

Shure SE420 earphones

Is it really worth £250 to hear your music better on the go?

by Stuart Miles published on 6 June 2007

So you've spent £200 on a brand new top of the range MP3 player and then got to trust the cheap headphones in the box to give you that mellow rich sound you've been hoping for.

Shure, makers of in-ear headphones for the music profession for years, has announced its latest range - the SEs to solve this problem. So are the steep price tags worth the investment? We check out the SE420s to find out.

To give you an idea of what the SE420 are, they sit in a range of four earphones from Shure that start at £99 for the SE210s and finish at £330 for the SE530s. The SE420 come in at £249 and are the second best the set the company offers, and as you can expect for that price they need to perform.

Well, not surprisingly, they do perform very well indeed, even against the company's entry level offering (that's the £99 ones) thanks to the two drivers, one for high frequencies, the other for bass.

Fitting snugly in your ear, the squeegee ear buds form a sound barrier making them almost as good as noise cancelling sets without the big cans on your head. Listening to them on the late night train with plenty of chatting we were unable to hear anything once the music was turned on.

As for the sound, probably the best way to describe the performance was like a decent bottle of wine that had been left to breath for half an hour before you tuck in.

Listening to everything from Johnny Cash's Hurt to some German Techno Funk from the Run Lola Run soundtrack the base resonated beautifully while the treble failed to pierce, like it does with cheaper models.



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One really nice design feature is the ability to remove virtually all the cable, meaning if you've got an MP3 player in your top pocket on a run you don't need to carry the long cable with you.

VERDICT

All this hyperbole might sound a bit airy fairy considering that they are more expensive than most MP3 players on the market, but then this is a case of paying for better sound quality than you've probably got in your house.

So should you invest? Well it does come down to a matter of how well you think your ears will benefit from the extra outlay.

For us the sound was noticeably different to the company's entry-level, but still top level for most headphones, SE210 set and light years away from the performance of any earphones that ship in the box.

Not one for the faint hearted or, for that matter on a tight budget.

At a glance

What is it?

Expensive earphones

Good

Sound thankfully, fit

Bad

Expensive

Verdict

Not one for the faint hearted or, for that matter on a tight budget

Price £249.99

Our score

8/10

Your score

?/10