

WHAT HI FI? SOUND AND VISION

APRIL 2015 ₹100

INDIA'S No.1 HOME ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

HI-FI SHOW

LIVE

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from Mumbai



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This magazine contains 122 pages including both covers.

haymarket

Hello / 04 / 15



As fond as I am of sharing my monthly experiences with the latest hi-fi kit around, nothing brings you closer to the experience than well, experiencing it!

The Mumbai edition of the *What Hi Fi Show* is always special because this happens to be the hub of sorts for the audiophile community. The most number of high-end brands are represented out of Mumbai-based distributors and this makes for demonstrations that go beyond the call of duty. There is sweat, altercation and passion in equal measure and it results in set-ups that match the calibre of any international show. More than 40 rooms occupied two levels of the luxurious Palladium Hotel in the heart of Mumbai to attract in excess of three thousand enthusiasts across three days to witness some of the best hi-fi and home-theatre systems currently being sold in the country.

Of course, with our appetites whetted, there was more sound to be savoured back in the test labs. Armed with our new **Reference System** (p85), we set out to audition the mighty McIntosh and Mark Levinson amps along with the brand new Audio Vector speakers and more. Our endeavour is to bring you more excitement and more live experiences this year, so keep in touch!

Nishant Padhiar, Editor



Why we're No.1!

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In the AV universe our deep rooted heritage and experience helps us share a wealth of information, helping you make a sound decision

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We spot big trends first

Don't blame us for breaking the best stories, it is a habit that ensures you get to learn about tomorrow, today

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"Whether you go for looks or not, at least it makes a welcome change from the usual rectangular wooden boxes we come across"



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"B&O's Avant really takes the fight to what we'd consider premium rivals"



Motorola Turbo
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"One look at its resumé and you're bound to be impressed"



WHF Show 2015 Mumbai, saw an outpour of audio philes from all parts of the country for the biggest display of hi-end Home-Theatre and Audio systems

First Test
"It feels like your ceiling is elevated - the sense of space is increased, and the soundfield is taller"



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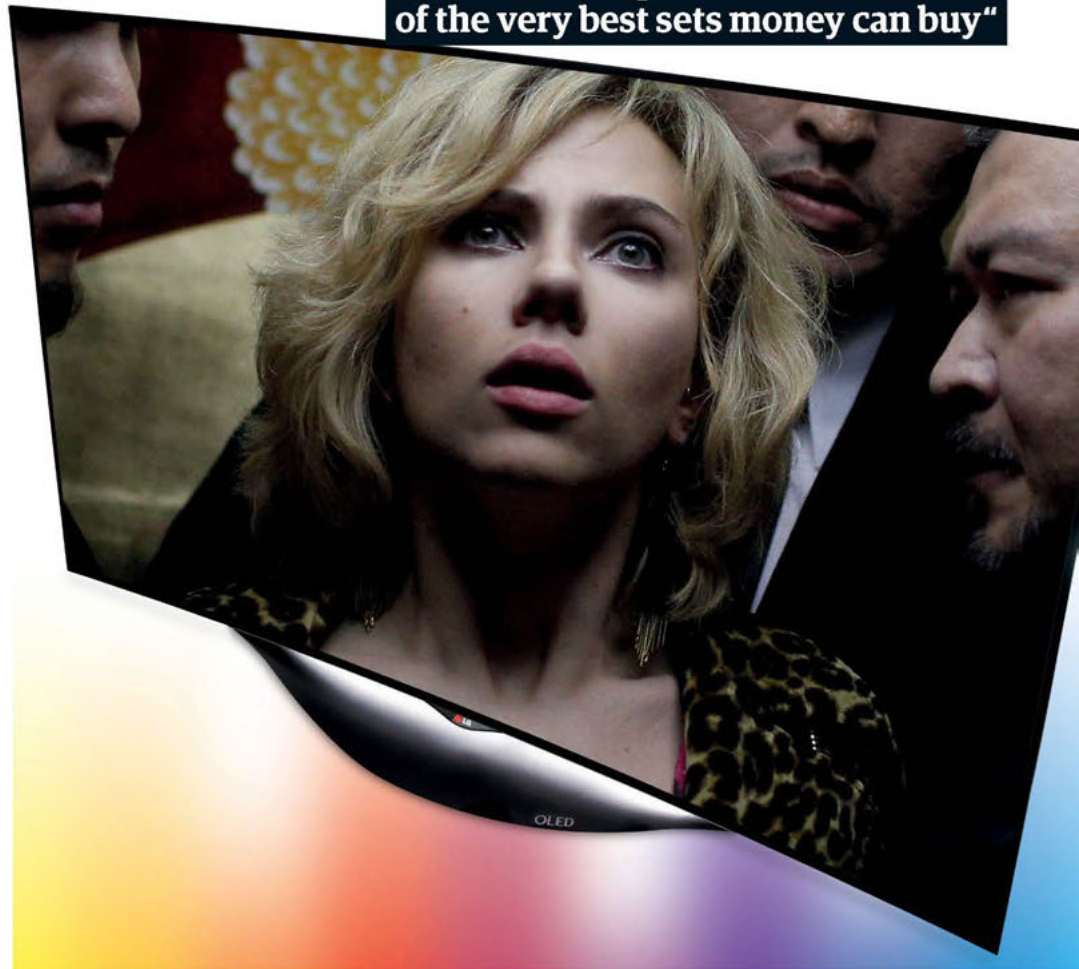
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**The Buyer's Guide...
 comprehensive!**

The most trusted hi-fi guide!
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 With new categories and key tech specs, we've made it easier for you to pick the best kit for your cash.



Our ratings explained

We always test products as a team, in dedicated facilities, and always compare them with their peers. That's why our ratings are the most authoritative in the industry.

- One of the best**
- A serious contender**
- Worth a look**
- Disappointing**
- Awful**



**WHAT HI-FI?
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If it's one of our winners, you know it's top quality

**MORE
FIRST TESTS**

EXCLUSIVE



B&O BeoPlay H2

₹23,000 **Page 11**

Beautiful looking good sounding on-ear headphones.



Sony NWZ-A15

₹20,400 **Page 13**

Low cost, high-res portable music player? Yes sir, indeed!



Elipson Planet LW Bridge System

₹1,15,000 **Page 15**

Beautiful to look at, wireless to boot with decent sound.

Raise the roof with a Dolby Atmos-equipped package

Pioneer S-73A | Speaker package | ₹3,00,00 (approx)

Dolby Atmos has arrived. Last month we reviewed our first couple of Atmos-enabled AV receivers. Gradually, Blu-ray discs with Atmos soundtracks are beginning to appear. And now we have our first Atmos-equipped surround-sound speaker package: the Pioneer S-73A.

This consists of the S-FS73A floorstanders, S-BS73A-LR standmounters, and S-C73A centre channel.

Bring on the sub

The subwoofer originally designed to partner this package is not available here yet. Instead, Pioneer has sent us an equivalent existing model (the S-71W), lowered from, to bring the overall cost to ₹300,000. Each component can be bought separately.

At first glance, this looks like a regular 5.1 package. The mildly curved wood-fibre cabinets are armed with a mixture of woofers and concentric drivers. Each one of

these is a 10cm aluminium midrange with a 25mm soft-dome tweeter at its centre. The aim is to deliver wide dispersion, a slim design and plenty of welly too.

Draw your attention to the top of the speakers and you'll see they are sloped. That's where the Atmos drivers sit. They're extra, upward-firing channels, which plug into the front-wide/front-height and surround-back connections of your amp.

These speakers bounce effects off your ceiling so you'll perceive them as overhead sounds. The idea is to add a whole new

the sound in front of you, rather than traversing the room on top of you.

Time for some real-world application, and we move to the nature documentary. It is a more sedate experience than that offered by an effects disc, naturally, as we track through a rainforest.

Move away from the attention-grabbing demo effects, and it's easy to see the real point of Atmos: realistic ambience. With noises coming from above, we are easily convinced of the canopy of foliage, insects and birds over our heads. The level of

Atmos works. The demo clips offer plenty of effects, and it's hard not to be amused (and mildly alarmed) by the sensation of various noises buzzing and clicking around and over us

dimension to the sound and create an immersive, dome-shaped soundfield.

It works. Those four extra drivers (which make this a 5.1.4 package) bring an element of verticality to your home cinema that simply isn't there with a standard 5.1 package. It feels as if the ceiling is elevated - the sense of space is increased, and the soundfield is taller.

Sample material

Our test Blu-rays are a varied blend: official Dolby Atmos demos, BBC Earth's *Enchanted Kingdom* documentary and, by way of contrast, *Transformers: Age of Extinction*.

The demo clips offer plenty of effects designed purely to show off Atmos's talents in the extreme. It's hard not to be amused (and mildly alarmed) by the sensation of various noises buzzing and clicking around and over us.

Effects placement is very precise. It is nothing new in the context of home cinema - until the noises running circles around you suddenly rise, going past your right ear and over your head. This is distinct from standard front-height channels, which really just raise the height of

immersion and engagement increases: it's a step from surveying to participating.

More pieces of the action

We move on to the sensory overload that is *Transformers 4*, to mix ambience with heavy effects. That ceiling-free ambience is quite obvious. Off-screen helicopters hover nearby, while bullets and missiles fly over our heads with precision.

Atmos works. We are very impressed by the level of immersion created by these speakers, which succeed in delivering extra scale, reach and precision.

There are other elements to consider, however. Putting aside our affection for Atmos, we find ourselves disappointed with the package's performance elsewhere.

This is not a particularly detailed sound. It's hard to follow and distinguish the individual strands of an orchestral score: what you get are broad, sweeping strokes but not the finer textures and subtleties. At one stage we can identify strings, but it isn't clear what else is playing.

