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# Austrian Audio OC16 Large-Diaphragm Condenser Microphone

*The Vienna sound, at a most attractive price*

REVIEW BY PAUL VNUK JR.

The OC16 is the latest large-diaphragm condenser from Austrian Audio. It is built upon the company's ceramic CKR capsule technology. With a focus on sound over features, Austrian Audio has released its most affordable large diaphragm mic to date at a truly impressive price point.



## Return to Vienna

Although only five years old, Austrian Audio has roots that stretch back into one of the most iconic microphone companies of all time, AKG. As the tale goes, when AKG closed shop in Vienna, many of the employees banded together to form and continue work as Austrian Audio. This allowed the employees to continue to hone their decades of classic design know-how, yet also move forward free from the weight of expectation and tradition.

The net result has been the creation of ten microphones and eight headphones, as well as innovative software apps. Of special note is the OC818 (reviewed October 2019), one of the world's first multi-pattern, large-diaphragm condenser microphones to be remote-controlled by Bluetooth. I am also a massive fan of the Austrian Audio CC8 reviewed in January 2022 that offers a classy, updated take on the classic pencil condenser.

## CKR Capsule Technology

Central to all Austrian Audio large-diaphragm mics is the handmade CKR capsule. The Austrian Audio CKR12 and

CKR6 are a direct evolution of the AKG CK12, featuring the exact dimensions, backplate hole pattern and side termination, but using a ceramic capsule rather than brass or nylon. Also, the CKR capsule is suspended at three points by floating rubber mounts rather than fixed to a single bottom point in the enclosure. The multi-pattern OC818 uses a two-sided CKR12 capsule, while the single pattern OC18 (reviewed December 2019) and the new OC16 employ a single-sided CKR6 capsule.

## Simplicity

The cardioid patterned OC16 is housed in a  $4 \frac{3}{4}'' \times 2 \frac{3}{8}'' \times 1 \frac{1}{4}''$  contoured rectangular body, visually identical to its siblings. Where the previous models contain some extra bling and Champaign flare, the stripped-down, economical OC16 is finished in matte black with only a small silver logo badge and a single three-position high-pass filter selectable at 0, 40 and 160 Hz. Note that the OC818 and OC18 offered a fourth 80 Hz setting and a three-position pad.

The OC16 features a multi-layered open mesh screening, part of the company's

open acoustic technology—the OC in the name. This includes the internal silicone capsule suspension and a bottom-located diffuser that separates the capsule from the electronics to cut down reflections for a cleaner, more open capture.

The OC16 comes in a Studio Set with a custom shock mount and a hard mount in a hard-sided nylon case.

## Vienna Waits For You

At the time of this review, there was not a published frequency graph. Based on comparisons of my recorded files from my OC818 review, the OC16 sounds similar. Using the OC18 frequency plot as a rough guide, you can expect the OC16 to have a controlled low-end, neutral mid-section with a 5 kHz upper mid-thrust and a small 12 kHz bump.

Compared to a current production AKG C414 XLS, you can discern an ancestral familial similarity, especially in the lows and mids. However, the OC16 offers a more forward mid-range with a natural open top end. Any source I recorded with the OC16 benefited from a very life-like depth of field. Like the OC818 and OC18, the OC16 is



literally a natural on acoustic guitar. I only had one, but I was equally impressed by how well it worked as a single drum overhead. Again, think spacious, natural and full of depth, so much so that I did not miss capturing the kit in stereo when it came time to mix. On a Yamaha baby grand, I preferred the OC16 at a distance of a foot or two rather than up-close or under the lid. The OC16 also works well as a vocal mic, as it has a full, up-close proximity effect that is not overbearing and balances nicely with the microphone's clarity.

Finally, thanks to its impressive 148 dB SPL range, it will happily live on loud electric guitar amps. It works well to fill in the space and detail in tandem with a mid-forward dynamic mic like a Shure SM57, or especially the even bolder Audix i5.

## Wrap-Up

The Austrian Audio OC16 offers a fantastic entry point into the clear and natural classic workhorse family of studio mics. While the OC16 lacks the bells and whistles of the upper-end Austrian Audio models, it retains much of their opulent, hi-fi tonality. The OC16 is an absolute steal for the money, especially when you consider that you can grab a pair for less than \$900.

I really like the Austrian Audio design paradigm so far. Make a great-sounding flagship, and then present it in multiple versions giving the user access to just the features they need without compromising the sound. With its track record so far, I am excited to hear what Austrian Audio conjures up next. ➡



**Price:** \$429 **More from:** [austrian.audio](http://austrian.audio)

<b>Frequency Range:</b> .....	20 Hz - 20 kHz
<b>Sensitivity:</b> .....	11 mV/Pa
<b>Equivalent Noise Level:</b> .....	14 dB SPL (A)
<b>Max SPL:</b> .....	148 dB SPL
<b>Impedance:</b> .....	275 Ω