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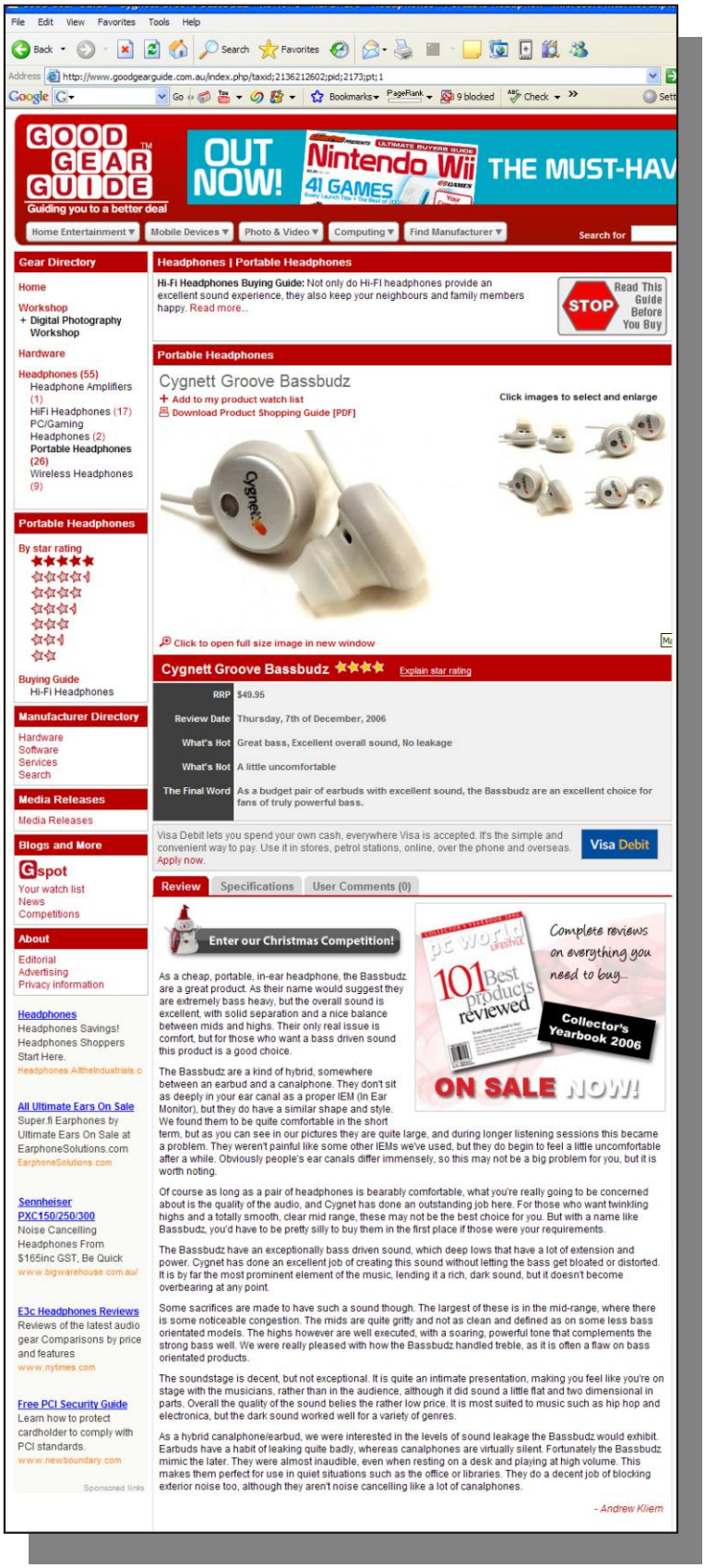

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Cygnett Groove Bassbudz ★★★★ Explain star rating

RRP	$49.95
Review Date	Thursday, 7th of December, 2006
What's Hot	Great bass, Excellent overall sound, No leakage
What's Not	A little uncomfortable
The Final Word	As a budget pair of earbuds with excellent sound, the Bassbudz are an excellent choice for fans of truly powerful bass.

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As a cheap, portable, in-ear headphone, the Bassbudz are a great product. As their name would suggest they are extremely bass heavy, but the overall sound is excellent, with solid separation and a nice balance between mids and highs. Their only real issue is comfort, but for those who want a bass driven sound this product is a good choice.

The Bassbudz are a kind of hybrid, somewhere between an earbud and a canalphone. They don't sit as deeply in your ear canal as a proper IEM (In Ear Monitor), but they do have a similar shape and style. We found them to be quite comfortable in the short term, but as you can see in our pictures they are quite large, and during longer listening sessions this became a problem. They weren't painful like some other IEMs we've used, but they do begin to feel a little uncomfortable after a while. Obviously people's ear canals differ immensely, so this may not be a big problem for you, but it is worth noting.

Of course as long as a pair of headphones is bearably comfortable, what you're really going to be concerned about is the quality of the audio, and Cygnet has done an outstanding job here. For those who want twinkling highs and a totally smooth, clear mid range, these may not be the best choice for you. But with a name like Bassbudz, you'd have to be pretty silly to buy them in the first place if those were your requirements.

The Bassbudz have an exceptionally bass driven sound, which deep lows that have a lot of extension and power. Cygnet has done an excellent job of creating this sound without letting the bass get bloated or distorted. It is by far the most prominent element of the music, lending it a rich, dark sound, but it doesn't become overbearing at any point.

Some sacrifices are made to have such a sound though. The largest of these is in the mid-range, where there is some noticeable congestion. The mids are quite gritty and not as clean and defined as on some less bass orientated models. The highs however are well executed, with a soaring, powerful tone that complements the strong bass well. We were really pleased with how the Bassbudz handled treble, as it is often a flaw on bass orientated products.

The soundstage is decent, but not exceptional. It is quite an intimate presentation, making you feel like you're on stage with the musicians, rather than in the audience, although it did sound a little flat and two dimensional in parts. Overall the quality of the sound belies the rather low price. It is most suited to music such as hip hop and electronica, but the dark sound worked well for a variety of genres.

As a hybrid canalphone/earbud, we were interested in the levels of sound leakage the Bassbudz would exhibit. Earbuds have a habit of leaking quite badly, whereas canalphones are virtually silent. Fortunately the Bassbudz mimic the later. They were almost inaudible, even when resting on a desk and playing at high volume. This makes them perfect for use in quiet situations such as the office or libraries. They do a decent job of blocking exterior noise too, although they aren't noise cancelling like a lot of canalphones.

- Andrew Kliem

Good Gear Guide
December, 2006