The lack of clarity is another issue. We wouldn't go so far as to call it muddy, but it's not the most insightful sound we've heard. Neither voices nor effects feel



USE IT WITH

Transformers: Age of Extinction (Blu-ray)

With Dolby Atmos fused into its soundtrack, the crash-bang-wallop of the Transformers franchise reaches new heights (literally), even if the whizzy processing does nothing to save the plot



At first glance the package looks conventional - until you look on the top...

particularly direct.

Much of this is down to the lack of solidity and dynamics. We'd like a punchy, well-defined sound but here the Pioneer's performance feels vague, a little soft at the edges, not to mention restrained. We can tell exactly where those bullets are, but there's no sense of how hard they're hitting.

The treble is a little forward (and often bright), the midrange is recessed and in need of firming up, and the low-end feels overblown and tubby. The subwoofer in particular seems to struggle with definition.

It's an agile sound, which certainly helps with effects placement and panning, but it's not enough to make for an exciting,



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In detail...

1 Pioneer's use of co-axial drive units makes a lot of sense. Such a configuration helps integration between the tweeter and midrange driver by putting their acoustic centres close together. This makes the array sound more like a single, wider bandwidth driver. The co-axial arrangement helps deliver a more even dispersion too – an ideal characteristic for a surround set-up.

2 Curved cabinets have a number of advantages over conventional rectangular alternatives. The curve reduces the build-up of internal standing waves, so reducing cabinet coloration. The curved appearance also helps the speakers look less bulky – ideal in a domestic environment.

engaging performance overall.

In order to optimise your sound, it is crucial you set these speakers up properly. The floorstanders go in front and have adjustable spikes, which must be tightened.

Upward-firing speakers ideally want to be angled correctly so that the sound bounces off the ceiling at the perfect angle to reach your listening position. The speakers' fixed-angle Atmos drivers don't allow for precise adjustment, so it's worth moving the speakers around to find the optimal positions.

Take care and calibrate

Take care with connections, as AV receivers may have peculiar plug arrangements and it's easy to use the wrong channel. Our Pioneer SC-LX88 preferred to assign the front Atmos channels to the surround-back plugs, for example.

After plugging in, make sure you re-calibrate your AV receiver. Not only does this ensure you've got all the channels in the right places – it also allows Atmos to work with the desired precision.

Is the Pioneer S-73A Dolby Atmos package worth its ₹3,00,000 price tag? That depends on your priorities. There is no doubt that Atmos works wonders, and we can't get enough of hearing sound come

The angle of the top drive-unit determines the location of Atmos effects, so – if possible – it's worth moving the speakers around to find the optimal locations

This S-71W subwoofer is the one Pioneer recommends buyers use in the Atmos system



from above.

These speakers are certainly capable of granting you that extra dimension, and right now, they're the only ones around.

Effects in perspective

Credit to Pioneer for being the first to get consumer-ready Atmos speakers out there. But at what cost? We find ourselves disappointed with the quality of the sound in other ways. It's not as clear, detailed, dynamic or punchy as we'd like for the money. That means you're paying a lot for Atmos at a time when Atmos material is still quite thin on the ground.

This is an excellent first step into the world of Atmos, but we need better sound and not just more of it. If Pioneer can add some deeper sonic quality to its Atmos tricks, we'd be all over it.

SYSTEM BUILDER

Add these two and you'll have all the hardware you need to create a great Atmos



AV amplifier
Pioneer SC-LX88 ₹1,73,990 ★★★★★
Staggeringly powerful, with stunning detail and clarity – and Atmos-enabled.



Blu-ray player
Panasonic DMP-BDT700 ₹60,000*
★★★★★
Superlative performance, with admirable build and a suite of features.

Total build ₹6,24,000*

TECH SPECS

Sensitivity (main speakers) 86dB/W/m • Impedance (main speakers) 4 ohms • Power handling (main speakers) 140W • Biwireable no • Front speaker dimensions (hwd) 100 x 24 x 27cm • Centre speaker dimensions (hwd) 19 x 50 x 22cm • Rear speaker dimensions (hwd) 39 x 19 x 24cm • Subwoofer dimensions (hwd) 39 x 37 x 41cm • Subwoofer power 280W • Subwoofer driver 25cm • Subwoofer cabinet type Ported • Subwoofer drive unit orientation downward • Subwoofer line inputs 1 • Subwoofer speaker inputs 1 • Subwoofer line outputs yes • Subwoofer speaker outputs no • Subwoofer phase invert yes • Subwoofer remote control no • Finishes 1

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Atmos really works – in lots of ways; precise, immersive sound

AGAINST Poor dynamics, clarity, detail and punch

VERDICT Pioneer wields Atmos with confidence, but the overall quality disappoints

**REVIEWER'S NOTES... GETTING TO KNOW THE PIONEER S-73A**

1 Atmos what? These look like regular speakers. Ah yes, there are drivers on top of the floorstanders and standmounters.

2 Time to take a closer look. Build quality is solid enough, but the finish isn't amazing – the vinyl wrap is a little untidy at some edges.

3 That slant isn't there just to look pretty – it bounces sound off the ceiling towards you! If only the angle were somehow adjustable.

4 The front Atmos sound effects are coming out of the back. That can't be right. Better check the channel arrangement and the AV receiver.

5 We've listened to this sample disc of whizzing overhead Atmos sound effects about 20 times now. We're still not tired of it.



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Bang & Olufsen BeoPlay H2 | On-ear headphones | ₹23,000

Stylish B&Os also score on sound

Bang & Olufsen is a brand we sometimes struggle with here at *What Hi-Fi?* The Danish company usually produces beautiful products that sound good, but we worry that, on occasion, people are paying a little too much for the style they're buying, rather than the right amount for the sound quality on offer. So the star rating can suffer - after all, we're all about sound per rupee.

Quality kit, superior sound

With the Bang & Olufsen BeoPlay H2, we have no such worries. These are fine headphones that easily compete on sound terms with their price and sector rivals. That they are also a beautiful example of the legendary Bang & Olufsen style and quality is a rather nice added bonus.

That feeling of quality hits us as soon as we open the flap on the box. Inside, there's another box and a ribbon tab with a sign that says "Pull me" in an *Alice In Wonderland* kind of way. Follow that advice and a cardboard cover with teasing holes in strategic places has a "Lift up" instruction. And so it goes, until finally the BeoPlay H2 headphones are revealed, lying in a plush, cloth-covered, contoured tray.

It's an impressive start for these ₹23,000 headphones - and that feeling of pride of ownership only grows as we take the H2s in our hands. These are headphones for being out and about in, and they are suitably robust, made from a strong, flexible plastic and partly covered in a durable cloth. There are five colours - the Deep Red here, pink, blue, silver and green.

Built for show

These headphones are light, at 150g, and the earcups fold so, B&O says, when you're not listening, the H2s can be worn around your neck with the earpieces following the shape of your body. Fair enough.

When we first put the H2s on, we're a bit worried that they are going to be too tight - it's a problem the spectacle-wearers among the team have suffered with some other cans. The clever composite material the headband is made from is 'adaptive', however, and while the fit is snug it is reassuringly so, and it never becomes uncomfortable, even during long listening sessions. This impressive comfort may be helped by the beautifully finished lambskin

leather-covered earpads.

And we're pleased to report the sound of the H2s meets all the impressive standards the build quality has set. The 40mm driver and bass port in each earcup provide an easily accessible sound, as is appropriate for headphones intended to be worn out. It's warm without being overbearing, and the presentation is even across the frequency range.



The sound of the H2s meets all the impressive standards the build quality has set. It's an easily accessible sound, as is appropriate for headphones intended to be worn out

B&O says it will soon make a longer cable available for easier indoor listening



There's little excuse for putting these headphones on the wrong way round

so no one area stands out as prominent.

Treble is clear without being too sharp or bright, and the midrange is a strength, with vocals coming across warm and intimate. The bass is just a touch tubby, but only compared with our current class favourites, the

Award-winning Philips M1 MkIIs (indeed the H2s' bass is reminiscent of the original M1s). It's not overblown, though, and that trait certainly doesn't hurt in a pair of headphones designed to be worn in the open.

Those padded earcups cut out quite a lot of external noise - always a benefit on a crowded train - but they don't prevent you from perceiving what is going on around you, so road safety shouldn't be an issue.

The cable has an inline mic and three-button remote to answer and end calls, and change songs and volume. It works well with an iPhone, but if you're an Android user it may not be as effective (with our Sony Xperia Z3 Compact, for example, it will pause and play but not change tracks). There is no noticeable noise transferred from the plastic-sheathed cable when we're out and about, leaving us able to concentrate on the music.

We like the BeoPlay H2s. They do a fine job of music reproduction and (just as important at this price) they're a top quality product that gives a pride of ownership that some other brands just can't match.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Enjoyable, first-rate sound; superb build; comfortable fit for long listening sessions

AGAINST Nothing of note

VERDICT A stylish pair of headphones that sound terrific and really look the part

Also consider

Philips Fidelio M1 MKII ₹10,999

★★★★★

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Sony NWZ-A15 | Portable music player | ₹20,400

Low-cost, high-res music has arrived

High resolution is the audio fledgling that hasn't quite found its momentum yet. One of its obstacles is the prohibitive price of music and equipment, so we're pleased to see Sony bring its latest Walkman out at the lower end of the market.

The NWZ-A15 is an entry-level music player, offering high-res goodness for £170. While it cannot match premium rivals on performance and build, it's a good place to start your resolution revolution.

For the money we wouldn't expect many bells and whistles, and the NWZ-A15 is a suitably dedicated device. That means no wi-fi, and no apps. Fancy some Spotify streaming or Miracast/DLNA action? You're in the wrong neighbourhood.

