

Iriver N10

by Stuart Miles published on 14 December 2004

With so many MP3 players available on the market, manufacturers now need to come up with more ingenious ways to entice you in to choosing its player over the competition. For some the temptation to be too wacky has become too much. In this case it's iriver with the N10 but wackiness aside, does the player make the grade? While we are more concerned with the product than the packaging, in the case of the N10 it has to be mentioned. Styled to look like the latest bottle of perfume from a French fashion house, the N10 tries to set the mood from the beginning. Take it out of the box and the first thing you'll notice is that you are encouraged to wear this device like a necklace around your neck. Headphones are built-in to a rubber necklace and the mp3 player becomes the pendant (it's small enough at 62 x 27 x 13 mm and weighs only 24 grams). The idea is a novel one, but are we really expected to wear our music players like they were jewellery? But the euro-pop image doesn't stop there and included in the box is a strange sweatband bracelet and we still can't work out how to use it, nor would want to work out how to use - it's at least 20 years out of fashion and hasn't come back in again. Of course for the more sensible among us the player luckily comes with a replacement cap that means the unit can be pocketed. Style-wise, the device manages to carry it off and the display is hidden behind a mirrored screen glowing turquoise. The screen offers all the usual data; song title, time, battery. Get past the style elements of the player and the unit offers MP3 and WMA support. Transferring songs to and from the player to a PC is done via a USB connection and annoyingly you have to do this via the iriver music software. The disc in keeping with the fashion setting box and player is business card shaped and PowerBook. In this case some laptop users should be wary of this before they invest (Luckily, the software is downloadable). The player itself comes in 128Mb, 256Mb and 512Mb versions and according to iriver has a 12 hour battery life and in our tests



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this was true to form. Iriver says its secret is because the blacklit LCD doesn't require much power, either way it means that it should last you a week of commuting to work five days a week.

VERDICT

On the outset the player is for the fashion conscious and unfortunately the price reflects this. Why you would pay more money than a 5Gb MP3 player for a 512Mb MP3 player regardless of style is beyond us, yes you are getting a smaller model that weights a mere 24 grams, but let's be serious about it, are you really going to wear this player around your neck? The sorry story is that we doubt it very much.

At a glance

What is it?

Small MP3 player

Good

Small and discreet

Bad

Very European in its fashion sense

Verdict

Stylish and small, but are you really going to wear it as a pendant as iriver suggests? I very much doubt it.

Price £200

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10