Report: Sonos will launch its fancy headphones next spring

Enlarge / Apple’s AirPods Max, a close analog to what Sonos plans to launch in April.

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Bloomberg reporter Mark Gurman isn’t just reporting about the inner workings of Apple; he’s breaking news about upcoming Sonos products. In a report published Tuesday, Gurman revealed that Sonos is months away from releasing a competitor to high-end wireless headphones after years of vague rumors.

Additionally, Sonos is reportedly working on a Roku Ultra- or Apple TV 4K-like set-top box that would allow users to watch video from a wide range of streaming TV apps.

The Bloomberg article says the device will cost between $150 and $200 and will be a small black box. We’ve seen some prior reports that flesh this out a bit; Sonos has been working on something called Home Theater OS (which would be Android-based) for some time, and voice control is said to be a key feature. Sonos is also considering launching its own streaming video service. The device will support Dolby Atmos and Dolby Vision, and it will seamlessly work with Sonos’ existing home theater speakers.

As for the headphones, Sonos plans to charge between $400 and $500, making them competitors to high-end noise canceling headphones like Apple’s AirPods Max and Sony’s popular WH-1000XM5. They’ll be available in both black and white, and

they’ll also support voice controls.

Sonos plans to follow those over-ear headphones with earbuds that will resemble Apple’s AirPods Pro in terms of features and form factor.

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Those were arguably the two most notable products mentioned, but there are others too: a Wi-Fi 6 subwoofer, a second-generation Roam speaker, a higher-end soundbar that will surpass even the company’s current Arc soundbar in sound quality, 8-inch ceiling speakers, and a home theater amplifier for hardcore enthusiasts that will cost as much as $4,000.

The headphones are said to launch as soon as April, with most speakers trickling out through the end of 2024. The TV streaming box might be further away; Gurman writes that it could arrive by the end of 2024 but hedges that a 2025 release date is also possible.

Why Sonos is branching out

Sonos was an early pioneer in connected wireless speakers, leading the charge on a product category that has become immensely popular over the years. But as bigger or established players like Apple or Bose have entered that space, Sonos has been in a constant state of fierce competition.

Amid that competition, Sonos’ smart speaker sales growth has slowed significantly, so diversifying into other kinds of products like headphones and set-top boxes could help on that front.

It hasn’t helped that Sonos’ products have had to rely on technologies like Google Assistant from companies that are its competitors in the hardware space. When the company made its initial public offering in 2018, the IPO filings named Sonos’ reliance on competitors as a key weakness.

Thus, the company has been working for a couple of years now at developing its own voice technology, content streaming services, and software to make it a more viable competitor in a crowded space.

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