



**Panasonic
RP-HS200**

£26 ★★★★★

In-ear headphones that are also over-ear headphones, the RP-HS200 might look a bit ostentatious but they're notably comfortable - and lighter than they look. The cable is all-but silent, another plus, but it's rather prone to winding in on itself. The overall sound is a bit on the thin, lightweight side (which makes a change from wildly overcooked low frequencies, but is still not ideal). Apart from that lack of substance, though, the Panasonics are nicely detailed and strike a good balance from the midrange up. Those who like it loud will look elsewhere, mind you: these are on the quiet side.

VERDICT Comfortable in the ear, but the Panasonics sound as lightweight as they feel

**Philips
SHE9000**

£35 ★★★★★

There's nothing wrong with the look or feel of the SHE9000s - the bevelled metal is a tactile treat - and they're a snug fit. The cable is a mixture of rubber and cloth; the rubber bit tangles, the cloth section doesn't.

The most notable aspect of the Philips' performance concerns the low frequencies: they're miserably overstated and barely controlled. At the opposite end, treble sounds are splashy and insubstantial. Perversely the SHE9000s sound quite poised in the midrange, and other pluses include dynamism and outright volume. But the oppressive bass and rather mechanical overall sound means they can be safely ruled out.

VERDICT Ill-sorted sound makes for an unhappy listening experience



**RHA
MA-350**

£30 ★★★★★

Everything's relative, of course, but the RHA MA-350 look pretty bulky. Fortunately, the big aluminium enclosures (shaped aerophonically, in the manner of a trumpet's bell) are lightweight and a comfy fit. And the MA-350s are a gratifyingly poised listen. The 10mm driver doesn't place undue emphasis on any particular area of the frequency range, instead delivering an even, balanced sound - dynamism and punch are on the menu, certainly, but not at the expense of detail or subtlety. The RHAs sing in a natural, unforced manner, and consequently remain an easy listen even through the entirety of a long-haul flight.

VERDICT Nicely made, with very impressive sound to match

**Ross
Reflecta**

£20 ★★★★★

The Ross Reflectas are the most affordable headphones here, and they do little to hide the fact. It's not the garish lime-green finish that betrays them, nor the firm way they burrow into your ear. No, the real problems begin and end with the sound they produce. There's no two ways about it, the Reflectas sound muddy and indistinct. Low frequencies bludgeon their way through tunes with scant regard for the beginning or end of notes, elbowing the midrange to one side and burying vocalists beneath ill-defined humming; treble sounds are coarse and hard.

VERDICT A tempting price, perhaps, but economies don't come much more false...

