

# Our New Speaker of the House

<http://www.wired.com/reviews/2011/11/audioengine-a5plus/>

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Updating a flagship product is tricky for any company. Change too much and you can ruin what already worked perfectly. Do too little — dress up the same technology in different clothes — and you risk alienating loyal customers.

Happily, [Audioengine's new A5+ speakers](#) skillfully dodge both of these pitfalls. In fact, these 50-watt (RMS) powered speakers strike a near perfect balance, keeping what was already great about the original A5s, while adding a number of small refinements that make the overall package even more enticing.

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As with the previous versions, these speakers come with five-inch Kevlar woofers and 20mm silk dome tweeters. While they're about an inch taller, they also have the same general footprint (7 x 7.75 inches). Most importantly though, they retain the lush sound signature, superb dynamics and great looks of their predecessor. While I didn't have an old pair of A5s on hand to directly test them against, the bass seemed even cleaner and more precise. Vocals once again are warm and natural, and the detail simply blew away other desktop speakers like [B&W's MM-1s](#).

As for that “+,” there are now RCA and mini-jack inputs on the new A5s. You’ll also get a remote control, a rear-panel USB charge port, upgraded speaker binding posts, and a variable preamp audio output.

This is great should you wish to take them out of the office and into, say, the living room. And let me tell you, these speakers thrive next to your HDTV. I used mine to beef up my TV’s audio and, when the TV was off, used Airplay to stream music from iTunes (with the help of an Airport Express plugged into one input). Because both inputs are active, you can simply keep both sources plugged in all the time. No switches to flick or cables to juggle.

Plenty of multimedia speakers aspire to be your all-in-one bookshelves these days, ready for any situation or setting. Still, I’ve yet to meet ones that are as versatile and fun to listen to as these. If you’ve got the desk space, do yourself a favor and fill it with A5+s. Once you listen to them, you’ll wonder how your ears tolerated anything else.

**WIRED** Rich, detailed, room-filling sound that bests speakers costing twice as much. New quarter-inch threaded inserts on the bottom of each speaker for easy stand mounting. Dead simple to set up. USB power port keeps your iPhone/iPod charged and the music coming. Also available in bamboo and white finishes.

**TIRED** The convenient, top mounted 3.5mm AUX input and USB port are now moved to the back. Still a bit bulky for a lot of desks. Baked-in AirPlay compatibility would be nice.

*Photo by Jon Snyder/Wired*