

# Nu Force Primo 8, high end in-ear speaker system..

BY JAMES PALMER ON 15/12/2015

An in ear speaker system, what kind of bunkham is this? It sounds like the marketing department have had their way. In the same way one might call a haircut a "head re-shaping". But no, it turns out there really is a set of drivers in these ear buds. 8 to be precise, covering different frequency ranges... you know, like a speaker system..

Incredulity and scepticism duly parked, I pulled the wrapper off the surprisingly heavy box and fought my way inside. Nu-Force have spared no expense with the packaging here, you do get a real pride of ownership experience as you fight your way in. The glossy documents, the way the different size ear pieces are mounted on a little plinth rather than shoved in a little plastic bag for you to burst open and spill half of them under a cupboard. The supplied leather pouch and cleaning cloth all add up to a feeling that your money (£300) has gone on something made with care and some love.



The ear buds themselves have a beetle blue shiny sort of clam shell covering, my daughter said they should have called them Ear Bugs, which I thought was an excellent description. They come with an optional set of memory foam covers, which you roll them between your fingers and screw into the ear in the same way you would fit health and safety ear plugs. This keeps out almost all external noise and provided by far the most comfortable fit for my ears. The cables then loop over the back of your ear and don't feel like they will move around on a run or trip to the gym. Yes, I go to the gym.. no, you shut up!

I have the UDAC here to (more of which under separate cover), so I plugged that into my laptop, ran JRiver, screwed the ear bugs into me lug 'oles and pressed play on some old favourites..

The first thing I notice listening to them is an eerie sense of space. They put me in mind of a pair of big, expensive open back Sennheisers like the HD800's (no they are not that good, but they are in that area presentation wise). You get an expansive open sound that goes totally against expectation from an ear bud. I use ear buds mainly on trains, planes and yes in the gym (stop laughing) and I've never heard a pair do this. The usual directness isn't there. I'm going to put this down to the multiple drivers sitting back in the Ear Bug creating space and air and a sound-stage. Tonally they are very nice; nice for me means fairly neutral and accurate with a very slight warmth to the mid bass. The blurb likes to go on about their smoothness, and I would say that's a fair boast. There's not an ounce of the usual ear bud glare or sibilance one comes to expect. My Klipsch ear buds do a lot of good things, but they have a very direct sound and can glare from time-to-time. I still recommend Klipsch ear buds, they are excellent, but these are a different animal all together. My Klipsch are an Escort RS Mexico, the Nu Force are an S Class Mercedes. You know where all that money went: refinement.



If they have weaknesses it's when things get super-busy.. the introduction to Radiohead's *Bodysnatchers* is a mixture of lead guitar with the gain up to 11, an E string bass-line and some high hat and rim shot drumming.. It's tough for any hifi and seems to stretch the abilities of this little set up to it's limit. The bass notes are a little lost, while the lead guitar has gone from grungy to dirty, It's perhaps a lot to ask of an ear bud, but I was disappointed having been so impressed up to this point I thought they might achieve the near impossible.. further into the album though, and *Weird Fishes* is beautifully rendered. Warm, unctuous (imagine Nigella is saying this), yet with great clarity from Thom's voice.. I listened to the rest of the album with great pleasure and stopped taking notes.

Would I pay the £300 asking price myself? Tough call. They are pretty sturdy and the cables are replaceable. For me I probably wouldn't use them enough to extract that much value. If you sit on a train for a couple of hours a day, then these could well improve your life to the point where they are a bargain. Back in the days when I was on a few long-haul flights a year and flying around Europe almost weekly, I would have invested. They make an appreciable difference and while expensive, I think there is good value there for the regular user.

It's now nearly two weeks since I wrote the above, and the ear buds have been in regular use. My attempts to get fit by next summer, so I can take my shirt off on the beach without anyone calling Greenpeace have meant extended gym sessions and longer walks at lunchtimes. This of course means more time with the Nu-force ear buds.. Until yesterday when I forgot to take them to work. I had to listen to my old Klipsch buds, which were on my desk. I really missed the Nu-Force smoothness, the sense of space.. At home now, Nick Drake's guitar sounds wonderful. Nice kit this, missing them is a good sign..

Worth a look.