



DETAILS

PRODUCT
Final ZE8000 MK2

ORIGIN
Japan

TYPE
True wireless
noise-cancelling
earphones

WEIGHT
6g each

FEATURES
• 13mm aluminium-
magnesium dome
dynamic drivers
• 24-bit/96kHz
• SBC; AAC; aptX;
aptX Adaptive

DISTRIBUTOR

Final Audio

WEBSITE
snext-final.com

sophisticated 'Pro' equaliser. Those with Snapdragon-enabled sources get a better deal with lossless music replay and low latency connection for gaming.

Sound quality

Seriously good before, seriously good now. Any perceived improvements are a matter of fine degree and will largely depend on the improved ANC, how loud you like to listen and if the redesigned eartips form a better seal with your shell-likes. I never had a problem with the MK1s and nothing's changed with the new, improved buds.

But retracing my listening session with the original ZE8000, there are subtle differences of a positive nature. As before, with the 8K Sound + setting activated, it's the mountain air clarity that's almost disconcerting at first. It can make even decent true-wireless rivals sound somewhat muggy and opaque by comparison.

Returning to Hans Zimmer's *Interstellar* soundtrack, the precise, spacious, highly resolving sound that so impressed with the MK1 ZE8000 checks in again but with a fraction more body, timbral texture, dynamic freedom and microdynamic polish. In short, the presentation is yet more refined, but no less insightful.

The sonic uplift isn't as immediately apparent with a track as well produced as Shaun Mendes' *Lost In Japan* but, again, there's an almost subliminal increase in solidity, tonal naturalness and dynamic expression that shows off the strong bassline hook and almost spooky space-expanding studio effect accompanying the chorus to stunning effect.

Conclusion

Clearly no believer in "if it ain't broke...", Final has somehow managed to shoehorn some worthwhile improvements into the diminutive form of its patently unbroken ZE8000 while reducing the price. Can't argue with that ●

Take two

Hot on the heels of Final's excellent ZE8000 true-wireless IEM comes an almost identical update. **David Vivian** explains all

When it comes to pace of activity for a product development department, few come faster than Final. I can't recall another hi-fi component that has launched and been superseded by its MK2 evolution in the same year. I reviewed Final's ZE8000 flagship true wireless IEM in 2023 (*HFC* 506). Granted, it wasn't tops for battery life, recharging convenience or noise cancelling, but its sound quality was so exceptional it easily bagged a strong recommendation.

Modifications made to justify the 'MK2' moniker include new 'Shield Fin' eartips for a snugger fit and increased passive noise isolation, an improved signal-to-noise ratio for greater detail retrieval, the introduction of an option to deactivate Active Noise Cancellation (ANC) altogether and a max volume hike of 5dB.

Final claims the ZE8000 MK2 is 32 percent better at isolating outside noise than its predecessor with ANC switched on. The company says this is achieved through internal structural

enhancements, new eartips and tweaks to the ANC algorithm.

The Finite Impulse Response (FIR) filter for frequency and time domain corrections and multiple digital signal processing (DSP) techniques still form the basis of Final's so called '8K Sound' but, for the MK2, the DSP has been refined to deliver even greater clarity, "extracting more detail and musical nuance from recordings".

The accompanying claim is lower total harmonic distortion (THD) and noise than any rival wireless IEM with dynamic drivers. Despite its toll on battery life (which remains a meagre five hours with ANC on) amplification is Class A-B whereas most TWS systems opt for power-efficient Class D.

Perhaps more useful is the redesign of its Volume Step Optimisation feature accessed from within the Final Connect app, which now offers even finer gradations of volume adjustment. The app also gives you four modes of noise cancellation/ambient hear-through, now joined by the ANC off setting. And there's a

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Stunning sound quality; comfort; improved ANC; app

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** So-so battery; no wireless charging

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** If high-end sound is the true wireless goal, the ZE8000 MK2 pretty much chooses itself

FEATURES
★★★★★

OVERALL

