



TESTED
AUDIOENGINE A2+

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TESTED: AUDIOENGINE A2+ POWERED SPEAKERS

PRICE : \$100-
\$499

By BEN
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on
1.22.14

Photo by HENRY
PHILIPS

Audioengine's original A2 Speakers launched in 2008 and were immediately showered with praise by audiophiles and satisfied buyers alike. Though they were marketed as desktop speakers, that label was slightly misleading. At 6 inches tall, 4 inches wide and 5.25 inches deep, the A2s were certainly sized to feel right at home on a desk — but they also boasted smart design decisions and spectacular sound quality, both of which were more in line with traditional bookshelf speakers or studio monitors. The A2s were quickly recognized for what they were: a powerful and versatile set of speakers that produced excellent sound from any device connected to it.

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The newly updated [Audioengine A2+ \(\\$249\)](#) retains its predecessor's baseline of quality but builds upon that wide range of usefulness with notable improvements for a variety of additional audio setups. The biggest revision is an integrated USB DAC that allows the pair to connect to computers via USB, giving buyers a plug-and-play solution for listening to high-quality digital files with incredible sonic accuracy. A new variable RCA output means a subwoofer or even [Audioengine's own W3 wireless adapters](#), which cut an additional cord out of the setup, can be added on as well. Finally, an upgraded power supply, accessory cables and binding posts fill out the A2+'s quality bumps. Perhaps best of all, this slew of enhancements come at just \$50 more than the asking price of the original A2s.

PHOTO ESSAYS

The DAC upgrade makes setup all the easier: simply connect the power supply to the speakers, run a speaker wire between the set and connect the included USB cable to the computer. There's no need to download software or tweak audio settings beyond selecting the Audioengines as your desired output source; just start playing music from your digital source of choice and marvel at the improvement over most desktop audio solutions, particularly when using high resolution audio files. Deep, tight bass leapt out at us during our testing, as did the A2+'s powerful sound, especially for such a small speaker. Focusing on electrical and acoustical design versus common gimmicks like fake bass boost circuits has clearly paid off for Audioengine.

LOFTY AUDIO CHOPS EASILY MAKE THE A2+ ONE OF THE BEST DESKTOP AUDIO SOLUTIONS AVAILABLE IN ITS LOW PRICE RANGE.

Some break-in time and extended listening sessions showed that the A2+'s real competitive audio advantage is refined reproduction of midrange and treble sounds. Countless sonic details and nuances create a rich, immersive sound field that — just like its bass — belies the speaker's compact stature. These lofty audio chops easily make the A2+ one of the best desktop audio solutions available in its low price range, especially for those concerned about setup headaches.



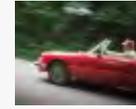
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And just as the A2s before them, there's no reason this set can't be put to use elsewhere in the home or even pull double duty for multiple audio sources. Smartphones, tablets, TVs, radios, CD players and turntables can all be easily connected (and even used in conjunction with a computer) through the rear RCA inputs and mini jack. If we had to point out gripes, the rear positioning of the volume knob makes it fairly inconvenient to use. The power supply is also bulky and requires a skilled cord manager to hide.

While we'll always love the flexibility afforded by the AirPlay streaming capabilities of excellent sets like the [Nocs NS2 air monitors](#), the A2+ provides more (albeit hardwired) connectivity options in addition to superior sound quality for \$200 less. So if you're looking for a great set of small powered speakers and can still put up with the tethered lifestyle, your search is finally over.

BUY NOW: \$249

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