

AIRWAVES



Technology, comfort and pedigree have established market leadership for Bose's A20 headset.

Review: Latest Bose A20 Noise Cancelling Headset

By Paul Southwick

Bose Corporation, founded in 1924, with annual revenue of ~US\$3.5b, and headquartered in Framingham, Massachusetts (~30 kilometres west of Boston), has long been a market leader in audio equipment across multiple consumer and industrial segments.

I decided to test the company's latest iteration of its A20 noise cancelling aviation headset, a version with enhanced Bluetooth capability, to see if Bose's market leadership is likely to continue.

Making a good first impression:

A new example of the A20, with the two plug option, arrived from Bose in "Apple-like" quality packaging. Included were easy to follow instructions, including a handy "cheat sheet" on Bluetooth connections. There is also an online

version of the instructions available to download in PDF form from the Internet.

The headset itself fits oh-so-sweetly into a classy and surprisingly compact, quality black carry bag. This is a headset that will take up very little of the precious room in pilots' briefcases.

Internally there is a nice divider that keeps the headset in place and the inside of the top of the bag holds the cord and control unit neatly in place.

Often a market leader, in any field, looks like a market leader, and the Bose A20 is no exception. It has beautiful form and design, somehow not too big and not too small, with eye pleasing shapes and high tech materials. The A20 is not flashy but still radiates product leadership.

Before trying out the headset in flight, pilots will be impressed by its light weight for such a powerful unit, and the "Am I really wearing it?" feeling of comfort. The clamping "effect," because "force" is too strong a word, feels light, but somehow holds the headset snugly in place.

There is a connection cord of generous length with two strong and effective clothes clips, as well as the master control unit which has a nice "in the hand" feel to it.

For older or even technology-challenged pilots, connection of an iPhone or similar device like an iPad to the headset is a breeze, and the quality of the sound will make pilots want to wear the aviation headset everywhere, maybe even in the tram, train or car to work. Owning a Bose headset is a bit like owning a personal jet - it really does not matter what others think!

For those who prefer the microphone boom to emanate from the right, not the left, it is a quick and easy job to swap it over.

Flight test - flying the talk:

Because the Bose A20 is so compact, it comes into its own in the cockpit where space is always at a premium. It is not cordless, but no doubt that will come in time. The great thing is that the Bluetooth connection works so well that it can be used to make calls, either routine, or emergency during flight. There is also the ability to stream audio from flight apps or even music from other devices on long flights.

The control unit allows the user to easily pre-set preferences for incoming audio. Most pilots will no doubt set their aircraft radio as number one, with any other streams "giving way," when radio communications takes place.

The greatest surprise (and later delight) for pilots using the Bose A20 for the first time, is what happens when it is turned on. Usually this will be after the engine has been started (headsets remaining off as "clear prop" is called out, to ensure there is no reply).

When the unit first comes on it is like any other headset - it dampens the sounds of the engine - in our test cases, 315 hp from Cirri SR22 G3, and G5 models. But then the surprise - when suddenly the noise cancelling comes on and the pilot, because of the drop in noise, believes, for just a second, that the engine has actually stopped - it really is that good. But then the gentle sound of the engine is heard again, with

any audible warnings. "Our goal is simply to put the user into a much quieter and more pleasant acoustic environment," says Bose.

Throughout the flight, with the exception of maximum power on take-off and climb out, the engine noise was just quietly there - not enough to impede on flying but just enough that any changes in engine performance can be detected. This is perfect for safety as it means pilots know the engine is running fine, but can concentrate on flying the aeroplane and listening to air traffic control, their passengers, or perhaps at appropriate times, music.

The headset boom was easily adjusted to the perfect position and the headset delivered perfect clarity in any communications that came through the aircraft radio. It was easy to make mobile phone calls through the headset with answer, auto dial, and voice activation all with a quick touch of the blue lit button on the control unit.

The sheep's wool padding under the top of the headset is a genius stroke as it is both light and comfortable. This is a headset pilots can wear for long periods without any problems.

In summary - the luxury car comparison:

It is said that the people who drive "normal" cars can be quite happy with them and completely unaware of what they are missing until they drive a luxury brand like Mercedes, Audi or BMW. But once they have gone luxury, they can never go back to a Ford or Holden. It's like flying a Cirrus aircraft for the first time after an old legacy single. And so it is with Bose. Once experienced it is impossible to imagine owning or flying with anything else. It's something you simply have to have.

New headsets are purchased less often than new cars, so it makes it even more important to get the right tone. Our review showed that any pilot purchasing a Bose A20 will not be disappointed. They will likely become a proud owner and user of Bose.✂



WHY I FLY.

Why Jamail flies with the Bose® A20® headset.

Flying from city to city gives Jamail the freedom to expand his world. And sound clarity makes all the difference, especially when he's traveling to multiple cities in one day. The Bose A20 Aviation Headset offers 30% greater active noise reduction than conventional headsets, which helps Jamail stay focused on flying. And with 30% less clamping force, even his longest flights are more comfortable.

Call 1800 173 371 Visit A20.Bose.com.au

Connect with us @ [BoseAviation](https://twitter.com/BoseAviation)
#WhyIFly #BoseA20

"To see the world from a different perspective."
Jamail Larkins, Pilot // Aviation Ambassador

©2017 Bose Corporation. *When compared to conventional headsets.



1800173371