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Samsung F400 mobile phone - First Look

Can a speaker bring you music to your ears?

by Stuart Miles published on 19 February 2008

Samsung's latest music phone promises to bring the sounds directly to you with a built-in speaker developed by Bang & Olufsen, but can it perform? We get jiggy with the new handset at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona Spain.

The Samsung F400 follows the company's U600 range at first with its slider design however manages to take a leaf out of Nokia's book at the same time.

Offering 3.6Mbps HSDPA with UMTS and EDGE, the handset measures 103 x 48 x 16.9mm in dimensions.

The front is dominated by a 2.2-inch TFT 240 x 320 resolution LCD screen with menu keys sitting uncomfortably below, with almost too much space surrounding them.

The mobile phone, with its polished front, sports a dual slider design. Slide the screen upwards and you reveal a simple metal keypad that is easy to use and inoffensive in its approach. There are no crazy buttons and no hidden tricks.

Slide the screen downwards and instead of revealing media controls as you do on the Nokia N95 and now N96, you reveal a speaker created by Bang & Olufsen.

The design and feel of the speaker is similar to that of the K5 from the company's MP3 player range, with a silver grill.

Following Samsung's previous partnerships with high-end audio company Bang & Olufsen on the Serene and Serenata, the ICEamp technology is revealed promising, and in our brief test delivering, great sound on the go better than most



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music phones.

The music sounded well-rounded and even on the show floor, which was very loud, good enough to enjoy. Samsung has helped users benefit even further from the speaker by including a dedicated music player that can be accessed without having to open the phone.

Using the same application as found in current models, users can scroll through tracks via artist, genre, album, etc. A quick press of a button and the music comes blaring out.

Continuing with the music front the F400 sports an FM radio with RDS, and music library and recognition software.

But as usual with Samsung phones, they aren't just a one trick pony so the F400 features a stack of other features including a 3-megapixel CMOS camera and superfast connection for surfing the Web.

All this is controlled via the now-standard Samsung graphical interface and it's easy to use with no real surprises.

VERDICT

The F400 see Samsung really trying to tackle the Sony Ericsson Walkman range head-on and the team-up with Bang & Olufsen is only going to help.

While, like the K5, some will see the built-in speaker as an annoyance, those looking to share their songs on the go will be able to revel in the decent sound rather than tinny cacophony that phones normally provide.

And hey, if the kids on the back of the bus are going to annoy you with their breakbeat tunes, at least this way they are going to do it with a sound you can appreciate.

It looks very promising.

At a glance

What is it?

Music phone

Good

Built-in stereo speaker from Bang & Olufsen, HSDPA, 3-megapixel camera

Bad

Not much on the music front

Verdict

If the kids on the back of the bus are going to annoy you with their breakbeat tunes, at least this way they are going to do it with a sound you can appreciate

Price price dependant on contract

Your score

?/10

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The Samsung F400 will is due out later this year.