

Digital Home Thoughts: The Audioengine N22 Amplifier - Big Sound from a Small Package

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Product Category: Desktop Audio Amplifier

Manufacturer: [Audioengine](#)

Where to Buy: [Amazon](#) (affiliate link)

Price: \$199.00 USD

In the Box: N22 amplifier with integrated stand, N22 power supply, Detachable AC power cord, 1/8" audio cable, RCA audio cable, Speaker wire (16AWG), Cloth amplifier bag, Cloth power supply bag, Cloth cable bag, Setup Guide.

Specifications: [Seen at Audioengine Web Site](#)

Pros:

- Excellent build quality;
- Attractive amplifier fits well with any decor;
- Big, full sound from a small package, especially when paired with Audioengine AP4 speakers.

Cons:

- A bit pricey;
- Power supply connector could suffer bent pins;
- 2 channel only, no surround capabilities.

Summary: The Audioengine N22 desktop amplifier is a small power plant that produce big, beautiful sound. The small, upright amp fits neatly on any desktop and its simple, understated design complements almost any decor. When paired with

Audioengine's AP4 bookshelf speakers, the result is sound comparable to larger, more expensive systems. If you are looking for top-quality audio from a small package, and aren't bothered by the price tag, Audioengine has your solution.

Last year, I had the pleasure of [reviewing Audioengine's AP4 bookshelf speakers](#). In that review, I was extremely impressed with the build quality, sound quality, and the packaging that Audioengine provides.

This quality continues in their new N22 Desktop Amplifier. Like the AP4 speakers, the N22 comes packaged in a luxurious cloth bag. The understated design boasts a big, silver knob right in front for on/off and volume. The front of the amplifier also has a blue power indicator LED and a headphone jack.

Measuring just 7 inches tall, 2.75 inches wide and 5.5 inches deep, you won't have trouble finding a spot on your desk to place the N22. It is designed to stand upright on the included stand to allow for maximum cooling. The back panel hosts RCA and 1/4" jack inputs, RCA line outs, AC adaptor port, a USB port (for power), and 5-way binding posts for speaker connections. The N22 comes packaged with all the cables needed to connect this little dynamo, including 16AWG speaker wire. The N22 comes with a power supply, but the connector is one that has 4 small pins. I've experienced issues with these kinds of connectors in the past where the pins become bent or broken. I'd prefer a connector that is less prone to error and breakage.



Figure 1: The N22's back panel provides all the connection types you would need, but I'd prefer a power supply that didn't have so many pins.

The N22 is rated at 22 watts RMS per channel with a total of 80 watts of peak power. It also has a power-saving idle mode should you forget to turn it off.

The USB port provides power for Audioengine's optional W1 wireless audio adaptor. Connect the W1 "sender" to your computer, iPod or other device, and its "receiver" to the N22, and you can send audio wirelessly from your device to the amp.

A subwoofer can be added by connecting its line-level input to the N22's full-range output.

I used the N22 to play my ZuneHD in my guitar studio. I hooked the N22 to a pair of Audioengine AP4 speakers, and connected the Zune to the N22 using the included 1/8" audio cable. I then set my Zune's volume to about "20." The resulting sound was perfect. The N22 pushed a full, clear sound to the AP4 speakers. I was able to get plenty of volume to allow me to practice guitar along with the music. The combination was



fully capable of reproducing the full sonic range, including bass, very well, even at loud volumes.



Figure 2: The N22 paired with Audioengine's AP4 Bookshelf Speakers.

Set up was simple. Audioengine provides all the cables you need right in the box, including speaker wire. I also tried connecting my Dell Inspiron laptop to the N22 using the same 1/8" cable. Again, the sound produced by the N22 was very satisfying with plenty of volume to spare.

I tested the N22 with just the AP4 speakers, but the amplifier should work perfectly with any 4, 6, or 8 ohm passive speakers.

I was pleased with the quality of sound produced by the N22 for all types of music and at various volume levels. The N22 is very good at producing quality low end sound without overwhelming the upper ranges.

At \$199 for the N22 amplifier, and \$249 for the AP4 speakers, \$448 is a fairly steep entry point for computer speakers. Especially since this combination doesn't provide any surround sound capabilities. However, if you are looking for a compact sound system that provides flawless sound in a small package, then this set up is definitely worth a look and listen. The N22 and AP4 both are beautifully designed products that are easy on the eyes. They also offer great build quality and outstanding sound.

Ron Hostetter is a software sales engineer by day, a gadget lover by night. He has worked in the IT field for over 20 years and loves reading about and playing with technology. He lives in Kansas City, Missouri with his lovely wife, his son and daughter, and their two dogs. He enjoys playing guitar in his band 71 South (<http://www.71southband.com>) and watching the Kansas City Royals.

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