



PLANAR MAGNETIC HEADPHONES

Blue Ella

£655, BLUEMIC.COM

Vs

Oppo PM-2

£599, OPPODIGITAL.CO.UK

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

With a clamping headband and whopping driver enclosures, Ella's style may not suit everyone - but we're fans. Heavy padding and synthy-leather earcups provide a snug fit. The cans ship with two 3.5mm audio cables, one offering iPhone control.

FEATURES ★★★★★☆

An integrated 250mW amp is used to energise the 50x50mm planar magnetic drivers, and battery life should see the day out. The amp enhances dynamics and bass reach. The design also provides an element of passive noise cancellation.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★☆

Crisp articulation and naturalistic imaging are hallmarks of planar magnetic headphones, but they can lack bass. Thanks to amplification, that's not an issue here. Vocals are sweet and musicality with all hi-res audio sources is outstanding.

USABILITY ★★★☆☆

The funky design is a head-turner, and doubtless looks cool when you're vlogging, but it's too bulky for a commute or gym session. The multi-joined headband can prove a little fatiguing, and the cans feel chunky around the neck.

VERDICT

We're impressed The dramatic design is cool; the amp emphasises dynamic attack; bass is great.
We'd improve Too bulky for everyday use; the head-hugging design is fatiguing.

★★★★★☆☆

DESIGN ★★★★★☆

A stripped-back version of Oppo's PM-1 flagship headphones, these cans are seductively light and comfortable. The headband is padded while the cup holders swing and pivot. Their open-back design compromises noise isolation, though.

FEATURES ★★★★★☆

The PM-2 use a seven-layer flat diagram and magnet arrangement. The open-back design adds space to the soundstage, but needs a quiet place to work well. The audio cable connects via two mono mini-jacks, while a headphone jack is included.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★★

The dimensionality we experienced with the PM-2 is invigorating. Crunchy guitars and flouncy strings all sound nuanced and real. Bass-light perhaps, but a sublime listen. Partner with a headphone amp for the best attack and clarity.

USABILITY ★★★☆☆

These Oppos are unashamedly play-at-home. The open-back design makes them ill-suited for travelling, as they let ambient noise in. Don't squander them on lossy sources either. They revel in hi-res 24-bit audio, regardless of genre.

VERDICT

We're impressed Boasts detail and musicality in abundance; lightweight design is easy to wear.
We'd improve Don't expect booming bass, as it's not there; the latex ear cushions get warm quickly.

★★★★★☆☆

2nd

1st

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