

# Siberia V2 Reviewed

## **Construction, Design & Comfort:**

There is not much to fault in terms of design and comfort. The over-all product quality is what you would expect of headphones of this price level. However the Siberia v2 could easily be considered above average in many respects. At first glance, the Siberia v2 might look cheap with a “plasticky” finish to them. But after a while, either I got used to the feeling or my first impression was a little off. Since then it has proven to be not nearly as fragile as I first thought.

Personally, I liked the lacquered white finish on the majority of the headsets with the plastic suspension arc matte. They look neat and tidy. Overall the v2 feel solid enough despite being light, which is definitely a noticeable improvement over the first Siberia.

The flexible and adjustable headband can also feel a little fragile sometimes; but they allow for a comfortable fit. The padded faux leather is also nice and soft which adds to the over-all look and comfort. The only thing that strikes me odd about the v2 is the earcups’ size. It might be able to fully enclose some people’s ears while for others; they will find that parts of the v2’s earcups are sitting on their ears. If they were to be slightly bigger; it will greatly improve the comfort level, and would also make the V2 a full circumaural headset. Circumaural headphones, by definition, do not sit on your ears, but rather they should surround them, thus avoiding sore and/or hot ears over long usage periods. They also tend to fit much better as the earcups get much more even sitting due larger contact area. Nevertheless, the Siberia v2 is still a very comfortable headset. It feels a little tight initially but after a couple of days of use, they will be broken-in, and feel much more comfortable, with relaxed, yet still firm, grip on the head.

The pull-out microphone is a definite win. It’s flexible and easy to adjust; so much so that it makes me think that all headsets should employ such design whenever possible. The integrated volume control is handy – though it could be a little more sensitive.

## **General Sound Quality:**

Initial impressions are quite good. The improvement over the old Siberia is tremendous. Overall, the v2 sounds a lot more musical, with more balanced reproduction across the whole spectrum. Definitely a very welcomed change in my book! Obviously this is a gaming headset and should not be compared to proper Hi-Fi cans. But when you are buying headphones – especially full sized ones you are looking for sound quality first, comfort second and other features after.

The V2 headphones definitely excel at being all-round good quality headphones, though the sound reproduction is best suited for gaming. However they are still more than adequate for casual or general music listening or movie viewing. I especially like how they feel a lot more balanced compared to other gaming or even regular music headphones. Generally speaking, the emphasis on gaming headphones is on being loud and ‘boomy’ but with very biased low end reproduction. Though I am sure that some people would like a stronger bass in the v2; to me a balanced sound is most important, especially when you’re to using the headphones solely for gaming. Excessive promi-



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By: Randy Rusli  
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nence of bass will make the overall sound become murky, overshadowing the mid to high ranges which negatively impact the reproduction of ambient noises. Deadening out footsteps and other small details in-game which are so crucial to the overall immersion, or (often more importantly) for tactical reasons such as determining your enemy position. A balanced reproduction across the whole spectrum will also help to create more natural sounding headphones that will perform better in spatial imaging; something that all gamers will definitely appreciate.

## **General Gaming Impression:**

I went through a couple of hours of Bad Company 2, Heroes of Newerth, Modern Warfare 2 and Metro 2033 with the V2 and I must say it was a pleasant ride. The sounds were punchy, upbeat and responsive. Spatial imaging is well above average; giving a wide enough soundstage for precise booms in Bad Company 2. Audio positioning is also handled quite well despite the V2 being a stereo headset.

When compared to the Audio-Technica ATH-AD900, the V2 feels a lot heavier and sometimes colder; emitting a stronger bass response which (no surprise) is designed to make explosions sound better. The real surprise, however, is how well it fares with ambient noises. The sound of footsteps, winds, water and gunfire all feel more "out there" and somehow more distinct when compared to the Audio-Technica. Overall, the V2 will give you a very lively atmosphere.

## **Music Listening Impression:**

When it comes to music, I can safely say that the Siberia V2 sounds better than many other gaming headset or similarly priced headphones currently in the market. The overall warmth gives the Siberia that long listening comfort, probably due to the open back design with the sealed sound deadening ear pads.

Many closed headphones feel a bit too dark and on the heavy side, losing that spark on the high end spectrum. The V2 is able to maintain the balance fairly well considering it is a gaming headset first and foremost. However, there is still some harshness to the overall tonality, making it sound very sterile and tiring sometimes. The low end is strong and punchy, but can be a bit slow for some complex and faster paced rock or technical metal music. I would say that it is perfectly matched for dance music though.

When it comes to midrange, I wouldn't complain about it, I would even say that it does a respectable job providing a smoother midrange sound than most 2.1 desktop speakers, gaming headsets or headphones in its class.

The highs are bright, but they tend to be on the harsh side for me. I'd like a more toned down and more focus on the midrange, just to make the overall balance smoother and less harsh sounding when producing the treble. This would align the whole spectrum with the low end, which I think is ideal if it is going to be used solely for gaming and certain types of music (notably: Dance, Hip-hop and RnB).

In general, the overall sound presentation is quite upfront and dynamic, and the V2 driver is surprisingly quite detailed, which is another welcome surprise. It's subtle enough to pick the more refined sonic details while it can also be explosive when needed. Kudos for the V2 compared to most headphones in its price class.

A good comparison for listening to music (from similarly priced headphones at least) here in Australia will be the Sennheiser HD 215 and the Audio Technica ATH-AD400. I would still prefer either of these if it were purely for music, but for the mix of gaming and music I'd take the V2 any day.

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