Sena 30K
Voices in my head

SOLITUDE. IT LURES US TO THE OPEN ROAD, THE PROMISE of wide-open lanes and tight turns unfurling in our minds when we fire up and roll out. And that's where we figuratively remain, isn't it? In our own minds. It's you, it's your bike, and it's the road ahead. And yet, sometimes long stretches of highway aren't all they're cracked up to be. Major highways leave a lot to be desired, and the silence can be deafening (literally). Is there a way to make those rides a little less…well, monotonous?

The Sena 30K Bluetooth device provides multiple solutions in one package. Let's unpack it.

The package includes the main unit, the universal helmet clamp (with microphone and speakers attached), the boom mic, the wired mic, and the plastic big filled with myriad fasteners and adapters.

My full-face Arai served as the lab rat, and the clamp went on easily enough. The microphone fit comfortably along the jaw/chin of the helmet with the mic near my mouth. Find the sweet spot in your helmet's ear pockets, and the speakers remain in place throughout the ride. From there, the actual device (it did not arrive fully charged from the factory—charge it while installing the clamp) was a simple slide-and-click process.

There are four buttons: Mesh Intercom, Phone, Jog Dial, and Ambient Mode. Turning on Sena 30K is easy, just hold the center button of the jog dial and the phone button located at the back of the device for one second.

To get the full experience of the Sena, simply sync it to your phone via Bluetooth. From there, download the Sena 30K Utility app from the Android or Apple store. Once in the app, you can set the default voice function you'd like to use, be that Google Voice or Siri. You can also preset your FM radio channels, configure your voice dialing, and turn on/off the Mesh Intercom.

I took a trip which offers various stretches of roads and highways. Pushing the ambient button, the Sena responds with "Say a command." This is where syncing the device to the app is vital, as you can make a call (i.e. "Call John Smith"), voice-to-text, ask it to play music, or ask any question as you would Google or Siri.

"Music," I said. My Spotify instantly picked up, and the volume was reasonably loud, though not eardrum-bursting levels, and you will hear a beep when the dial goes as loud as possible. I pushed up to around 65 mph, and I could still hear the music clearly, so highway speeds won't hinder your jam sessions on long trips. Changing tracks/stations proved a little tricky, as you need to push down on the dial and move to the left or right, depending on if you want to go back or forward.

Both the phone call and voice-to-text functions were fairly responsive, though as is usually the case with dictating texts, words were missed. As with the music, the phone calls were clear even when gathering speed.

The intercom works for public or private conversations, and it can be toggled for group intercom or individual Sena-to-Sena intercom. You can pair up to three other Sena devices into one collective intercom group. The Mesh intercom, however, is like a frequency sent out to a particular radius, which allows the user to speak with other Sena users with their Mesh functions enabled. These exchanges come in as clear as the music or phone calls, though there is about a one-second delay. The Mesh-to-Mesh intercom can remain connected for up to five miles, and doesn't require pre-pairing headsets in order to communicate.

I look forward to taking long excursions with the option to throw on some AC/DC to occupy my mind on something other than why pizza boxes are square when the pie is round. **AIM**

Battery life is about 13 hours, and a quick-charge feature will net you another four hours in a mere 15 minutes.

This is everything that comes with one Sena 30K (I received a dual pack). The main unit, a clamp w/ microphone and speakers, a boom mic, a wired mic, a multitude of fasteners and adapters, a user guide, car charger, audio cable, and Allen key.

SOURCES

Sena
30K Bluetooth Mesh Intercom
Communication System, $329
Sena.com