

iPod Garage

Voice of the iPod Generation

KENSINGTON SX 2000 SPEAKERS FOR IPOD



Product purpose: The Kensington SX 2000 is a dockable iPod speaker system.

Positives: Bigger bass sound than most sub-\$200 dockable systems. Loud enough to fill a room. Uses universal iPod docking system and comes with trays for some older iPods. iPod charges while docked. Audio-in port for non-dockable iPods.

Concerns: Bass sounds dry/synthetic when compared to high-end dockable systems. No battery option. No remote control.

Pricing and availability: currently available from Kensington for **\$159.99**, but widely available in the **\$110-120 range** from online retailers.

Company website: Kensington.com

Works with: Any dockable iPod (Universal Docking system, includes trays for iPod mini and 20 GB Fourth Generation iPod)

In detail: iPod users who want a dockable speaker system with a big bass sound have up until now had two options: spend close to \$200 to get it, or learn to live without it. But Kensington is offering a third option in the form of the SX 2000, a dockable system which is widely available for about \$110 and uses a technology called "nxt" to essentially create the bass synthetically. And what's more, you can crank it loud enough to easily fill a room.



The SX 2000 is a one-piece system with an iPod dock on the right and a flat-panel speaker mounted on a pedestal. The system's overall footprint is as tall and wide as Apple's iPod Hi-Fi system, but only about half as deep. But the SX 2000's speaker panel itself is remarkably thin for the kind of audio it puts out, no more than about an inch front to back. Using technology to "fake" the bass output instead of including an actual subwoofer has a noticeable effect on sound quality, with the result being a bass sound that sounds dry and, well, synthetic in comparison to systems such as the \$180 Cyber Acoustics A-302 or especially the \$350 iPod Hi-Fi. But mention the prices of those systems in order to point out that at the \$110 price range of the SX 2000, many users will consider synthetic bass preferable to insufficient bass, which is the case with systems such as Altec Lansing's \$150 iM5 and \$180 iM3.



Another strong point of the SX 2000 is its use of Apple's Universal Docking system which ensures compatibility with future iPod models. This is a big advantage for users who tend to migrate to each new iPod generation as it's released (witness the various speaker systems released in 2005 which are now fairly incompatible with most currently shipping iPod models), not as big of a deal for users who expect to keep their current iPod until it dies. The SX 2000 packaging comes with trays for the iPod mini and the 20 GB Fourth Generation iPod, and the iPod nano and Fifth Generation iPods each come with their own tray; some 4G users and all 3G users will need to buy a tray from their local Apple Store.



We expected that having the iPod on the side of the speaker system instead of in the center might be distracting, but perhaps owing to the overall thinness of the speaker itself, we didn't find this to be an issue during use. Some users will be disappointed by the lack of a remote control; at Kensington's official \$159 price point, we'd expect one to be included, but at a street price of \$110 it's difficult to expect one. The SX 2000 doesn't provide a battery option, meaning that it's not portable, but its flat-panel design is space-efficient (especially front to back). In all, the Kensington SX 2000 is a no-frills dockable system which, while it doesn't measure up to high-end systems, outclasses most of what else is out there for about a hundred dollars.