

Apple Debuts AirPods Pro, With 'New Design' and Noise Canceling Capabilities

BY **MARK GURMAN / BLOOMBERG** UPDATED: OCTOBER 28, 2019 - Time

(Bloomberg) — Apple Inc. announced the AirPods Pro, a higher-end version of its popular wireless headphones that add noise-cancellation, water-resistance and a new design.

The model priced at \$249 will sell alongside the current \$159 version that launched in March, and marks the first time that Apple is segmenting its AirPods line in a significant way. The new model includes interchangeable flexible tips to improve their fit. That addresses a criticism of the original design, which first debuted in 2016, and also helps enable the noise cancellation feature for improved audio quality.

The Pro model has a feature called Adaptive EQ, which automatically tunes songs for better sound and has an updated touch-sensitive stem that allows users to switch between noise-cancellation mode and transparency mode, to be able to hear around you. The new model will begin shipping Oct. 30, Apple said in a statement Monday. The water-resistance should make the AirPods a better option for

athletes, pitting them against the latest offerings from Apple's Beats brand.

The high-end AirPods will include a wireless-charging case so it can be charged on standard charging pads. The wireless charging case is an extra cost on the lower-end AirPods.

The AirPods have quickly become one of Apple's most popular products and have helped build up a wearable devices portfolio that also includes the Apple Watch and Beats headphones. The new headphones come at a critical time. Until this launch, Apple has not made meaningful functionality changes to the AirPods. Meanwhile, new players have entered the wireless earbuds space, including Amazon.com Inc. and Fitbit Inc.

Apple's Wearables, Home, and Accessories financial segment grew 48% to more than \$5.5 billion last quarter. According to a report from Counterpoint Research earlier this year, AirPods held 60% of the market for in-ear wireless headphones, putting them far ahead of rivals.

Bloomberg News reported last February that Apple was planning higher-end AirPods for 2019.

Apple on Monday also released iOS 13.2, which adds compatibility for the new AirPods with the iPhone. The software update also allows users to delete their Siri history, disable Siri recordings, adds new Emojis, and makes improvements to picture-taking.

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