NFC (Near Field Communication), FM radio and aptX Bluetooth is about as fancy as the feature list gets. The screen - 2.2 inches, 320 x 240 pixels - only functions as a display and offers no touch capability.

On the button

You control the Walkman using physical buttons - remember those? A diamond-shaped directional pad adorns the front, with enter/play/pause at its centre.

The design is a matter of function over form. That textured aluminium face makes a good first impression, but the matte finish on the back and sides looks and feels a little cheap. We find ourselves missing the luxury of the flagship Sony NWZ-ZX1, even though it costs a lot more.

At least it's tiny. Sony currently claims the A15 is the world's smallest and lightest high-resolution music player, which isn't hard to believe. Measuring 109 x 44 x 9mm and weighing only 66g, this thing will disappear into your pocket without issue.

Loading music onto the Walkman is a matter of dragging and dropping files from your computer. The internal 16GB fills up



You won't find many features adorning the NWZ-A15, but it scores where it matters

quickly, but you can just insert a microSD card. File compatibility includes MP3, WAV, AIFF, WMA, AAC, HE-AAC, FLAC and ALAC. The NWZ-A15 does not decode DSD files.

Finding your content from the main menu is easy enough, although the 'Back' key provides an easy escape if you do take a wrong turn. It feels a little archaic, and not entirely intuitive - especially after being spoiled by lovely touchscreens.

Customise the sound

In the music playback screen, the options menu gives you many ways to mess with the sound as well as some bizarre offerings limited to non-high-res tracks. We'd recommend tinkering with the various EQ settings and sound modes, but we're essentially happy with the default sound.

We're impressed by the agile, energetic audio performance of this diminutive device. We start jamming with Bob Marley's *Could You Be Loved* and it's an insightful listen. The Walkman shows off all manner of texture, from the obvious drumming and guitar picking to the subtle *cuíca*, played by rubbing a wet cloth on a stick.

Tonal balance is good, with no undue emphasis on any part of the frequency range. It's a lean sound, which helps with agility, but it never oversteps into thinness.

Timing and dynamics

Our recent experience with Sony portables has led us to expect regimented precision, but the A15 doesn't quite tick that box. Instruments are well organised and clearly positioned within an accurate soundstage, but timing isn't as taut as we'd like. There's also the issue of dynamics, which we'd like to be more expressive.

Ultimately it comes down to this: if you want the very best in sound quality and features, the A15 isn't what you're looking for. But if you're not after flashy features and merely want to dip your toe into the high-resolution water of portable music, this is a good place to start.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Lots of detail; small size; expandable memory; excellent build and finish; easy to use

AGAINST Could do with better timing and greater dynamics; uninspiring design

VERDICT This pared-down player is a good way to get into high-resolution music

Also consider Sony Xperia Z3

₹41,990 ★★★★★

Now supporting high-res music, this smartphone sounds warm, punchy, detailed and wonderfully spacious



In detail



Make the connection There's a standard data/charging port and 3.5mm headphone port on the base



Card accepted Sony gives the NWZ-A15 16GB of internal storage, but you can add a microSD card for more



Physical controls The play/pause button sits centrally inside a diamond-shape pad on the front

AURO 3D[®] AUDIO

AURO-3D INTEGRATED 3D SOUND PROCESSORS



AURO-3D[®] AURIGA™

Its 16 output channels include 13 amplified channels, each capable of delivering 200 watts / 8 ohms, all channels operating together, and 4 additional RCA line outputs.



AURO-3D[®] MENSA™

With 16 output channels, the Auro-3D[®] Mensa™ allows to accommodate not only all Surround sound formats but also the most immersive experience available in the home market today. Your movie experience will be like nothing you have heard before with crystal-clear dialog and immersive soundtracks like originally intended by their creators.



AURO-3D[®] CRUX™

Boasting 15 output channels, the Auro-3D[®] Crux™ delivers outstanding audio performance with high sensitivity. 10-band parametric equalization for each individual channel and superior bass management allow both flexibility and precise control.

Contact Information

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WWW.AURO-3D.COM

Elipson Planet LW Bridge system | Wireless speaker system | ₹1,15,000

Elipson build a Bridge of highs

Elipson provides smart-looking rings to act as bases for the speakers

We like this Elipson package. It's beautifully built, mostly wireless and sounds pretty decent too. And we can't overlook that distinctive appearance either. Whether you go for the looks or not, at least it makes a welcome change from the usual rectangular wooden boxes we normally find.

Slam-dunk speakers

At the heart of this package are the Planet LW speakers. These are basketball-sized and available in neatly applied black, white or red gloss finishes. Don't worry about them rolling off their supports, Elipson supply smart-looking metal rings to act as bases.

These speakers use a two-way coaxial driver array comprising a 16.5cm mid/bass (loaded by a rear-firing port) and a fabric dome tweeter. There are two 50-watt amp modules on each enclosure - one for each drive unit - so these are truly active rather than just powered. The amplifier modules are the well-known ICEpower designs developed by Bang & Olufsen.

One of the big selling points of the Planet LWs is that they are wireless - the connection works at 16-bit/44.1kHz. As usual, wireless doesn't mean there aren't any wires involved, as you still need a mains feed to each speaker. Use either of the supplied transmitting dongles (one USB and the other a 30-pin Apple version) and you link to the speakers directly. The designated left-hand LW is the master: aim the cheap-feeling remote towards this to adjust volume.

Planet of sound

The Elipson Audio Bridge adds aptX Bluetooth, optical and analogue connectivity. These sources connect to the Bridge and it links to the Planet LW speakers wirelessly. The speakers won't work with both the Bridge and the dongles

simultaneously, only one at a time.

Set up is easy: establish the wireless link and off you go. Within a few minutes we're listening to music. We start with the Audio Bridge in the set-up, using our



The Elipson Audio Bridge remote control is not great: it feels cheap



We listen to *From Finner* by Of Monsters and Men and are pleased with the overall presentation. It's pretty balanced across the frequency range. Bass is solid and reasonably taut, providing a foundation for the rest of the frequency range

reference Naim NDS /555PS streamer as an analogue source. The results are decent, but not inspiring.

We listen to *From Finner* by Of Monsters and Men and are pleased with the overall presentation. It's pretty balanced across the frequency range. Bass is solid and reasonably taut, providing a good foundation for the rest of the frequency range. The drive units are well integrated and there's combination of stability and control that most passive alternatives would find hard to better.

It doesn't take long for us to think these speakers play things a little too safe, though. There isn't the attack we expect, nor enough of the energy we know is in the song. Greater transparency would be welcome too.

The analogue input is to blame to a large extent, as switching to optical and, to a lesser degree Bluetooth, shows. We wouldn't say the issues go away with the digital connections, but things improve notably - enough for us to have fun listening to a range of music, from Outkast to Elvis.

We power down the Audio Bridge and use the supplied dongles: the USB one with our MacBook and the other with our iPad. If anything, going directly to the Planet LWs adds a little more clarity and sparkle to the performance. Tchaikovsky's *Marché Slave*



USE IT WITH Sony Xperia Z3

This smartphone is a true multi-media powerhouse. An outstanding all-rounder.

Op.31 is delivered with conviction and decent scale. Moving the speakers close to a rear wall helps with outright authority without unbalancing tonality much. Bass remains decently articulate in this position too.

We admire Elipson's fresh approach to speaker design. The wireless aspect proves stable, though we have doubts about the quality of the analogue-to-digital conversion inside the Audio Bridge. Even at their best the Planet LW speakers still sound a little restrained, but they're insightful enough to remain interesting to listen to.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Distinctive appearance; wireless; good connectivity; balanced and informative sound

AGAINST Presentation is a little too safe; analogue input doesn't sound great

VERDICT Has much to commend it. It looks great, is wireless and sounds pretty decent, too

Also consider Dynaudio XEO 4 ₹2,40,000 ★★★★★

Pricier, but they deliver a hugely entertaining sound packed with detail and dynamics.



*** Lenovo A7000**

Announced at the MWC 2015, the smartphone has Dolby Atmos surround sound on-board. An India launch is awaited.



4K future

4K content: The revolution will be televised, but how?

From 4K Blu-ray to broadcasts and streaming

The lack of 4K content has been a key concern that's checked the rise of Ultra HD TV. Is that about to change?

Live TV and kicking...

4K technology is finally finding its way into Indian homes courtesy of a few TV manufacturers and Direct-To-Home (D2H) Television operators. The market is wide open and a couple of operators are scrambling to grab the biggest piece of the pie while it's still in a nascent stage. During the recent ICC Cricket World Cup, Star Sports and Tata Sky came together to broadcast seven games in 4K, including four games that India played. This was the first cricket broadcast in 4K in the world! Tata Sky had also screened the world's first live 4K football match in 2014.

Videocon, another Indian player making serious headway into D2H services, has gone a step further and launched India's first 4K channel. The



Ultra HD channel is planned to carry multi-genre content like movies, sports, travel, video-on-demand and a host of other content provided by international broadcasters and independent content providers. Videocon has launched a 4K set top box and a 4K TV in the past. The launch of this channel signifies a foray into 4K, content which seems like a smart move to create an Ultra HD ecosystem for the discerning Indian TV viewer.

Tata Sky and Videocon have both launched 4K set top boxes for the Indian market

4K technology is finally finding its way into Indian homes courtesy of a few TV manufacturers and Direct-To-Home (D2H) Television operators

Getting in a spin

And we will now get 4K Ultra HD Blu-ray discs, with the first titles due to hit the shelves this year.

