Sonodyne Antara review: Perfect for the morning raga

Rs. 14,999

Antara is a great choice for music lovers seeking pure, unadulterated sound.

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A compact Bluetooth speaker with a minimalistic look. (Image credit: Nandagopal Rajan/The Indian Express)

One of the best speakers I reviewed in recent times came from an Indian company – Sonodyne. Now, the company, launched by IITan Ashoke Mukherjee, has come up with a portable Bluetooth speaker that tries to bring its distinct audio profile to a larger audience.

The Sonodyne Antara is compact and has a design that promises European sensibilities in a minimalist kind of way. Its enclosure is made of what seems like fibreglass with two radiators on both sides and a flap that opens to reveal the port options in the rear. The controls are on the top in what is a soft touch panel with LEDs to guide you about Bluetooth pairing and the like. The speaker has USB and USB-C ports along with AUX-in. Though compact, inside the Antara packs two subwoofers and dome tweeters, but all you see is the front grill in black. Also, this is a heavy speaker, not one you will put into your backpack for a sleepover with friends.



The physical control buttons make it easy to switch between the inputs. (Image credit: Nandagopal Rajan/The Indian Express)

Where you feel the impact of all this hardware is when you start streaming music via the Antara. When you have rain finally bringing some relief from the sweltering heat and humidity of July, you feel the depth of Sunidhi Chauhan's vocals rendering *Raja re ae re barkha*… almost as if she was singing for this moment in time. As Anirudh Varma steps on the volume mid-song in *Mausam*, you can hear Antara too move gears to stay ahead of whatever this ensemble might have to offer.

The Antara is great for vocal-focussed playlists like Raga Lounge, but that doesn't mean it muffles other elements of the composition. You can hear the percussion and strings clearly getting the space they deserve.

In my high-fidelity playlist, ‘Somebody that I used to know’ was the first song. Here too I could see the ability of the speaker managing the highs and lows — there are a few in this song — well without breaking a sweat.

I found the Antara to have a unidirectional sound throw and lacks a very strong surround sound kind of effect, which is found in many Bluetooth speakers these days, maybe not at this price range.



It also accepts inputs from microSD and USB drives. (Image credit: Nandagopal Rajan/The Indian Express)

This is the sort of speaker you would keep on the mantle and listen to your favourite songs to accompany your melancholic mood swings. But it can be the party animal too as the bass can be impressive when needed as I found out with the Mega Bass number I use to test audio devices.

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The Antara has a battery that lasts over 12 hours. Also, you can use this as a music player if you load all your songs into a USB drive and plug it directly into the speaker, a handy feature for those who still have hundreds of high-quality audio files saved somewhere. And if you feel like it you have a pair of two of these for a better effect in the room.

At Rs 14,999, the Sonodyne Antara is a great choice for those who love their music and like it pure without unnecessary embellishments not planned by the creators. Sonodyne again shows that good audio products can be created in India too.

Pros	Cons
Excellent audio quality, especially for vocals	Unidirectional sound throw, lacks strong surround sound
Minimalist, European-inspired design	Relatively heavy, not very portable for travel
Powerful bass and clear highs	Price may be high for some consumers (Rs 14,999)
12+ hour battery life	
Ability to play music from USB drive	

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