

LowBeats

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Magnat.LZR 980

Magnat **LZR**
980



«CLASSY EXTERIOR, CLASSY SOUND.
AND BOTH FOR NOT THAT MUCH MONEY»

Magnat **LZR**

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Magnat

LZR 980

MAGNAT LZR 980 TEST: THE GRAND COUPÉ OF MOBILE HEADSETS

Successful design by Pininfarina, elaborate acoustic research using laser technology (LZR) and the best materials put this mobile over-ear headset way ahead of the great majority in this category.

When experts from all the different fields come together:

Magnat und Heco, beide wie auch der Kabel-Spezialist Oehlbach unter Magnat und Heco, both of whom, like the cable specialist, Oehlbach, are part of the Voxx Germany GmbH concern in Pulheim, have one of the best equipped loudspeaker development laboratories in Germany. Hardy anybody knows this! Some may wonder why this establishment regularly turns out sensationally sounding loudspeakers at extremely moderate rates. „The advantage of advanced technology“ is the answer and, in particular: through laser technology. Dresden-based Professor Wolfgang Klippel created a unique loudspeaker analysis system that enables millimetre-precise measurement and extensive simulations. It is thanks to Klippel, in particular, that loudspeaker development has been able to make such great progress in the direction of low distortion over the past few years.

So what could be more natural than to tackle the complex subject of headphones with Klippel. Nothing, of course! Except for the fact that only a few companies in the entire world have such systems at their disposal. After long series of Klippel tests, a special 40 mm driver was created at Magnat which is reinforced or damped by foam material at different points of the speaker cone. However, the driver is just one part of many relevant components: The shape of the enclosure behind, the quality of the ear pads - all of this plays a role in acoustic terms.

The visual concept was contributed by Pininfarina. The top designers do not, however, simply stop when they have created a successful design; they also follow the development process until they are sure that everything proceeds in accordance with their extremely demanding standards. In this way, they prevent the reputation built up by them over the last 50 years from being tarnished by moderate or poor performance of a product designed by them. On the other hand, the manufacturer, in this case Magnat, needs to meet the highest standards, such as those applying in the premium automobile class.

Leather, remote control and special cables: Features of the LZR 980

The tactile quality of the LZR 980 is outstandingly good: The ear pad covering of the very pleasant foam material, the headband and the hinges of the folding mechanism convey the impression of being very long-lasting. There is a choice of two different cable feeds from Oehlbach: The high-end version without any component in the signal path and one with a remote control for the volume, plus a microphone for the headset function. I compared them with each other and - to be honest - could not detect any difference in the sound. There's nothing to say against the remote control cable, but plenty to say in its favour. Both are strong, do not get tangled and are protected against microphonics (i.e. sensitivity to touch) by a tough coating. I find it particularly annoying with headphones when you can hear every touch of the cable.

The LZR 980 weighs in at 300 grams. That is considerably lighter than the Teufel Turn, which is comparable in terms of the basic concept, but the Magnat is certainly not a lightweight for all that: You can certainly feel you're wearing it, but it is a pleasant feeling. I quickly found the right setting for me and used the LZR 980 in an endurance test on a train journey from Munich to Hamburg. Over 5 hours of great listening - something I'd never manage with in-ears.

TOTAL

SOUND	★★★★★
PRACTICE	★★★★★
WORKMANSHIP	★★★★★

The nominal impedance of 32 ohms shows the LZR 980 to be a classic mobile headset. 30 ohms is the resistance value at which smartphones are especially comfortable. You can find further technical details, explanations and images here: LZR 980. The website is also well presented, together with a small animation of the Magnat LZR 980.

Listening test: So this is how the Magnat LZR 980 sounds

The acoustic tuning of mobile headsets is always a compromise. Ultimately, the developers have to provide sufficient bass energy for most cases, which usually results in too much bass at low levels and with little ambient noise. This is also the case with the LZR 980 which, with a full, voluminous and warm soundscape, initially conveyed the impression of producing somewhat excessive bass levels. But that was in the quiet LowBeats office; on the train journey to Hamburg mentioned previously, the bass range levelled off due to the noise made by a high-speed ICE train. And then I was delighted to find a bit „more“... Regardless of the place, however, it really is a pleasure to listen to music with the LZR 980. The voices of the a capella band, Flying Pickets, had a very sonorous touch thanks to the powerful bass range - which was also a perfect match for the listening test number „Here Comes The Flood“. What really makes the Magnat stand out, though, is its discreet transparency and airiness in the overall mid/treble range. Compared with the Teufel TURN (this concerns the LowBeats test), also a closed over-ear headset, the Magnat actually sounded more like Grand Coupé than a sport car. Not in the mid/treble range, though, where the LZR 980 was finer and more airy. On account of the mid-range tones being produced in such an open and dynamic way, the firmly struck bass strings once again came across as faster and more effective in the second listening test piece, „Panther“ (Marcus Miller „Live & More“). The abundance of detail and ease with which the LZR 980 resolves even complex passages enables it to build up the concert atmosphere in a rather realistic way. Not bad for a set of headphones. The LowBeats measurements underlined the very well-balanced nature of the LZR 980.

The LZR 980 was also at its best with the final listening test example, Dvorak's „9th Symphony“ (Scherzo Molto Vivace), in which a large number of cellos and double basses produce a wonderfully dynamic groove while amazingly loud triangles seem to raise the tempo. With its, on the one hand, full-bodied, rich and, on the other hand, silky way of playing, it was very realistic in creating the illusion of a large orchestra between the ears - also because there is hardly any distortion, even at high levels. Fantastic! There are not that many over-ear headsets for €300 that master this so confidently. In relation to joy of performance and wealth of detail, the Magnat played just slightly better than my long-standing reference, the Philips Fidelio X1. This is an open over-ear headset, however, and is therefore only suitable for home use, though not solely for that reason.

Conclusion: Classy exterior, classy sound. And both for not that much money.

You notice that the Magnat LZR 980 is something special just by touching it. The excellent material quality and the classy exterior go hand in hand here. I first had to get used to the relatively powerful bass of the large Magnat headset, but it is even correctly proportioned in many situations. Outstanding, though, is its fine resolution, as well as the precision and naturalness, which make just about any recording a pleasurable experience. The price/performance ratio is exceptionally good.

- + RELAXED, FULL, FINE SOUND
- + CLASSY MATERIALS, GOOD FINISH
- + STYLISH EXTERIOR
- + EXCELLENT PRICE/PERFORMANCE RATIO

Magnat LZR