

Sena Cases Elega Pouch for Apple iPhone

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Company: Sena Cases

Website: www.senacases.com

Model: Elega Pouch

Price: \$40-50

Compatible: iPhone

Without a doubt, leather has become the manufacturer's material of choice for iPhone cases: we've seen more leather iPhone cases over the past three months than in the iPod's prior twelve. Today, we're briefly reviewing nine new leather cases that have recently been released for the iPhone: four of the cases are virtually the same "play-through" design, with small differences, while three are "flip-style" cases, and two are sleeves.



The two sleeves are both from Sena Cases: first is the UltraSlim Pouch for Apple iPhone (\$29), and the other is the Elega Pouch for Apple iPhone (\$40-50). They're both made to appeal to leather aficionados, and despite one critical similarity—their shared shape—they're otherwise quite different in execution.

For both cases, Sena has used a leather design that covers literally every part of the iPhone save for its top surface, top side corners, and hints of its bottom microphone and speaker. As its name suggests, the idea behind UltraSlim is to provide this protection without adding significantly to the iPhone's thickness. Velvety microfiber lining and a soft, interestingly textured Nappa leather are used to protect the iPhone; black, tan, red, and white versions are available. The Elega Pouch takes a different approach, adding both hard reinforcement and padding to the leather outside and velvety inside; thus, it at least doubles if not triples the iPhone's thickness. Here, the leather comes in 13 different colors and two textures: crocodile-styled (shown) or standard, smooth leather. The crocodile versions sell for \$50, while the smooth ones go for \$40; as with most Sena cases, each is packaged with a soft red bag.



On a positive note, Sena's leather here is as nice as ever—perhaps the cases' greatest distinguishing factor from others on the market. Both versions look and feel like premium leather products, contrasting with similar previous products released by Griffin ([Elan Holster](#)), Belkin ([Holster](#)), and Macally ([mSleeve](#)). There's no doubt that both of these cases aesthetically occupy even higher visual ground than the nice Belkin Holster, and that the crocodile Elega Pouch in particular is the most deluxe of the sleeves we've yet seen.



The cases each take a slightly different approach to belt clipping. Like Belkin's Holster, Elega has a fixed-position vertical clip built-in, while UltraSlim is like Macally's mSleeve, lacking a clip on the grounds that it would increase the thickness. Other than the added versatility that Griffin's two-position vertical- or horizontal-mounted Elan Holster clip included, this approach makes sense to us; most UltraSlim users will be looking for pocket protection, and most Elega users will be satisfied with vertical mounting; horizontal is especially unnecessary given the way you need to remove the iPhone from the Pouch.





Unfortunately, the same complaint we raised about the prior three sleeve-styled cases—each rated a C+—is at least equally applicable here: iPhone's face, back, and sides are completely covered, permitting virtually no access to their controls. (The ringer switch, generally useless, is usable in Elegia.) Unless you're using the iPhone's remote-equipped headphones, should you decide to answer a phone call, or want to change the current track, you'll need to pull it out of the case. Want to change applications or do anything other than music and answering calls? Again, pull the iPhone entirely out of the case. With both UltraSlim and Elegia, actually doing this takes a little work, as each case holds the iPhone snugly inside, and neither has enough of a hole on the bottom to let you simply push the iPhone out. You'll need to do a little pushing and squeezing, which may be less than convenient if the phone is ringing.



As noted above, Sena does expose hints of the iPhone's bottom in each case. UltraSlim has twelve tiny holes for the microphone and speaker, and Elegia has two larger, more centralized holes—one each for the two bottom components. While in speakerphone mode, callers said that they could hear us in UltraSlim, but that their own voices echoed awfully; the same speakerphone mode worked fine in Elegia. Actually using this mode assumes that you're willing to remove the phone from the case to actually take the call, then put the iPhone back inside, which we can't see a lot of people actually doing.

