

Quick Picks *iPod speakers*

We recently tested 10 models ranging in price from \$140 to \$600. In general, we found sound quality comparable to what you'd get with a decent table stereo radio—not equivalent to a home-theater system or component speakers, but fine for casual listening. Like all speakers and sound systems, each has a unique tone quality or timbre, and you might prefer one system's personality to another. The size and features—whether it's a portable or tabletop model—and the functionality it offers should also be considered. All the models in the Ratings accept a line input from non-iPod players. Here are several models we recommend for various uses.

Quick Picks

Best values for tabletop use:

[Cambridge SoundWorks SoundWorks Radio CD 745i](#)
\$350

This fairly large system gives you excellent sound quality and a lot of functionality for the money. The SoundWorks is a tabletop clock radio with a built-in CD player and a separate dock for your iPod. The iPod dock has composite-video and S-video outputs, so you can hook it up to a TV to watch your videos. Tone controls let you adjust the sound to your preferences. The remote control can address all the usual iPod functionality, so you don't have to tinker with the player itself to change settings, for example.

[Altec Lansing iMV712](#) \$300

With top-notch sound and a built-in 8.5-inch widescreen LCD screen, this system is the best of the bunch for watching videos stored on your iPod. It has inputs that accept audio and video from other devices as well. Want a bigger picture? Use the S-video output to connect to an external display. It's relatively big but not as heavy as you might expect.

Good choices for portable use:

[Bose SoundDock Portable](#) \$400

If you want the best sound in a smallish, portable package, check out this Bose. It has excellent sound, can run on a removable rechargeable battery or AC, and weighs just over 5 pounds. The remote is good only for basic playback; it can't access the iPod menu.

[Altec Lansing iM600](#) \$140

If you want to spend less for a portable system and don't demand the very best sound, the Altec is worth a look. Sound was very good, though lacking in bass. You can attach a subwoofer (\$50) to remedy that. This small, light unit weighs only 2.6 pounds, and it folds into an even smaller size. It includes an AM/FM radio. The rechargeable battery is built-in and can't be removed by the user.

Best-sounding tabletops, but expensive:

[Chestnut Hill Sound George](#) \$500

The George has excellent sound and enough oomph to fill a good-sized room. It's the most fully featured system we tested, and one of the most expensive. Where it really sets itself apart from other systems is the ease with which it can control the iPod. The removable front-panel control doubles as a remote with knobs and navigation buttons that act as an iPod click-wheel for scrolling through your songs; the built-in screen on the remote looks much like the iPod screen. The remote also has eight "jump" buttons, each assigned with three letters to quickly search through your artists or songs by alphabetical list. It uses an RF remote so that it doesn't need a line of sight to the main unit to control the iPod. Other features include an AM/FM radio, alarm clock, audio minijack to connect to other audio devices, and a line out to listen to your iPod on an external system while using the remote to choose songs. The remote can be recharged with the included separate charging stand. The downside to the George is its price tag: \$500.

[Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin](#) \$600

This uniquely designed system resembles a football, but a heavy one—it weighs more than 17 pounds. Sound was excellent, and it was rich and full enough to give it presence in a sizable room. You'll pay handsomely for that quality, though. The remote is good only for basic playback; it can't access the iPod menu.

Ratings *iPod speakers*

Quick Picks	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Sound quality	Versatility	Size (HxWxD) (in.)	Weight (lb.)	Remote controls iPod menu	CD player	Built-in FM radio	Alarm clock	Battery type
*	Cambridge Soundworks SoundWorks Radio CD 745i	\$350	84.			5x14x11	12.4	●	●	●	●	none
*	Altec Lansing iMV712	300	78.			7.6x18.8x9.5	8.9	●				none
*	Chestnut Hill Sound George	500	77.			4.9x14.3x10.7	13	●		●	●	none
*	Altec Lansing iM600	140	76.			6.1x11.2x4.9	2.6			●		built-in rechargeable
*	Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin	600	74.			7.7x25.5x9.5	17.4					none
	Harman Kardon Go+Play	350	71.			10x19x9.5	9.3	●				8 Ds
*	Bose SoundDock Portable	400	69.			6.7x12.2x5.8	5.4					removable rechargeable
	iLuv i199	185	67.			5x15.4x10	9.6		●	●	●	none
	Polk Audio miDock Studio for iPod	185	64.			6x17.2x8.5	7.5					8 Cs
	Acoustic Research black Vault AR 2.1 Vacuum Tube	150	58.			9.3x14x7	9.3	●				none

GUIDE TO THE RATINGS

Price is the approximate retail price. **Overall score** is based on Sound Quality and Versatility. **Sound quality** reflects the speakers' ability to reproduce sound accurately. **Versatility** is based on features and judgments on the operation and layout of the unit and remote control. **Size** is measured in inches for height, width and depth (HxWxD). For the Acoustic Research Vacuum Tube, dimension includes the separate pair of speakers. **Weight** is measured in pounds. The weight includes a rechargeable battery if the system comes with one, but it does not include the weight of alkaline batteries if the system accommodates them. **Remote controls iPod menu** indicates the system's remote can access all the menus and functionality of an iPod. (Its controlling capability is not limited to basic playback functions such as play, pause, and forward.) **CD player** denotes a built-in CD player. Built-in FM radio indicates the unit can tune in local FM radio stations. **Alarm clock** denotes the unit can wake you up with music from an integrated CD player or an iPod. **Battery type** indicates if the system works on batteries in addition to AC power. If applicable, we note the type (built-in rechargeable, rechargeable, or disposable alkaline), size (AA, AAA, C, D, etc.) and number of batteries.