It's expected that these discs will support High Dynamic Range technologies and sport a wider colour gamut as well. The final specs are due to be confirmed by mid-2015, and we could well see 4K Blu-ray discs on sale in time for Christmas.

All told: the scarcity of 4K content is finally being (slowly) addressed. And by the end of 2015, the option to watch 4K streams, broadcasts and discs could all be a reality...

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 Phone: 09810065877. Email: snarendra1707@gmail.com

*** Intex LED 3111**

Intex has launched a 32in LED TV with HDMI, USB ports, noise cancellation and other essential features at ₹23,990



Panasonic showcased a prototype 4K Blu-ray player at CES 2015



Analysis

Are people prepared to adopt a new 4K disc format?

There are still plenty of people yet to be convinced by the concept of Ultra HD 4K TV. Even for the most committed AV enthusiast, the prospect of splashing out on a new TV might feel somewhat premature given the lack of content. It's hard to argue.

And yes, to an extent we're still being kept waiting, amid reports of trials, breakthroughs and more - but there can be no disputing progress is slowly but surely being made. 2015 is set to be the year it all comes to a head, but which way is the market most likely to go?

Getting a 4K TV is the easy bit. It's evident that prices are starting to tumble, and that's no surprise judging by just how many 4K sets we expect to hit the shelves in India this year. It's ever more likely that your next TV will be 4K.



4K broadcasts might be the next most likely option, and also provides relatively few barriers for adoption. So what about 4K Blu-rays? They're due by the end of the year, but the hurdle is hardware. A sole Panasonic prototype is all we've seen. And how many people are prepared to spend money on a new disc format? The BDA says the discs will offer higher bitrates than online 4K streams, so the hook looks likely to be better quality. And that's something we're always happy to get behind. Interesting times...

TOP 5 New launches



B&O and Q Acoustics speakers, Epson projectors



Sennheiser RS
Priced from ₹15,990 to ₹31,990, this wireless range from Sennheiser has four models - each engineered for different acoustic needs.

Toreto Twins

Stream music wirelessly via Bluetooth from a compatible device on these 'twins' via an indigenous 'Air Stereo Pairing' feature. Yours for a cool ₹6999.



Eagle Cables for audiophiles launched by Lending Lifestyles in India

Eagle Cables, made and engineered in Germany, are now available in India through Leading Lifestyle Solutions. The brand's Deluxe Series is targeted at the high-end audio enthusiast. The cables have gold plated metal connectors and are covered with a black nylon mesh jacket to help against extended wear and tear due to usage. The HDMI Ethernet cables are future-ready and fully compatible with HDMI 2.0, ARC, 3D and 4K video resolution.



Debuted at the WHF Show 2015, ZVOX launches the 'Platinum Series' in India

ZVOX has launched three SoundBase systems under its new Platinum Series. The series claims theatre-quality 3D sound with the simplicity of a pedestal design and single-wire connectivity. The high-end 770 model uses three 5.25in subwoofers with a high-mass, long-throw design plus five 2x3 main speaker drivers. Prices for the models start from ₹30,000 and go up to ₹50,000.



LG introduces a new Bluetooth portable speaker - the MusicFlow P7

Priced at ₹11,990, the MusicFlow P7 is the latest portable speaker from LG. Despite the small size, it's touted to have exceptional sound performance courtesy LG's Auto Sound Engine. The P7 can be connected to three devices simultaneously via Bluetooth and can pair with other MusicFlow speakers and LG TVs as well. It's equipped with a 2600mAh battery that promises nine hours of playback.



Apple unveils new line of Macbook

Apple has updated all previous models of its Macbook line and introduced a new laptop called simply, Macbook. The new Macbook sports a 12in Retina display and runs on the fifth-generation Intel Core M processor with Intel HD Graphics 5300. Apple has done away with almost all ports in the Macbook and just left one USB-C port for data transfer, video out and charging. The traditional trackpad has also been replaced with a new 'Force Touch' trackpad that utilizes haptic feedback to recognize inputs. The new Macbook claims a battery life of ten hours and is available in gold, silver and space grey. Prices start from ₹99,900. The 13in Macbook Pro with Retina display features the fifth-generation Intel Core processors up to 3.1GHz and Intel Iris Graphics 6100. It gets the Force Touch trackpad update as well, has a battery life of twelve hours and starts at ₹94,900. The Air now boasts of an Intel Core processor upto 2.2GHz, Intel HD Graphics 6000, Thunderbolt 2 and is priced at ₹65,900. All new Macs ship with OS X Yosemite, Apple's latest operating system.

B&W T7 (left), C5 series 2 (centre) and P5 series 2 (right)



B&W launches three new portables

Our group test winner (Feb '15 issue) in the wireless Bluetooth category, the B&W T7 features alongside the P5 series 2 on-ear headphones and C5 series 2 in-ear headphones, as part of the products launched. The T7 hi-fi Bluetooth speaker is priced at ₹29,900 and is the first Bluetooth speaker from B&W. From a sturdy yet classy design to admirable class-dominating audio output, the T7 holds its ground comfortably in the given price range against well-established rivals. Next up is the P5 series 2 headphones. It combines the best of two predecessors - the P7 that became renowned for its output and precision as well as the P5 which was popular for its comfort fit and classy finish. Included is a 'made for iPhone' cable and a carry case. The P5 series 2 is priced at ₹23,500. Finally we have the C5 series 2 in-ears. They boast better sound quality, courtesy of improvements in small scale drive unit design, including the introduction of new drivers and other internal components. The C5 series 2 in-ears are priced at ₹15,499.

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This cricket season, get set to experience the energy of a stadium in the comfort of your living room thanks to snapdeal's awesome collection of home theatre equipment. You'll find projectors, TVs, amplifiers, speakers, and much, much more - all guaranteeing an immersive experience like nothing else on the planet

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Epson EH-TW6100 LCD Home Cinema Projector

Make cricket a lot more fun with this Full HD projector. Gather all your friends around for a true big screen experience. And when the match's over, extend the party with the latest 3D blockbusters.



ONKYO SKS-HT528 5.1 System

You know what makes the action even more immersive? Great sound! If you agree, then you'll like this 5.1 system that packs in full-range bass-reflex speakers and a downwards-firing subwoofer.



Marantz PM8005 Amplifier

Upgrade your music setup to the next level with this audiophile-grade amplifier. Two channel audio and six inputs make this perfect if you're the sort who cares about an authentic listening experience.



F&D T-400x 2.1 Floorstanding Speaker

The T-400X can really pump up your heartbeat with its powerful sound. USB, SD-card, karaoke, and Bluetooth playback options make this perfect for fun-filled post-match celebrations.



Sony BDP-S4200 3D Blu Ray Player

Match not all that interesting? Then perhaps it's time to watch a Blue-Ray or DVD that features exciting classic sports action from your favourite matches. Or why not just put on a movie and enjoy the weekend?



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Home Theatre? More like Home Stadium! Redo your living room and get ready for the world's most exciting sports action



Sony BDP-S1200 Blu Ray Player

With Dolby TrueHD and DTS-HD support, this Blu-Ray player is the perfect companion for your new TV. After all, even the sports fan likes to kick back and relax with a movie once in a while.



Samsung 65HU9000

TVs don't get better than this 65in Smart TV. Ultra HD Resolution makes every catch and goal come alive, while Active 3D means it's ready for family movie time come Sunday evening.



JBL Cinema Base 2.2 Soundbase

Make your sports viewing even more immersive with this 2.2 channel soundbase. Dolby Digital decoding, Harman Display Surround, and Bluetooth connectivity make this a must-have piece of kit.



Yamaha RX-V477 5.1 AV Receiver

Ultra HD and 3D support, Virtual Cinema Front and Extra Bass technology, multiple connectivity options and Internet streaming capability make for a true cinema experience in your living room.



Swan H5 active speakers

The ebony finish certainly looks elegant, but what makes the Swan H5 bookshelf speakers such a good buy is the powerful and accurate sound you get from a compact and convenient package.



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CLUBHOUSE ACTION

Summer's here and the TV schedule's packed with sports events. Catch it all in club-class luxury with this amazing setup



Samsung BD-F5100

How do you make a Blu-Ray player even better? How about a Native Apps function that opens up the world of social media and online streaming without needing a Smart TV?



LG 55LA9700

Fall in love with cinema all over again with this fantastic 55in 4K TV. The IPS panel provides wide viewing angles with accurate colours, while 4.1 front sliding speakers and Cinema 3D make movie nights a lot more fun.



Marshall Stanmore

Feel like a rock star with the Marshall Stanmore. Multiple connectivity options, Bluetooth streaming, and vintage guitar amp styling make this gorgeous speaker a perfect fit for your clubhouse.



Yamaha YAS-103 Soundbar

Dolby Digital, DTS-HD, Advanced Bass Extension Processing, Clear Voice, and Air Surround Xtreme make this Bluetooth soundbar just right for anyone who's picky about audio quality.



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Lapcare LBS 333

The water-resistant Bluetooth speaker from Lapcare offers a playtime of up to four hours and has a 32GB Micro SD slot. It is priced at ₹1459.

**CONTEST****WINNER: WHAT HI FI SHOW 2015**

A surround system worthy of a WHF award was given away. Envious? So are we...



What Hi Fi Editor Mr. Nishant Padhiar (left) and prize winner Mr. Bhavya Taneja (right)

Cambridge Audio package finds a lucky new home

A lucky draw was conducted, as part of the fanfare for the recently concluded *What Hi Fi Show 2015*, Mumbai. The grand prize up for grabs was a package comprising the Cambridge Audio Aero 5.1 speaker system (Winner of *Best Speaker Package* in the ₹1,00,000 to ₹3,00,000 segment, 2013) along with a Cambridge Audio Azur 551R 7.1 Channel HDMI AV receiver. Pictured above, is the Editor of *What Hi Fi India*, Mr. Nishant Padhiar handing over the prize to the winner, Mr. Bhavya Taneja. We congratulate him on his prized and envious win.

