

Refreshingly Simple

By John Fardoulis

Sudio's range of products continues to expand, with three new models appearing. They say their products are designed to be 'refreshingly simple'. We found Brio, Alto and Linc to be rather versatile as well.

This isn't the first and won't be the last time that we look at the types of products you see on this page. For a change though, insight comes from my personal usage scenarios.

Sudio Alto

Reviews on this and the adjacent page took place while listening to Sudio's Alto (stereo Bluetooth headphones/PHF), worn while writing.

Songs were streamed from Yahoo!'s Music Jukebox application - loaded on the computer where these words are being typed. And music definitely helps stimulate creativity.

Freedom of movement that cord-free listening provides isn't really noticed while sitting in one spot but comes to life when getting up to go to the front office reception area, lunch room, or even the toilet.

It's like having headphones magically embedded in your ears, reminding you where the music was coming from. Rather novel when music is streaming over the internet.

Alto was also used to play music stored on a memory card in various phones, with one of the major advantages being calls weren't missed because the music pauses when a call comes in.

Or an even more advanced cross-over, a standard (non-stereo) Bluetooth phone connected at the same time as computer music, with the Bluetooth headphones accepting two connections - muting computer music when a call came in. In the past I've missed calls because of not hearing the phone ring when headphones were on. Not any more using this technique. Sounds a bit complicated but is actually very cool.

Sudio say that up to 10 hours talk and 600 hours standby time is available from a single charge.

According to Wikipedia, in music, an alto or contralto is a singer with a vocal range somewhere between a tenor and a mezzo-soprano.

Sudio Brio

Sudio have a new zero-install hands-free unit named Brio. Products like this are usually attached to the sun visor in a car as a low fuss hands-free unit used while driving.

Just in case anyone's forgotten, it's still illegal to drive with a phone held up to your face. Pricing of a unit such as the Brio generally the same or less the cost of being fined, so why not buy one?

Up to 6 hours talk and 550 hours of standby time is quoted, even though Brio is rather small. Like a small egg-shaped equivalent of a mobile phone. It's a cute little egg.

Located in the centre of the unit is a round screen with a four line multi-colour display. This screen guides you through what's going on and also shows caller ID. Menu layout is pretty straight forward, rather icon driven to help

guide you through.

Two charging options are provided in the box, via a computer USB cable, or car cigarette lighter socket.

A couple of different mounting options are also provided: a sun visor clip attaching the Brio via magnets and a clip that locks onto car air-conditioner vents.

The visor clip can also be used on a desk, for hands-free functionality while in the office or ad hoc conference calls via mobile in a boardroom or lounge room.

A lot of handsets have inbuilt hands-free speakerphones these days but they're a bit soft and awkward to use at arm's length. Most people will probably put the Brio in the car and leave it there but I experimented by carrying it around for a few days. It was good for allowing multiple people to get involved in a conversation at the Brio end, say at a ferry wharf when calling friends to hurry in time to make a boat pick up. Or in a beer garden at a pub, letting another person in on a conversation with several people who were there.

The Brio is easy to use, with a few simple buttons around the edges of the screen. Volume up/down, send/end, menu and phonebook.

Something rather interesting was a phonebook function, where the Brio synced with the phone contacts. After initial setup, you can scroll through its phonebook and initiate a call - without having to touch the mobile. This could be good if a mobile's floating around in the console of a car or in a bag while driving, with the Brio easier to reach on the visor. You can delete numbers stored in its phonebook if lending it to someone else.

In summary, this is a cute but practical little unit. Perhaps more powerful than it looks.

Sudio Linc

About a month ago, I upgraded to a new desktop computer and thus far have been holding off installing any Bluetooth products. I sort of had it in my mind that too many things were installed on the old machine and wanted to keep the new one clean. But Sudio's Linc looked interesting enough to break the seal.

And guess what, music is now directly streaming into my ears through Sudio's Alto wireless headphones, compliments of the new computer. Skype could be used just as easily as well.

Don't ask what I'm listening to, I'm in a bizarre mood. That's the beauty of Yahoo!'s Music Jukebox, with over 2 Million tracks in their library, all available for a fixed price each month. The depth and breadth of music is incredible.

I also installed GPS mapping software on an older laptop, and connected to Nokia's LD-3W Bluetooth GPS unit using Linc. Very cool for logging course information on boats.

What does Linc do? Pretty obvious, it's a Bluetooth plug that links things that would have previously required a cable. Linc can for many reasons; to exchange and transfer information, images, video, photos and music between a phone and computer and also hook up a laptop via a phone over mobile broadband.



Sudio Alto



Sudio Brio



Sudio Linc