't seal off 100 percent of extraneous noise, though we didn't take issue with this. In our testing on a city street, we could enjoy our music and still keep an ear out for oncoming traffic.

Macworld Australia's buying advice.

The overall sound quality of the C5s are exemplary. However, if you're after a pair of in-ear headphones with full noise isolation, you may be disappointed with what the model offers.

In terms of design, the C5s are hard to look past. Match your Apple device with this just-as-stylish peripheral and, at a reasonable price, you'll look forward to pressing Play each time, every time.

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Pros:

Cutting-edge design; reasonable price; great overall sound

Cons:

Tricky to manoeuvre cabling; doesn't block all extraneous sound

RRP: \$249