

REVIEW: AUDIOENGINE'S B1 BLUETOOTH MUSIC RECEIVER

Posted by [Dr. MacEnstein](#) on Sunday, February 8, 2015 - 2 Comments



I'm about to try to make a case for why you should want the \$189 [Audioengine's B1 Bluetooth Music Receiver](#). It won't be easy, as for that price you could get TWO Airport Expresses that could also wirelessly stream music, or for \$10 more you could have an Airport Extreme, which boasts a bunch of useful features in addition to streaming music. So why would you want to pay for a one-trick pony that promises only the simplest way to get the best sounding streamed audio to your speaker system? Well, there's two reasons right there.

I will first say that I have an Airport Extreme and two Airport Expresses, and I recently replaced them with a single Asus router and have given up on Airplay because I have had just horrible WiFi drop outs when streaming music around my house. You would think I live in a mansion with 2 foot concrete walls the way my wifi went in and out for no discernible reason. In addition, the sound from the Airports was best described as "fine". I usually chalked it up to I was streaming a compressed audio stream already so how good COULD it sound, really? Well, the answer is, quite a bit better, assuming you have a decent speaker system and a decent ear.



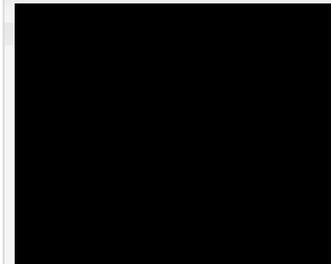
Audioengine has always impressed us with their various audio offerings, and the B1 certainly feels at home in their lineup. The thing is solid, or as solid as something this small can be. Design-wise, Audioengine went with a sleek, black aluminum shell that is largely unassuming and shouldn't stand out or distract too much from your existing setup. There is one fairly bright white LED on the front of the unit which might be my only design complaint. The light serves dual purpose as the power button, and I suppose it's constantly illuminated to let you know it is on, (it also blinks during bluetooth pairing) but it could be a little smaller, or perhaps a softer green or something would have been nice. Not that EVERYTHING in my setup doesn't already have something similar shining back at me, but still... In fact, there's really almost no reason for the light, as the B1 never TRULY turns off. The light goes off after about 15 minutes of inactivity, but you could come back the next day, choose the B1 in your bluetooth settings, and begin streaming to it again without getting near the power button. Personally, I love this as other Bluetooth devices power off completely when they disconnect, and my lazy butt likes knowing I can always start music playing without getting off the couch or out of bed.

There is also an antenna which sticks up from the rear of the receiver, which could easily have made the whole thing look horrible, but somehow it doesn't. It's not overly large, and it is a necessary evil as anyone who has experienced the range-fallof of normal bluetooth receivers will tell you. You have the option of connecting the B1 to your speaker system via either the included RCA cable or an optical (TOSLINK) audio jack (cable not included).

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While the B1 certainly looks nice, what sets it apart from other wireless streaming receivers is its ease of setup, its extended range (up to 100 feet), and its advanced audio signal processing circuitry and inclusion of a 24-bit high-performance DAC. The B1 also has a very low latency of about 30ms (milliseconds) which means streaming the audio from videos you are playing on your phone syncs up nicely with no noticeable lip sync issues.



Setting up the B1 is as simple as setting up most Bluetooth devices. Simply plug in its power cable, connect it to you speaker, and select it as a speaker in your Bluetooth settings on your iPhone (or computer). I really must say Bluetooth has gotten so much better over the years, and the range of the B1 is certainly enough to work from every room in my Bi-Level house. The larger (theoretical) range of AirPlay never held promise for me, and I am loving the range on the B1. Finally NO DROP OUTS!



Conclusion

Audioengine's B1 is not for everyone, but even moderate audiophiles will be raving about its audio quality and ease of use. If you're someone who doesn't mind listening to AM, or even FM radio, then you probably can save your money. But if you have a nice home audio system and want to add great sounding, easy to setup wireless audio into the equation, take advantage of **Audioengine's free 30 day trial**. We're pretty sure you'll love it.

Audioengine's B1 Bluetooth Music Receiver (\$189)



Price: \$189 on Audioengine's site

Pros: Just wonderful sound, design, ease of use and much better than average Bluetooth range

Cons: A little pricey for a one trick pony. Probably have to care a lot about sound quality and have a decent audio



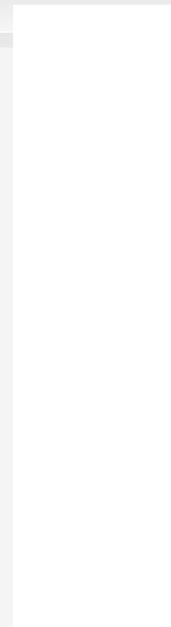
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