



Hifiman Sundara Review

FATTAH ALAM KHAN

Before I purchased this headphone, I read everywhere that this was one of the best options under the 350 USD budget (both between dynamic drivers and planars)! I have been using this headphone for over 2 weeks now and this gets better every day. The cans came in a paper box. After taking off the top cover, I found the warranty card and the manual.

Beneath it was the Sundaras sitting snug inside the foam cutout wrapped in a silky black cloth. Hifiman didn't provide many accessories with this model, just the connecting wires and a quarter-inch

adapter to go with it. Although this looks larger than your typical headphone, as soon as I put it on my head, it just disappeared.

The comfort is on another level, the earpads are large and barely touches my ears (they sit around my ears), not to mention how soft they are. The rest of the headphone is built of metal and plastic.

The Sundaras are rated at 37 Ohm, which means that they are not hard to drive. But like all planar headphones, this comes to life if you pair it with a good amplifier. Running this beast off a phone or the 3.5mm port of your PC will mean that you are seriously underutilizing it. I used two devices to test my unit, the Topping NX4S portable amplifier and then the Topping DX3 Pro.

The first two words I would use to describe the Sundaras are "airy" and "spacious". It seemed like the sound was coming from all around you, yet you could put your finger exactly where the sound was coming from. I played "Bubbles" by Yosi Horikawa. The imaging blew my mind, there were so things

happening at once in this song and yet each one of them could be distinguished separately. They were happening all around you.

Secondly, I played "The Chain" by Fleetwood Mac. This particular track is used by a lot of people to test their headphone/ earphone. The kick drum in this track was fast and precise. This was expected to be honest, planars are known for their fast and accurate bass reproduction. Any track that I played later that had a good amount of bass in it, I thoroughly enjoyed it. The bass was tight, controlled and did not bleed into the mids in any track. I am personally am a bit treble sensitive, but I had no problem with the Sundara's treble. The treble in these is very detailed without being fatiguing at all. The midrange is also very transparent and clear. I prefer a "lush" and "meatier" mids, so this was the only region that the Sundara left me wanting for more. But overall, the tonality of this headphone is excellent.

There is very little to complain about the sound in this price range. About the devices that I used, the Topping DX3 Pro

was better suited for my taste. It sounded a bit more "whole" for a lack of better word. The NX4S is an excellent portable DAC+AMP and is probably unbeatable for this price, but it sounds too technical with the Sundara. The synergy between the DX3 Pro and the Sundara is better in my opinion.

That is not to say that I have no complaints overall, it would have been nice if Hifiman included a carrying case with these. The worst part of this headphone is the cable, I honestly expected a better cable than this, it gets tangled and it often remains like that. I also would have liked if the cable length was 3 meters like the Audio-Technica M30X.

In conclusion, if you are in the market for planar (or for any headphone in most cases) in the \$350 budget, this thing is an absolute beast. Pair this with a good pair of DAC+AMP and you are good to go for years. I don't see myself upgrading to another planar anytime soon. There simply isn't any planar magnetic headphone that can match this in this price range.