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Product Reviews

Multimedia hardware

Cygnett GrooveSnooze [MacUser]

COMPANY: Cygnett PRICE: £69.99 (£59.57 ex VAT)
RATING: ★★★★★ ISSUE: 23 5 DATE: Feb 07

Verdict: At £70, the GrooveSnooze is £30 cheaper than its iHome or Gear 4 equivalents, but we still can't recommend it ahead of them.

Our relationship with the superficially attractive GrooveSnooze was doomed from the moment we pressed the Open button, at which point the plastic lid covering the iPod dock connector sprung open and rattled against its rear support. It was an inauspicious start, one that suggested a poorly thought-out product rushed through the design and manufacturing process to capitalise on the current vogue for iPod radio alarm clocks. Where iHome's iH5 and Gear4's HouseParty 24/7 are solidly built and give great audio, the GrooveSnooze is cheaply made and sounds like its speakers are made from the same material as a can of beans.

The GrooveSnooze does at least offer the basic functions expected of an iPod clock radio. It allows you to wake up or go to sleep to your iPod, although there's no gradual fading out of the sound to lull you into the land of nod. There are AM and FM tuners and a buzzer, all of which can be used as an alarm instead of your iPod. It has a volume control wheel, and buttons for setting the time, alarm, switching power on and off, swapping between AM and FM, sleep and snooze. In common with most alarm clocks, the snooze button is larger than the others.

The LCD clock is large enough to read easily, the display also shows the day and month, albeit in US format, and the backlight has three brightness settings. The GrooveSnooze also has adaptors for most recent iPods, except the shuffle.

On the back of the case are a power socket, an earphone jack, a mini USB connector, an auxiliary input and a composite video output. The inclusion of a USB port for syncing your iPod with your Mac and a video socket to allow you to watch videos and photo slideshows on a TV are odd because they assume you keep a Mac and TV close to your bedside table. There's also a battery compartment that takes two AA cells and lets you use the GrooveSnooze away from a power outlet. The remote control has buttons for all the functions, but they're uncomfortable to use.

For all its other failings, it's the GrooveSnooze's audio quality that's most disappointing. It may boast 10W per channel and two 2in bass drivers, but there is a distinct lack of oomph.

At £70, the GrooveSnooze is £30 cheaper than its iHome or Gear 4 equivalents, but we still can't recommend it ahead of them.

By Kenny Hemphill

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