

REGULARS

GADGET of the month:

beyerdynamic

THE COCKPIT NOISE LEVEL OF ZS-FPI RUNS AT 103 db IN THE CRUISE, SO I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR HAVING A THING ABOUT HEADSETS. I HAVE NOW BEEN GIVEN THE LATEST AND GREATEST BEYERDYNAMIC TO TEST. I WILL TRY MAKE IT MY LAST HEADSET TEST FOR A WHILE!



MY initial experience of Beyerdynamic a few years ago wasn't great as it was the entry level HS300. I found it let in a fair amount of noise, and I said so. Thus when the latest HS 800 headset arrived, I was a bit dubious, especially as it is about 10-20 percent cheaper than its top of the range competitors, being the Sennheiser S1, Zulu Lightspeed 2, and Bose X.

Each ANR headset manufacturer likes to claim that they have invented the ultimate noise cancelling technology. Beyerdynamic call theirs Digital Adaptive Noise Reduction (DANR). The claimed benefits include noise attenuation over a wider frequency range, and better response to changing noise levels. I am happy to report that it works well – with less of the sometimes intrusive white noise that you get from other ANR headsets.

Overall I was very impressed with the Beyerdynamic. It is a classically German no-nonsense product and is built more substantially than my Lightspeed. It comes in a large carry bag, and at first glance seems hefty. Beyerdynamic has sensibly put the electronics into the battery box, rather than into the earcup. The advantage is that the weight carried on your head is less. In past models this made for a bulky battery box but for the HS800 the control box has been slimmed down to barely larger than the two AA batteries it takes. The result is that, excluding the cable and control box, the HS800 weighs about 330g, which is lighter than most passive headsets, and is impressively comfortable.

Although I didn't try it, you can plug an MP3 player or cellphone into the control box, and reviews say it works well. Interestingly, it doesn't have Bluetooth connectivity. Most usefully though it does come with a male plug that fits a cigarette lighter, so you can power it from the aircraft.

Overall, I was much impressed with the performance and comfort of the HS800. It comes with a five year warranty and is available for R9500.00 from Comet Aviation at Rand Airport (011-824-3368) and other good aviation shops. ✈️

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"SAA needs an extra R6bn from state as costs bite. The Airline expects loss situation in 2011-12 after two years of profit."

The mainstream media loves to bash South African Airways. But creating the impression that SAA was asking for a R6 billion bailout was irresponsible muck-raking journalism at its worst. The airline has made over R1 bn in profits in the past two years and would like capital to grow. That was the real story.