

Hardware · Reviews

AudioEngine A5+ Speakers Review: Run And Hide, Because It'll Drop The Bass

by [Stefan Etienne](#) May 26, 2014 at 2:34 pm





A few months ago, [I reviewed the A2+](#) — Audio Engine’s entry-level desktop speaker, which sounds great, looks like a minimalist masterpiece, and is just small enough to move around without much hassle. Now, take away that last part, and you can partially understand the A5+ speakers.

They are *huge*. I think shots comparing the two can easily can’t convey the size difference, and thus the massive weight difference. That aside, the A5+ looks very rustic in bamboo, which costs extra to build and ship — and that makes them just a *tad* bit more awesome.

Price as Reviewed: \$469 at [AudioEngine](#)

Aesthetics



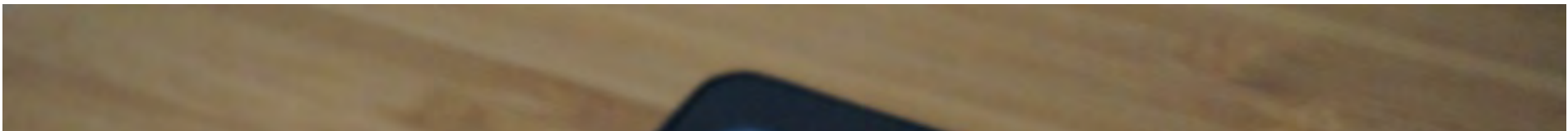


Normally, the AudioEngine A5+ costs \$400 for a pair, the remote, storage bags, and all the wires needed to start up a connection. But if you want handcrafted bamboo, well, you'll have to shed a little extra. For \$470, you can get the bamboo edition, which looks positively marvelous. The finish is smooth and polished, but also surprisingly durable, as it's not really that easily to scratch it with say, some car keys.

Internally, you get 150W peak power total (50W RMS / 75W peak per channel) with AES. On the front, you'll recognize the massive 5" Kevlar woofers (that's right) with 3/4" silk dome tweeters, IR port (which can also work with a smartphone with the capability to control devices with IR ports), and finally, a volume knob that doubles as a sleep button. Input-wise, you can opt for a 3.5mm stereo mini-jack or RCA L/R; a USB port lives at the back, but its for charging devices, not transferring data or audio.

The left speaker, which contains the massive heat-sink and is responsible for having all the main power components inside, weighs 15.4 lbs (7 kg) while the right speaker weighs just 9.6 lbs (4.4 kg). Oh, and of course: these speakers are pretty big, measuring 10.75" (27cm) x 7" (18cm) x 9" (23cm) — thus, make sure you have enough desk space to accommodate them, otherwise go with the smaller A2+ model.

Using It





Oh, wow.

Most likely, that will be your first realization when you crank the minimum audio output from your computer (a measly 2% in Windows 8), turn the knob on the A5+ to max, and realize that for most of your time using the A5+, you might never reach 50% of the full volume, because they will be more than adequate. In case you need a 16 to 24-bit DAC (so one can connect the A5+ over USB instead of 3.5mm audio jack), AudioEngine offers those as (expensive) accessories, as well as wireless audio transmission kit that works over USB.


Speaking of audio quality: the A2+ sounds like crap in comparison, but the fact that AudioEngine's speakers are such a step above nearly all desktop

speakers on the market, you'd be even more let-down by any other offering in the same category. Low, high, and mid ranges are all very evenly matched and audible, while the bass is actually very, very supportive of the tracks that I've played, but they're not overwhelming — *or even worse: bass heavy*. The AudioEngine A5+ has enough accuracy to even be used in a professional audio setup; I don't see why not.

Conclusion

Score: 9/10





Now, you might have asked yourself this: “Stefan, why give the A5+ a less than perfect score for speakers that pretty much fill all of your audio needs, and more?” Good question.

It’s because of the size — no, no, no — they’re *not* too big. For the price, class, and quality, the A5+ is the perfect size. It’s that in the same class, there are undoubtedly speakers with similar (or even better) audio quality, while the A2+, in its diminutive form, cannot be beat, because there’s nothing else on the market quite like it. All of that ridiculous analyzing aside, I can say that AudioEngine produces the best consumer computer speakers available in existence. And that’s

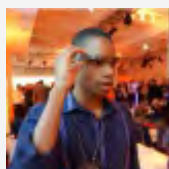
saying a lot.

Pros

- Fantastic audio quality
- Remote is an added bonus
- Bamboo finish is a treat

Cons

- Expensive (but what did you expect?)



— **Stefan Etienne**

Founded tech site LaptopMemo. 17-years-old, loves tea, tennis, reading, tech, gaming, + more.

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