The Award-winning Cambridge Audio Aero 5.1 speaker package



Cambridge Audio Azur 551R AV Receiver



Merlin Audiova

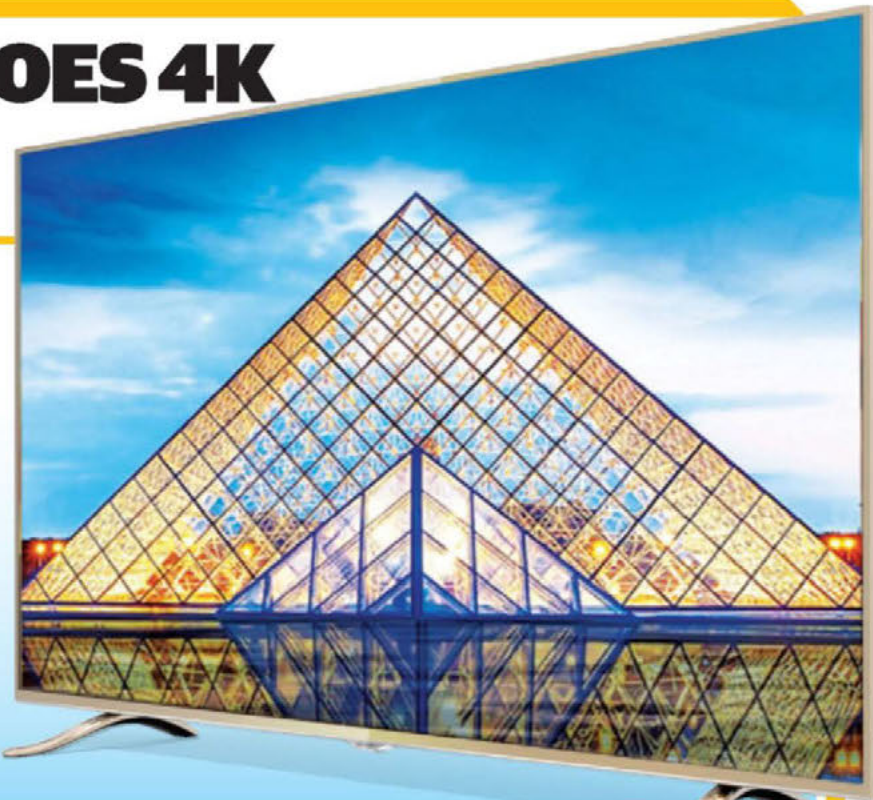
These waterproof headphones promote ear-free listening by transmitting sound directly to your ear through the skull via vibrations. Out now for ₹6899.

MICROMAX GOES 4K

Micromax launches 4K Ultra HD TVs on Flipkart.com

Available in two screen sizes of 42in and 49in, the two 4K UHD Micromax TVs launched are priced at ₹39,990 and ₹49,990 respectively. The TVs offer a claimed 178-degree viewing angle, SRS (sound retrieval system) audio with a five-band equalizer. These are smart TVs with Android KitKat 4.4 on the 49in and Android JellyBean 4.2 on the 42in variant, both preloaded with Google Play, Facebook, Twitter among others.

The 49in TV also features a Dual Core CPU, Quad Core GPU, 1GB RAM and 2.5GB memory with a capacity to expand up to 32GB. It also has three USB ports, two HDMI ports and is preloaded with games like Riptide, Turbofly and Speedx3. The 42in TV has a similar chipset with a 2.2GB RAM and 4GB memory, again expandable to up to 32GB. Choose from either a Somato-sensory remote that allows for air scrolling or the voice-command feature. You can also use Miracast to pair your smartphone with the TVS to mirror your smartphone's display onto the TVS. They're now available exclusively on Flipkart.com



from left to right:
Image 401, Image 411
and Image Sub10

Absolute Phase bags Image loudspeakers

Chris Ball was a talented cabinet maker in New Zealand. He was driven by a passion - to make loudspeakers that stayed as true as possible to recreating the experience of listening to music live. His legacy is Image loudspeakers. Now, they are available in India courtesy of Bangalore-based Absolute Phase which is the sole distributor for Image and other brands such as Dynaudio, Esoteric, Teac, Arcam, among others. A few loudspeakers on demo are the two-way Image 401 monitors, the floorstanding image 411 and Image Troubador loudspeakers among other models.

The Samsung Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge are here

Launched as the world's most advanced smartphones, the Samsung Galaxy S6 and S6 Edge are now available in India. The Indian R&D team was involved in vital departments for building the smartphones. The S6 Edge has a unique, never-seen-before curved display on both the edges of the smartphone. The Galaxy S6 starts from ₹49,900 and is available in white pearl, black sapphire, gold platinum, blue topaz colour options while S6 Edge starts from ₹58,900 and is available in only emerald green colour.



The S6 Edge (left)
and the S6 (right)

*** LG G Flex2**

Powered by the 64-bit Snapdragon 810, the G Flex2 offers a 403ppi display, self-healing tech, and a 13MP camera with OIS. MRP has been set at ₹ 55,000



LG 2015
TECH SHOW
WHAT HI·FI?
SOUND AND VISION

1 LG 105UC9T

If there was a standout star at the LG Tech Show 2015, it had to be this new TV. At 105in and with a 21:9 aspect ratio, it's wide enough to elicit a double take. But its real claim to fame is the 5120 x 2160 resolution - making it the world's first 5K TV. Other features include an in-built 8MP camera, 150W RMS audio, 7.2 channel Harman/Kardon sound, a 4K 60P HEVC Decoder, NFC, 4K 3D upscaling, Miracast and Intel WiDi, Smartshare, Wireless Sound Sync, and WebOS. Now launched, the LG 105UC9T has an MRP of ₹59,99,900.

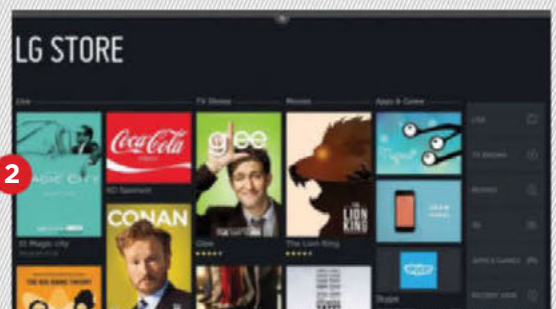


3 21:9 Ultra Wide Monitor

Another rather striking display at the LG Tech Show was a multi-display 'wall' of LG's new 21:9 Ultra Wide monitors. Available in two variants, these new 34in displays are targeted at artists, photographers, designers, and even stockbrokers and traders - in short, anyone who needs to display plenty of information at once. Features include QHD resolution, 99% sRGB coverage from the IPS panel, and Thunderbolt 2 connectivity.

2 Web OS 2.0

LG's WebOS operating system for Smart TVs has garnered lots of acclaim since it first arrived on the scene. And now, with the launch of version 2.0, LG claims its TVs will get even smarter, with a faster, more responsive interface, and more customisation options. A quick demo of the new system does make it seem more intuitive and slicker to use. Users of existing TV sets won't get to upgrade to the new system, although the new OS should be standard on all future TVs.



CABLES & ACCESSORIES HOME VIDEO

Nowadays, projectors and players deliver perfect playback. Nevertheless, the pictures are often out of focus or faded. There is a reason for this: DVD or Blu-ray players emit unbelievably large amounts of information simultaneously at high speed. If the cables are not perfectly designed, the colours and contours fade and the picture is grainy. The wrong cables are the main cause for poor pictures and sound. Or in other words: the quality of your device is only as good as the cables it is used with. Picture cables from in-akustik ease the way for signals and protect them from external interference. For all picture connections.

IN-AKUSTIK IS A PARTNER OF HDMI LICENSING, LLC

HDMI 2.0

The HDMI Forum, to which 88 companies from the multimedia branch belong, announced the specifications for the new HDMI standard – Version 2.0 – on 4 September 2013. The most important new feature of HDMI 2.0 is the support of 4K content with a frame refresh rate that is twice as high as the previous one. The High Speed HDMI Cables with Ethernet from in-akustik already support HDMI 2.0 now and are therefore optimally suitable for the future requirements of the improved audio-visual interface.

Previously, the customer has hardly been able to tell whether a cable really is an HDMI® conform product. There was never any option of checking for HDMI® certified products, for example on the internet. The huge variety on offer makes it very difficult for HDMI® Licensing LLC to check adherence to specified guidelines. HDMI® Licensing LLC has now developed its own certification – the “Approved HDMI® Associate Program”. This provides consumers with the required transparency and enables them to check the HDMI® conformity of a given product at a glance..

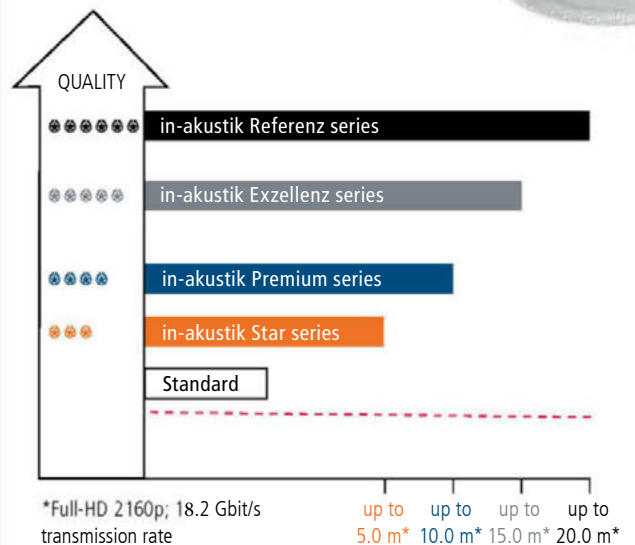
All certified products are now labelled with the official “Approved HDMI® Associate” logo.

