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Philips DC910 Docking Entertainment System

Mini soundbar for your iPod

by Chris Hall published on 10 November 2008

Philips have picked up a design cue from their range of home cinema soundbars to create the DC910, an iPod docking station. But can the DC910 live up to the impressive performance of some of Philips' home cinema range? We find out.

The design is instantly recognisable, a straight bar housing the speakers, sitting on a controlling base, which in turn sits on a stand. Surrounding the speaker unit is the customary Philips flare detail, which is common across most of their range of audio-visual products. The speaker grill is metal and for the most part, the unit seems to have the usual good build quality you expect from Philips.

Unfortunately the stand was over-looked, resulting in an unfortunate creak issuing whenever you touch the unit. Two small plastic pins have been used to align the main body of the system on the stand, and as these pins move the unfortunate creak is heard. The base does have rubber feet on it however, so it is a shame that such a small point spoils the overall effect. It can also be wall-mounted, and fixings are supplied for this.

Hiding under the metal grill you'll find six speakers however: two 3-inch main drivers, two 1.5-inch tweeters and two wOOx bass radiators that push the bass out of the back. Set in the front of the speaker bar is the actual dock, which is on a swivel mount, so if you have an iPod touch or new nano, you'll be able to rotate to get the best aspect ratio for viewing any movies or photos. You do get a number of inserts to support your iPod and your iPhone will work, but only in offline mode.

Beneath the speakers are the main controls,



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which are simple, allowing you to access most options, however, you'll need to resort to the supplied dinky remote to get the most from the system, as this will give you menu access for your iPod. The remote has responsive controls and is fairly compact, it is just a shame that there is no where to slot the remote when out of use - a simple clip on the back would have stopped it from getting lost.

Across the top of the device you are presented with two more options - an MMC/SD card slot, as well as a USB port, meaning you can play any music (in MP3 or WMA formats) that you might have on these devices, although obviously you then don't get the advantage of a screen, but it is an easy way for a guest to pull the card from their MP3 player and away you go. You'll also find two 3.5mm auxiliary inputs around the back, so you could easily rig this up to a different MP3 player, PC, or even TV. There is an FM radio onboard too.

You'll also find (or not find as the case may be) that there is no 3.5mm headphone socket. This seems an oversight and a significant one at that, because if you have taken the time to connect up a number of devices as you might do in a bedroom, then you can't just make all that private with a single headphone connection.

When it comes to music playback you'll notice that bass is fairly well presented. We say fairly well, because it is not fantastic - certainly it delivers bass, but that bass delivery seems to come at the cost of crisp mid and high ranges. There is a "Dynamic Bass Boost" option, which unfortunately seems to apply a bass blanket across the entire sound range resulting in a muffled effect.

There are also four preset options, giving you rock, jazz, classic and pop options. In our tests, we couldn't really see (hear) that these made any great difference to the overall effect, and are probably best left alone. We found on several

At a glance

What is it?

iPod dock

Good

Plenty of features, loud volume

Bad

Sound quality not the best, stand is creaky

Verdict

If sound quality is an absolute must, then you'll be better off looking elsewhere, but as an overall package, there is plenty on offer here

Price £149.99

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10

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occasions that music with heavy bass, or heavy guitar parts, made DC910 trip over itself, struggling to authentically deliver the music.

That said, it needs to be remembered that this is principally an iPod dock and some consideration needs to be given for size, as the DC910 is a reasonably compact unit, and at only 120mm deep, will sit happily on most bookcases or window ledges without too much difficulty. You'll also get a respectable level of volume from the dock, with 2x 15W RMS, meaning you'll easily annoy the neighbours.

VERDICT

The DC910 lends itself to the bedroom as in standby it features a clock, with a timer, so you can wake up to whatever you want. It also starts quiet, rather than belting out your chosen track. You also get a sleep option.

As a complete package you get a reasonable amount from the DC910, with the other features aside from the iPod dock meaning you can ditch your old clock radio and have a simple well designed solution.

If sound quality is an absolute must, then you'll be better off looking elsewhere, but as an overall package, there is plenty on offer here.