

Audio Review: Audioengine's Classy B2 Bluetooth Speaker

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My house is usually full of music in one way, shape, or form. And since the music more oft than not consists of the jazz greats, I'm always on the hunt for the best ways to hear the vast dynamic range of Louis Armstrong hitting the highest trumpet notes and Charles Mingus' low bass – without costing too much, taking up too much space, nor looking out of place. Enter the [Audioengine B2](#) Bluetooth speaker.





The speaker (\$299 at B&H) is a hefty 10 pounds, making it feel like a quality product. The speaker unit is 4 inches high, 12 inches wide and 5.3 inches deep. It comes in black ash, zebrawood, or walnut. I tested the walnut version with a gray grille that covers two woofers (each 2.75 inches, Kevlar) and two tweeters (each .75 inches, silk dome). There is a total of 60 watts of output.

On the back, a Volume knob, Bluetooth pairing button, 3.5mm Aux input, power button, connection for included power cable, and a connection for the included Bluetooth antenna. Pairing took less than a minute once the power switch was flipped on, appearing on my smartphone almost instantly.

If you are concerned about style and design most, this is the unit for you. It looks beautiful on a bookshelf and doesn't take up a lot of room. It definitely would not be out of place in an office, either. Since there aren't a lot of nooks and crannies for various buttons, etc., cleaning it with a simple wipe occasionally is all it takes. In short: it looks classy – like it SHOULD be playing the jazz I had pumping through it. That's opposed to my [Bose SoundDock Series III Digital Music System](#), which to me still looks like something from the Sharper Image catalog circa 1999 (though is less pricey at \$249 through B&H).

The sound of Audioengine's B2 should meet the needs of most when it comes to sound. It doesn't have any kind of bass boost and instead aims to provide a more complete sound that covers all aspects of a composition. Audioengine claims the unit employs "similar high-end technology, components, and design philosophy" behind studio monitors used by producers. I wouldn't expect this to become the studio standard by any means, but you can definitely hear what they mean.

Specific for this test, I played Sonny Rollins' "The Bridge." The rolling bass was clear and not overbearing, while the sax and guitar were balanced perfectly. With the Bose SoundDock, the bass often overpowers the other instruments and there isn't much you can do about it. That being said, if you are more into dance music and using a Bluetooth speaker to power your party, the Bose SoundDock might be a better, wall-shaking choice.



However, for its refined look of style, design and simple elegance – and focus on providing a more complete music experience you don't want to spend a ton – Audioengine B2 is the way to go.



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