As partner of the “Associate Program”, in-akustik is obliged to undergo one of the HDMI® Licensing LLC conformity tests for all HDMI® cables every year.

Visit www.hdmi.org for further information.



Interview with Steve Venet,
President of HDMI Licensing, LLC





Nobel TVs now on Snapdeal.com
Snapdeal announces tie-up with Nobel TVs for an exclusive partnership. They are now available at various prices and sizes, in both non-smart and smart (with Android) categories

Portronics Pandora

Stream content from smartphones, tablets and laptops on TVs and projectors with this streaming stick for ₹2999



1 Geneva Model Cinema ₹66,000*
Want a soundbase that benefits from minimalist Scandinavian design? The Model Cinema might be for you. It's Geneva's first TV soundbase and features DSP technology, Bluetooth streaming, and analogue and digital inputs. Geneva has turned out some excellent wireless speakers, so this is one to watch.



2 Epson EH-LS10000 ₹TBA
Another first, this time from Epson. The LS10000 is the company's debut laser projector. It features Ultra HD 4K "enhancement technology" and claims to deliver Epson's widest colour gamut yet. It comes with a long-life light source of up to 30,000 hours, is 3D-ready and can power-up and project an image in just 20 seconds.

TOP 5 New launches

3 Q Acoustics 3000 Series ₹16,800*
The new 3000 Series sits alongside the existing 2000 Series and comprises two standmounters, a floorstanding pair, a subwoofer and a centre channel. Unsurprisingly, Q Acoustics claims the 3000 Series are "the best loudspeakers on the planet for the money". The team claims to have learned from the Concept 20 range, introducing a thicker baffle, an improved cone material and making upgrades to the crossover.



4 B&O BeoLit 15 ₹49,990
Designed by Cecile Manz, the BeoLit 15 Bluetooth speaker from Bang & Olufsen is all anodised aluminium and full grain leather. Featuring 4 active drivers and 2 passive bass radiators, the speaker is driven by dual Class D amplifiers and delivers 240 watts of peak power. It is packed with B&O's True360 sound technology and is touted to play for 24 hours on a single charge.

5 Apogee Groove ₹TBA
The Apogee Groove is a USB DAC/headphone amp for Macs and PCs. Apogee Electronics has 30 years of experience in the digital audio business, working on audio filters and recording technology. The Groove has a Quad Sum DAC, supports 24-bit/192kHz high-res audio and has a USB 2.0 connection.



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The best TVs you can buy right now

A new year can only mean one thing: resolutions. But we're talking shiny new TVs, not eating more of your five-a-day. Buying a new flatscreen can be an absolute minefield so we've done all the hard work for you, and rounded up an assortment of the very best sets money can buy.

WHAT'S ON TEST?**BANG & OLUFSEN BEOVISION** p64**LG 55EC930V** p64**SAMSUNG UE48H6400** p62**SAMSUNG UE48HU7500** p64**SAMSUNG UE55HU7500** p66**SAMSUNG UE65HU7500** p66**SONY KD-65S9005B** p66**SONY KDL-32W706B** p62**SONY KDL-40W605B** p62

32IN Sony KDL-32W706B ₹44,900

The demand for bigger screen sizes (over 50in) is increasing year-on-year, but there's still no escaping the popularity of smaller sets. Not everyone has the space for a monster screen and, even if you have, a set like this Sony makes a lot of sense as a second-room solution.

Unlike many rival sets at this price, the KDL-32W706B uses a Full HD 1920 x 1080 resolution panel, and the benefits are obvious. The Sony's a tremendously well-balanced watch. Colours are natural, whether they're skin tones, brightly punchy primaries or subtly drab. Contrasts are strong too, and there's ample detail to the brightest white or inkiest black scenes. The benefits of a native Full HD panel become obvious when you study the Sony's confident and secure handling of motion.

The Sony delivers with its standard-definition performance too. Whether it's a

broadcast channel or the *Die Hard 2* DVD, the picture bears impressive definition and an expertly judged balance.

Ergonomically, this is everything you expect from a Sony - especially the SideView App, which is a colourful, logical and useful alternative to your standard EPG (Electronic Programme Guide). Connections are numerous, Sony's online Entertainment Network covers all the smart content, catch-up TV, video on-demand and what-have-you in style. Talking of style, the set looks good, too. Its narrow, tapered bezel wears an elegant, sparkly metallic finish, which stands out in a sea of black plastic, (although silver is also an option). Even the sound is a cut above the usual flatscreen flatness.

With the KDL-32W706B, Sony has hit the bull's-eye and for those who want a screen this size it's something of a no-brainer.

A rival-bashing blend of great pictures, ease of use, elegance and value steals the show for Sony

40IN Sony KDL-40W605B ₹87,900

There's been no shortage of great 40in sets to choose from in recent months. In fact, the level of performance and features you're getting for your money has never been greater. So how have we managed to narrow it down to the Sony KDL-40W605B?

Straight out of the box, the Sony puts forward a convincing case. Even before you take a closer look at some of the basic settings, you're taken by just how subtle and punchy the picture is. The Sony can offer detail in even the inkiest, most uniformly black scenes, and variation in the most glaringly bright. The colour balance - rich and vivid, but unarguably natural too - is smartly judged, with skin tones appearing especially convincing. Motion is dealt with confidently and edges are crisply drawn. What's more, all of the above is equally true for upscaled content as it is for native 1080p stuff.

At any money, the 605's connectivity and ergonomics would be admirable, so at this pared-back price they're deeply impressive. Four HDMI's, a pair of USB's, integrated wi-fi and a Freeview HD tuner take care of your inputs, with the network connection opening up Sony's excellent Music and Video Unlimited Portal to Netflix, iPlayer, YouTube and dozens more. The remote control is brief and logical, the on-screen menus simple and thorough. Sound quality could be better, but it's still better than the shocking standard we've come to fear from flatscreens - there's plenty of detail, and it's clear and direct with voices.

Performance, functionality, usability, looks, and build quality all wrapped up in a great-value product - these are the qualities that make the Sony our go-to option at this screen size.

Competition is intense at the 40in screen size, yet this outstanding Sony is still a clear favourite

48IN Samsung UE48H6400 ₹1,03,900

Where do we start? Award-winner, Supertest victor and *What Hi-Fi's* TV Product of the Year 2014. These are just a few accolades we've given the Samsung UE48H6400 over the past few months. And one thing's for certain, our rundown of the best TVs currently on the planet wouldn't be complete without reserving a space for this shining star.

Sharp, clear and full of subtle detail that's hugely impressive at this price, the 6400 has you hooked from the moment you turn it on. High-definition pictures burst with clarity and crispness, and the screen has a beautifully judged colour palette that's full of depth, subtlety and punch.

Great contrast and minimal picture noise also help make the Samsung's active 3D processing enjoyable and low-fatigue. Switch down the resolutions to DVD or standard-def TV

broadcasts and the UE48H6400 is pretty heroic: picture noise is controlled well and motion hardly suffers at all.

Styling is decent (opinion is divided on the claw-style stand), while specification - in terms of socketry, smart functionality, choice of remote controls, 3D functionality, you name it - is extensive.

Most rivals are limited in their choice of catch-up services, but this Samsung packs in the lot: 4oD, Demand 5 and the often elusive ITV Player complete the line-up.

Even the sound is passable, which is by no means a given on flat TVs of any price.

The Samsung stands head and shoulders above all the others in its class with a superbly detailed and natural picture - all for a great price. There really is no arguing with that amount of screen for this amount of money.

Features - both on the set and on the network - are comprehensive, and the price is a steal





TECH SPECS

Size 32in • Resolution 1920 x 1080 • HDMI inputs 4
• USB inputs 2 • 3D No • Dimensions (hwd)
43 x 73 x 6cm • Weight 7.9kg

TECH SPECS

Size 40in • Resolution 1920 x 1080 • HDMI inputs
4 • USB inputs 2 • 3D No • Dimensions (hwd)
56 x 93 x 9cm • Weight 7.9kg



At any money, the 605's connectivity and ergonomics would be admirable, so at this pared-back price, they're deeply impressive



TECH SPECS

Size 48in • Resolution 1920 x 1080 • HDMI inputs
4 • USB inputs 3 • 3D Active • Dimensions (hwd)
63 x 109 x 5cm • Weight 11.9kg

48IN Samsung UE48HU7500 ₹1,67,900

For some manufacturers 4K Ultra HD is all about the bigger picture, ie they claim it's best viewed on screens 55in and above. But such is the Ultra HD picture quality of Samsung's UE48HU7500 we'd argue 4K content can make just as much of an impact on a smaller screen.

Three of the 4K TVs in this round-up come from Samsung's 'HU7500' range so it'll come as no surprise they are all closely matched in terms of specification. The design shares the lovely thin bezel of its bigger brothers, as well as their impressive ergonomics and thorough feature set. This includes the five different 'panes' of Samsung's Smart Hub experience, which has been well thought-out and makes navigating content, be it multimedia, apps or games, a real pleasure. And, as you'd expect from a premium TV, there are plenty of useful connections including four HDMI sockets for

high-def sources and three USBs, one of which can be used to turn the set into a PVR.

