

Grado GW100x

These open-back headphones are more about staying in than going out, which suits **Ed Selley**

UPON FIRST INSPECTION,

Grado's GW100x is in keeping with other wireless headphones. The 42mm drivers are fed by onboard amplification and a Bluetooth 5.2 platform with aptX HD and AAC support, matched with an old-school 3.5mm analogue input. Battery life is a healthy 46 hours and recharging is via USB-C.

So far so normal, but these cans are radically different to notional rivals. Like most Grado models, the GW100x is open-backed. This means it is rather less able to keep external noise at bay in busy spaces, and because it naturally lets noise in, there's no onboard noise cancelling either. It's therefore rather more limited in noisy environments but – on paper at least – rather more spacious in



presentation terms. The design is comfortable and reasonably well made too, although Grado's ongoing refusal to make carry cases is an enduring mystery.

And yes, there are some limitations to using the GW100x out and about. External noise that won't trouble a closed-back design becomes intrusive.

Airs and graces

However, if you are in the market for a headphone to pair with a TV for late-night viewing, these are truly outstanding. That open-back configuration brings an airiness and

three-dimensionality that only the most expensive closed-back designs get anywhere near emulating. The final house assault in *The Accountant* (Prime Video) was delivered with a near perfect balance of detail, scale and depth, and nothing else I've tried, from Netflix documentaries to Apple TV+'s *Slow Horses*, has wrongfooted it. Musically, the GW100x is no less accomplished, and works extremely well via the wired connection when switched off and in passive mode.

What Grado has engineered here is a slightly specialist proposition at a great price. The GW100x can't match ANC-toting rivals on the move but the performance in a home environment is up there with the very best. Buy with confidence ■

The GW100x uses 42mm drivers

HCC VERDICT



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→ £250 → www.grado.co.uk