

# Audeze LCD-1 headphones £399

The high-end headphone brand dips under the £500 barrier for the first time. Si Truss takes a listen

**CONTACT WHO:** Audeze **WEB:** [audeze.com](http://audeze.com) **KEY FEATURES** Open backed, foldable headphones making use of planar magnetic drivers



**C**alifornian brand Audeze are known for their high-end headphones built to appeal to both pro audio and audiophile users.

With a sub-£400 price, the LCD-1s – part of the company's Reference Series – are by some margin the most affordable Audeze cans to date (for reference, their original LCD-2 design retails at just under £800, while their flagship LCD-4s go for a whopping \$4k). Despite the drop in price though, these open back headphones still boast the company's signature planar magnetic technology and such sci-fi sounding features as Uniforce Diaphragms, Fluxor Magnet and Fazor Waveguides.

Design-wise, the LCD-1s are simple and classy looking. They're lightweight, with memory foam pads around each ear cup and across the headband, all of which makes for a very comfortable set of cans, although the ear pads can get a little sweaty after long periods of use. They're a folding design too, and come complete with an equally smart-looking carry case to keep them safe from harm. These are wired headphones, coming supplied with a nicely braided 2m connector cable that requires connection to both left and right ears. The fact that both sides of the headphones have to be plugged in at once is a mild annoyance – but at least these two connections are reversible, meaning you don't have to faff around working out which connection is supposed to connect to which ear.

These are open-back headphones, so expect a lot of sound leakage. In fact, even compared to other open-backed studio headphones we've used, a lot of sound seems to get both in and out of the LCD-1s when in use. This is something worth being aware of – in a recording situation, you're almost definitely going to hear that leakage, and if you're using these in a noisy environment don't expect them to cut out a lot of that background din.

Sonically, the LCD-1s are absolutely excellent. There's a huge amount of detail in the



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sound, making them an excellent choice for mixing and sound design duties. There's plenty of power here too; even at high volume there's no audible distortion to the sound, and there's a pleasing amount of low end on offer too. I spent some time working on a crowded kick/bass pattern and was impressed with how easily I could pick out and adjust the relevant frequencies.

Headphones that cross into the audiophile realm – at least at this price point – sometimes tend to flatter the music a little and artificially boost certain mid-range frequencies. The LCD-1s seemed very trustworthy though, and strike me as a good tool for mixing sessions. In all, these are certainly some of the best headphones I've used at this price point. The only

real downside is the leakiness of their open-backed design, which limits their use away from the studio somewhat. That aside, for studio musicians on the hunt for trustworthy, quality headphones below the £500 mark, there are few options better than these. **FM**

## FM VERDICT

# 9.0

**A quality pair of headphones which combine classy looks and detailed sound. Excellent for the price**

## THE PROS & CONS

+

Excellent, detailed sound

Classy, subtle design

Lightweight and comfy

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Cables connect to both ears at once

Lots of audio leakage, even by open back standards