

OVC TC20 and VSonic R02PRO

Contributed by Ron Kerlin

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This review of the OVC TC20 and the VSonic R02PRO is being submitted in a different format than usual.

Since both phones were received at the same time, and both supplied by the same distributor, Head-Direct, I will evaluate them together, comparing them to each other.

As both sets of IEMs are targeted toward OEM earbud replacements and both are at the lower end of the IEM pricing scale, the comparisons with each other should be quite appropriate.

OVC TC20

The OVC TC20 is a small, ball-shaped black and white plastic IEM (MSRP: \$39.00) that at first glance looks rather unimposing, however the performance is a significant step above that of the OEM devices usually included with MP3 players, radios, and CD players. The phone are clearly marked by colored strain reliefs to determine right from left. Included in the packaging is a carry case, and 3 sets of silicone tips, sized S-M-L. There is also a descriptive card, printed in Chinese. The cables are white vinyl approximately 36" long and terminated with a stereo mini-plug. Being round in shape, they fit quite well in my ears and I was able to get a good seal using the large tips. The phones are quite efficient, being very easily driven without the necessity of an external headphone amp. The sound was a definite improvement over most stock headphones that are packaged with various players. Mids and highs were quite smooth and detailed, however the lower frequencies lacked impact and seemed to be rolled off noticeably below about 100 Hz. Overall, I would consider these to be a good step up from OEM buds. I noted on the Head-Direct website that these phones were at times offered on special at \$19.00 USD. They are an excellent value at this price. Pros:

- Low price
- Very nice mids and highs.
- Ipod white cable may be a plus for some purchasers. Cons:
- Replacement tips unavailable.
- No double-flange tips included.
- Most other tips will not fit.
- A bit bass-shy. VSonic R02PRO

The VSonic R02PRO listed at \$69.00 USD is one of a family of IEMs by this company. There are several models priced above this that will be added to the line in the future. At this price point, there is quite a bit of competition, some from Head-Direct with their highly-regarded Yuin line of earbuds. The PRO is also available in "Ipod" white. The terminating mini-plug is molded at a flexible 45 degree angle which allows it to be used quite easily with most any player without the need for 90 degree adapters, etc.

Packaging is more sophisticated than the TC20, including a main box with a magnetic latch lid, 4 sets of tips (S-M-L-Med double flanged), a soft leather carry case, lead clip, and manual printed in English listing the specifications as well as a diagram of the frequency response. The shape of the phones are somewhat odd, with a hard plastic center portion that has a softer rubbery spine terminating in a strain-relief that is about an inch long. The PRO was not nearly as easy to get placed in the ear for a good seal as was the TC20. I could only get a satisfactory seal by pointing the tips up and looping the cables over my ears. Otherwise, the rubber strain relief prevented inserting the tip deeply enough to seal. It was also almost impossible to tell the left phone from the right, as the letters were very tiny and of the same color as the spine.

Once inserted, I found the phones to be VERY efficient, delivering a very high sound level with quite a low input signal. There was certainly no need for external amplification, and I found that there was very little tonal difference when using an amp. Bass response was considerably better than that of the TC20, however I found the highs to be much more emphasized than those of the TC20. I felt that the PRO sounded better at lower volume levels than did the TC20, which performed better at higher sound levels. The frequency response graph included with the phones clearly depicted the emphasis in the mids and higher frequencies. This also happens to be where the response of the human ear is at the greatest. For those users who really enjoy great detail and presence, these phones would do well. They would also be ideal for those individuals who might have a hearing loss in the higher frequencies, but who would also like to use IEMs. At the price-point of these phones, they are encountering some stiff competition, such as the PK2, priced just above, and the PK3 priced just below. I found the bass response of the PRO to be better than that of the Yuin PK2, but preferred the smoother mids and highs of the PK2. I did find that by judicious use of the EQ in my test players, I was able to reduce the mid and treble peaks that initially caused listening fatigue in a short time; the end result being a very nice-sounding IEM. Imaging and soundstage were very accurate, comparing favorably with the best of IEMs. Pros:

- Very smooth and accurate bass response.
- Good selection of tips.
- Nice included accessories.
- Handy 45 degree tip.
- Ipod users will like the color. Cons:
- Odd shape restricts placement in the ear.
- Replacement tips unavailable.

- Hard to discern between left and right. Ron Kerlin(HiFlight) {mosgoogle left}