

ADL

Audio Video Magazine South Africa ADL EH008 Review

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ADL EH800

A lot of my day to day life involves either headphones or earphones. Be it pleasure or work, I've always got something stuck on or inside my (according to some colleagues) elf-like appendages. So I consider myself somewhat of an expert in the arena.

The EH800s are my second helping of ADL products from this Japanese-based company, and although I didn't know anything about them before that, they're quickly winning me over with their sleek, ultra-modern styling – and of course Japanese engineering where you need it most on a pair of earphones. What does that mean? Well basically it means that there's enough tech inside these little things to run the Apollo 11 capsule. Let's have a look.

Unpacking the EH800s, it becomes clear that you've got something quite special. Firstly they have one of the most, if not *the* most, ingenious carry case system for storing your earphones neatly and safely that I've ever seen. A rubberized mould shaped like the carry case itself allows you to slot both the earpieces and the 3,5 mm connector perfectly in place before you roll up the cable. What a pleasure!

The outer housing of the earpieces themselves is constructed of carbon fibre for that legendary damping ability, while the inside is a special ABS resin for enhanced driver stabilization. The end plates are diamond-cut aluminium, subtly branded with ADL's logo. An extra rubber outer seal ring has been added for better sound isolation and also adds a touch of flair for an overall modern, funky style.

Build quality seems impeccable all the way down to the tangle-resistant cable and adjustable earpieces, and I can see them lasting a good long while.

Sound reproduction comes at you in the form of a dual-driver design. For the mid to low frequencies there is an 8 mm Alpha-Cryo treated driver, while a similarly treated 5,8 mm driver with titanium trembler film handles all your high frequencies. In a word, the sound performance is clear. Crystal clear to be exact, and it's probably



the most controlled sound I've ever heard from an in-ear design.

The outer seal ring ensures that the bass is delivered with all the bass boom to satisfy your inner teenager and gives you that big, warm feeling you sometimes don't get from in-ears that don't fit so snugly. I did find that I was constantly fixing the seal ring back into its proper position given the fact that they are a separate piece altogether. This tweaking is probably my only criticism and although there is the luxury of choice to leave it off if you want, I have to wonder if a fixed ring might do a better job.

All in all I found the sound well-balanced, with an exciting amount of urgency. Their absolute precision makes them sound almost like reference earphones and although some might say they could've added a bit of fun to the experience, as a sound purist I really appreciate this level of control and accuracy. Plus, there's this thing called an equalizer if you want a bit more bass pump or midrange warmth.

I was fortunate enough to be reviewing the ADL A1 headphone amplifier at the same time and the combination of the two is really something to behold, because the A1 unlocks the true characteristics and

nuance of the EH800s without affecting the amazing clarity. The expansion of the already incredible sound is like Christmas in your ears as you're filled with the entire arsenal of the frequency spectrum.

Unlike every other pair of quality earphones on the market right now, the EH800s don't come with the expected second cord with microphone and mini controls for use with your phone.

Although this did initially make me raise an eyebrow, I like this kind of bold move that says, "Only serious audiophiles need apply".

The EH800s are definitely in the 'audiophile' league and are up there with the best I've ever reviewed. Beautiful to behold and stunning to listen to, they've sorted out the worst part of owning a pair of in-ears... storage! If you're not a fan of in-ears, these would probably turn you.

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw

VITAL STATS

Type..... In-ear
Acoustic design... Dual dynamic drivers
Drivers..... 2 x 8 mm
(Mid-low frequency)
2x 5,8 mm (High frequency)
Sensitivity 100+/-3 dB SPL
(130 mW input @ 1 kHz)
Frequency response..... 20Hz – 20 kHz
Impedance..... 19 ohms @ 1 kHz
Weight..... 15g

Price R2 550

Verdict

Innovative Japanese design with audiophile-grade sound.

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OUR RATING: 84 / 100