And with the 48HU7500 you can have your 4K cake without making your existing Blu-rays, DVDs or favourite Freeview HD TV programmes any less tasty. It goes without saying that *Breaking Bad* streamed in 4K via Netflix looks the business, but so too does *Doctor Who* on BBC One HD and *Avengers Assemble* on Blu-ray. The Samsung even makes a standard-issue DVD of *Gravity* look appealing. Everything sounds pretty good, too - clear, loud and fairly punchy.

There's already a 48in set in this line-up in the shape of another Samsung, the UE48H6400. It's a lot cheaper but does without 4K resolution. You'd think that this could leave the HU7500 on shaky ground but, if you can afford it, and want to go 4K in a smaller package, then we wouldn't hesitate to recommend this TV.

This Samsung looks stunning - both in terms of its alluring design and its stunning 4K picture

55IN Bang & Olufsen BeoVision Avant 55 ₹9,99,990

There's premium and then there's luxury. Luxury, in our eyes, is a concept that's as much about how a product makes you feel when you use it as it is about outright performance (although a good picture obviously helps). And this is where B&O's Avant really takes the fight to what we'd consider premium rivals.

This 55in set happens to be a very good 4K TV in its own right, but it's the whole package that takes ownership to another level. The design is lovely, with the screen surrounded by a smartly finished metal chassis. The aluminium-cased remote is beautifully balanced, nicely weighted and laid out with care. Compared with this, most other TV remotes look and feel like they belong in the bargain-basement bin.

And, as the TV glides into place on its elegant, swivelling motorised stand (a ₹1,89,990 optional extra), the B&O's speaker array lowers into place. In effect it's a built-in soundbar, complete with eight drive units and a 60W amplifier, and the sound it makes puts rival flatscreens to shame. The TV even has a built-in surround-sound processor so you can steer effects to any of B&O's extensive range of speakers.

It irks us that the Avant can't handle Netflix's 4K content, but with high-definition and standard-def video the B&O still paints a hugely convincing picture. It's one of the classiest TVs and consumer experiences money can buy.

Genuinely luxurious, the Avant 55 combines uncompromising design with a first-rate picture

55IN LG 55EC930V ₹3,59,900

Twelve months ago you would have been looking at a mega exorbitant price tag for a slice of LG's curved OLED TV technology. Today you can stand right on the cutting edge for a fraction of that. Just doing the simple maths is enough to encourage a hand-on-wallet moment, even before you're being persuaded to chip and PIN by the stunning picture quality.

The 55EC930V (turn to page 14 for our full review) is a beautiful specimen of a TV, even when it's a blank screen. Whether or not you believe in the merits of curved over flat, it helps give the set serious aesthetic appeal. There's barely any bezel around the edges, and because it's OLED the screen is pretty much wafer-thin.

Another of the benefits of OLED tech is the lack of a backlight, which allows for plasma-like blacks with no bleed or washing out in the shadows. They're inky black where required,

but there's still great detail and contrast in the shadows. The LG also presents a pristine picture, and doesn't have much picture noise to contend with. Whites are punchy and colours are vibrant - the image really pops out at you even before you start watching 3D movies, which themselves are a delight on this screen.

You get two remote controls: a standard wand and a fancy banana-shaped 'Magic Remote' that controls the on-screen cursor by sensing your movements. Throw in LG's WebOS smart TV platform - one of the most intuitive out there - and the only thing lacking is 4K resolution. But, given that this kind of content is currently limited and there's no firm plan for 4K broadcasts, it's not the end of the world. For those willing to commit with eyes wide open, the LG combines, technology, price and performance to spectacular effect.

This LG brings the very considerable delights of OLED tech within reach of the non-super-rich



TECH SPECS

Size 48in • Resolution 3840 x 2160 • HDMI inputs 4 • 3D Active • Dimensions (hwd) 62 x 107 x 4cm • Weight 14kg

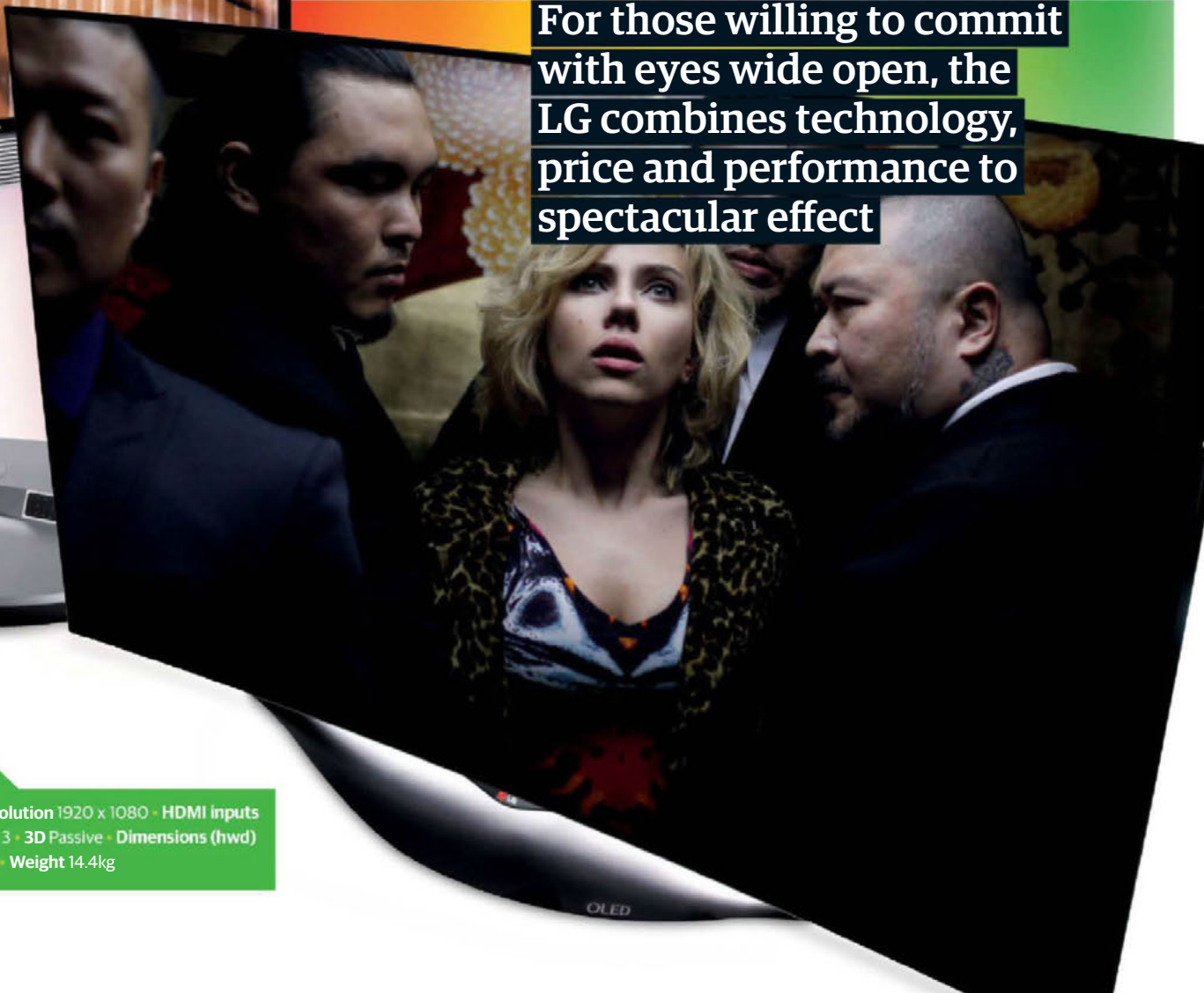


TECH SPECS

Size 55in • Resolution 3840 x 2160 • HDMI inputs 6 • USB inputs 2 • 3D Active • Dimensions (hwd) 71 x 129 x 10cm • Weight 55kg



For those willing to commit with eyes wide open, the LG combines technology, price and performance to spectacular effect



TECH SPECS

Size 55in • Resolution 1920 x 1080 • HDMI inputs 4 • USB inputs 3 • 3D Passive • Dimensions (hwd) 72 x 123 x 8cm • Weight 14.4kg

55IN Samsung UE55HU7500 ₹2,45,500

You don't need 20/20 vision to see the appeal of 4K Ultra HD and it's only natural you want a piece of the action. But you don't want to pay through the nose for the privilege. That's where Samsung's stunning UE55HU7500 comes in.

At 55in, it's big-but-not-too-big, and now it's priced below ₹2.5 lacs it's even more affordable than it was when we gave it an Award last year. But what sets it apart from the competition is its prodigious combination of picture quality, build quality, on-line functionality, design and ergonomics.

Obviously this screen is at its best with 4K material and with some native Netflix content streamed in the Samsung looks superb. Every crucial component of picture creation (contrast, colour, detail, edge-definition) is beyond reproach. And with excellent motion-handling added to the equation, the UE55HU7500 is an

extremely impressive, immersive view. 4K TVs have plenty to do when it comes to upscaling Full HD or (heaven forbid) standard-def, but the Samsung is composed and convincing when dealing with the lower-res material: 1080p Blu-ray images are superb, and even standard-def TV broadcasts are eminently watchable.

As befits a TV at this sort of money, the UE55HU7500 is thoroughly specified: 3D (with a couple of pairs of active-shutter glasses thrown in), 4 HDMI 3 USBs, a smooth five-page smart interface, satellite and HD tuners... everything you require, basically. Like most flatscreen TVs regardless of price, the Samsung doesn't produce the most exciting or full-bodied sound, but that can be overcome with a soundbar, soundbase or 5.1 system that will do justice to the pictures. And believe us, these pictures are worth every rupee.

