

HEADPHONES, REVIEWS

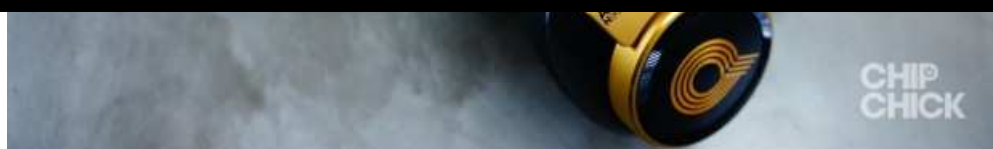
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## AKG N90Q Headphones Review – Totally Worth the \$1500 Price Tag

By Helena Stone [@helenastone](#) · On March 22, 2016

Born from a partnership between iconic musician Quincy Jones and Harman Kardon, the AKG N90Q headphones are not your ordinary pair of headphones. Heck, \$1,500 for a pair of headphones is not exactly a common thing. So how does Harman justify the price point for these headphones? They aren't just about being luxurious, and they aren't just about targeting audiophiles – they are about offering a new technology that adapts to the listener's ears, creating a powerful soundstage experience that you won't find elsewhere.





Even unboxing the AKG N90Qs feels like a luxurious experience. Inside the packaging is a beautiful case with a gold cover that matches the headphones' aesthetics to a T. This case is designed to not only stow the headphones, but to charge them as well. In addition to the power case, there is also a matching battery pack included, as well as a travel pouch. We've never been fond of having to charge headphones, but we do very much appreciate that Harman has thrown in an extra battery pack for longer flights or car trips. In addition, all the accessories you could ever need are included – that includes a flight adaptor, a 3m straight cable, a 1.2m 3-button remote/microphone for iOS and a 1.2m 3-button remote/microphone for Android and Windows, as well as a Micro USB charging cable.



The headphones themselves are huge, but still super comfortable thanks to their dual density ear cushions. They are a bit heavy, too, but they are built to last, which is something you have to demand at this price point, anyway. The dual density ear cushions also help create an incredible seal. When combined with the headphones' active noise cancelling technology, you absolutely won't hear anything around you. The ear cups also sport dual rotary controls for volume control, bass and treble levels, and sound imaging.





Everyone's ears are unique. That's why headphone taste can be very subjective, and why one person can love a pair of headphones that another person hates. For example, some people appreciate heavy bass, while I shy away from bass-heavy headphones because they feel painful to me. Harman's AKG N90Q offer a solution to this dilemma by offering a unique technology called TruNote that auto-calibrates itself to the acoustics of each wearer's ears. This creates a personal experience for the listener, as opposed to the one-size-fits-all experience you'll get with 99 percent of the other headphones out there. But, if you're someone who wants finer tuning control, you can still adjust the bass and treble using controls on the ear cup.

## So how do they sound?



The AKG N90Qs are the best pair of headphones we've tried to date, and they certainly should be since they are also the priciest. It takes a moment for them to be tuned to your ears, but before we knew it, the headphones felt incredibly balanced with just the right amount of treble and bass. Vocals shine and you truly feel the music. I found myself closing my eyes and getting lost in the music in a way that I have never experienced with any other headphones before.

The AKG N90Qs also have a built-in DAC and USB connection so that they can truly take advantage of hi-res digital audio tracks. If you listen to hi-res digital audio tracks on a PC or Android device, that certainly takes things to the next level, but even when playing higher bit rate files playing from streaming services like Spotify, the AKG N90Qs absolutely shine.

## Read on for the verdict...

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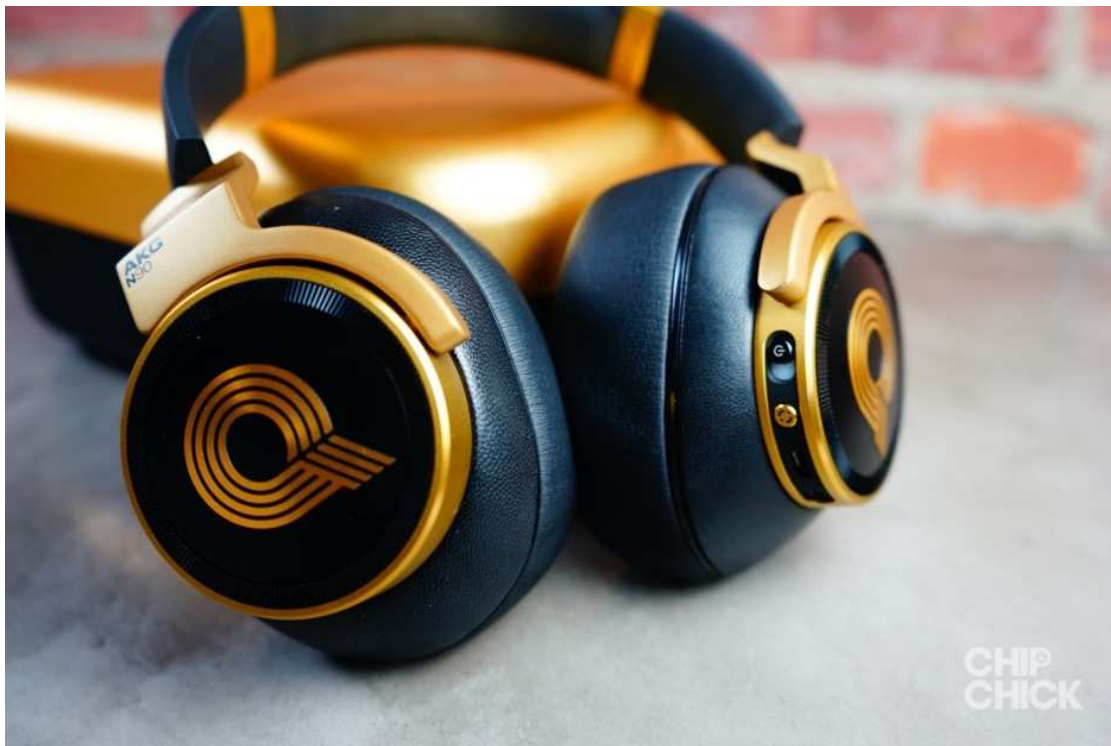
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## Verdict



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### WHAT'S HOT





We've reviewed countless pairs of headphones over the years from budget to pricey, as well as many that have been the result of artist collaborations, but the experience testing the AKG N90Q headphones have been like no other. Quincy Jones should be proud. So if you have money to burn, think of the AKG N90Qs as the headphones equivalent of a 75" 4K TV splurge. The [AKG N90Q headphones](#) are finally available in the U.S. and they retail for \$1,500.

**Two words — Freaking amazing.**

**The Good:** Luxuriously designed and packaged, creates a personal sound stage for the listener, very comfortable ear cushions, excellent noise isolation, plenty of accessories

included as well as a matching battery pack and carrying case, true hi-res audio support

**The Bad:** Crazy expensive, very large and heavy to wear

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