Every component of picture creation on Samsung's UE55HU7500 is beyond reproach

65IN Samsung UE65HU7500 ₹3,83,500

Curved TVs aren't necessarily for everyone. Which is why if you want your next TV to be 4K, flat and 65in, then it has to be Samsung's UE65HU7500. Originally reviewed in August last year, this set was the first ever 4K TV to get five stars from our review team.

Some TVs focus purely on 4K picture quality, and it can sometimes be at the expense of Full HD and standard-def images. But this Samsung achieves a fantastic balance. With 4K content those eight million pixels are put to great use, and watching *Breaking Bad* (streamed via Netflix), we're blown away by how much texture is afforded to everything. The image is clean and crisp, and with little noise. Colours are immaculately judged: subtle and less shouty than Samsung sets of old. But that's not to say the picture is restrained. There's plenty of punch but not enough to tire the eyes. The HD

picture is as crisp and detailed as we could expect too. Play the Blu-ray of the glitzy *American Hustle* and the image is as scintillating as we've seen. There's vibrancy and life to the picture, but hues are still natural and convincing. Black levels are excellent and the backlight is even.

The Samsung's also pleasant to use, easy to live with and stacked full of functionality. There's a choice of two remotes, including a smart-wand, which has a motion-sensitive on-screen pointer. Surprisingly, it's responsive and fun to use. Those looking for decent smart functionality will be suitably impressed. Samsung presents it all in a slick, sophisticated menu system and accessing on-demand and paid for content is a painless process. A class television.

Samsung's UE65HU7500 is packed with smart functionality, and its interface is great to use

65IN Sony KD-65S9005B ₹TBA

Sony might be a little late to the party with its curved 4K TV, but it's been well worth the wait.

The company has opted for a slightly shallower bend compared to rivals, the idea being to reduce any issues viewing off-angle or from further away. The screen actually looks almost flat when viewing at normal distances, but it's still blessed with a striking design, and the way the gentle curve blends with rounded edges at either side is neat.

Behind the rounded sections at either side are actually speaker units, and this brings us to the first of the 65S9005B's key strengths: sound quality. This TV can process Dolby Digital and DTS signals directly, and pump them out as virtual surround sound via a built-in 4.2 speaker system. And this super-neat, built-in solution produces an impressive, room-filling sound, with good weight, punch and nice central focus

for dialogue. All this would be for nothing if the picture wasn't up to scratch, of course, but the Sony shows even greater ability in this area. Play some 4K-content on Netflix and you're treated to a lovely performance. Detail levels are extremely high, as is the sense of clarity and level of realism. *House Of Cards* really pops out of the screen. Colours are rich and natural, and there's great dynamism as very dark blacks and pure, punchy whites occur side-by-side.

Motion has always been a Sony strength and the 65S9005B duly obliges: fast action is clear and controlled, with camera pans smooth and generally sharp. Watch a Blu-ray or Freeview HD channel and this TV is in its element.

What you have here is a TV of serious quality and a step above your average 4K set - consider the curved design as just the pretty packaging it all comes in.

The Sony KD-65S9005B can process Dolby Digital and DTS signals directly: a key strength of the TV



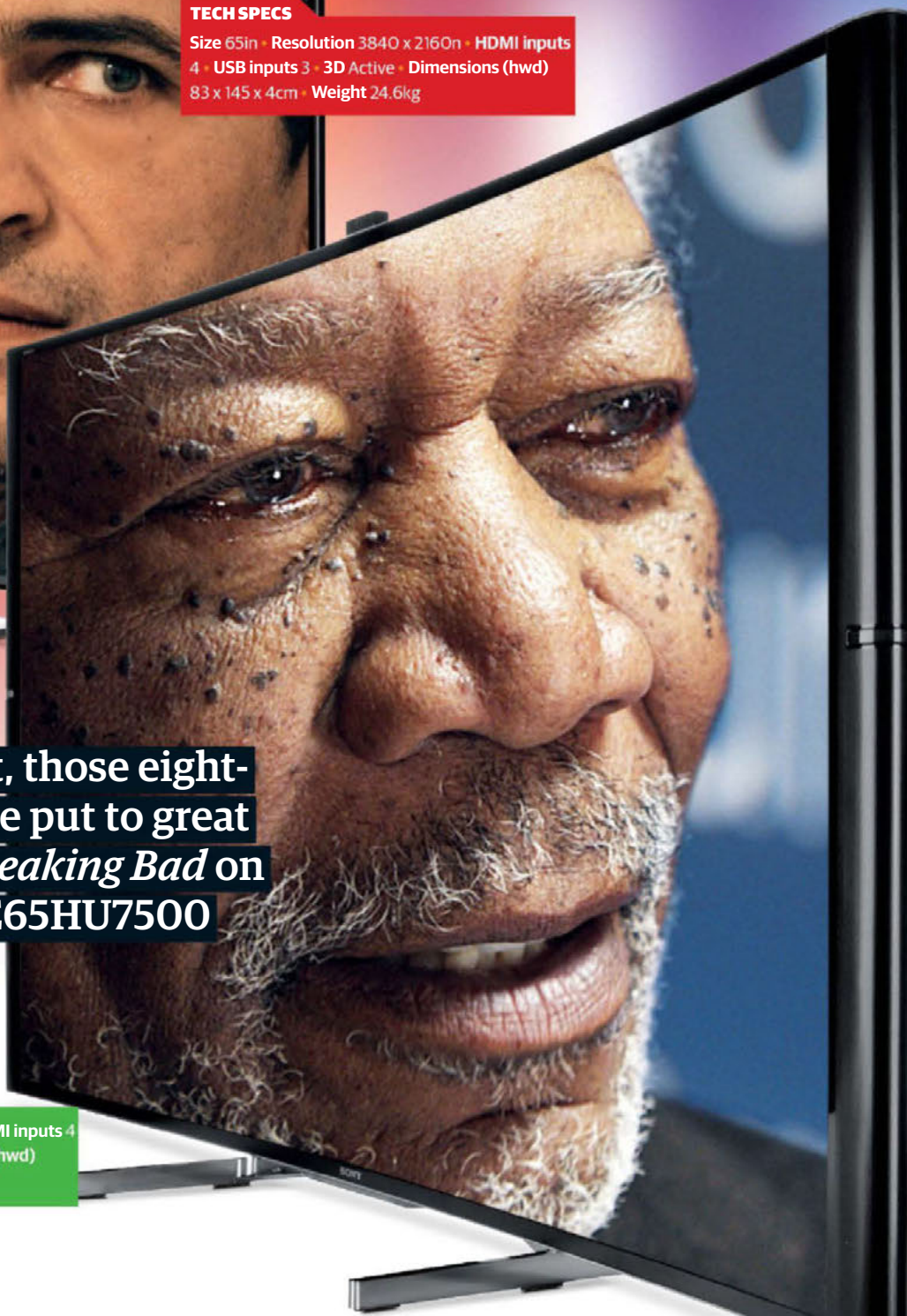
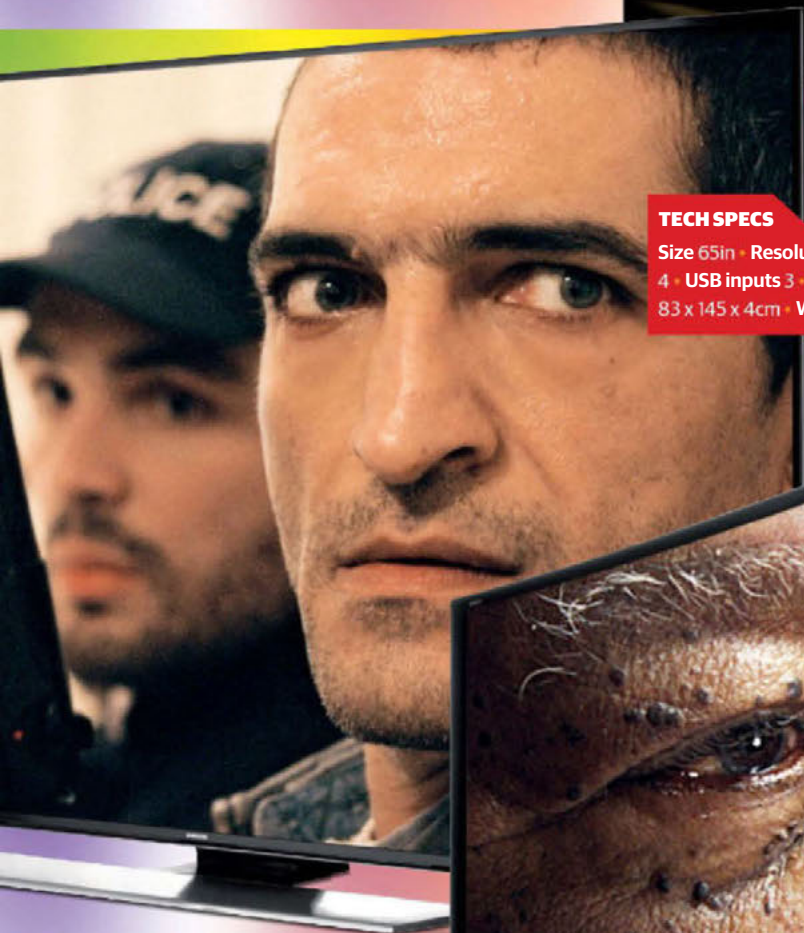
TECH SPECS

Size 55in • Resolution 3840 x 2160 • HDMI inputs 4 • USB inputs 3 • 3D Active • Dimensions (hwd) 71 x 123 x 4cm • Weight 18kg



TECH SPECS

Size 65in • Resolution 3840 x 2160n • HDMI inputs 4 • USB inputs 3 • 3D Active • Dimensions (hwd) 83 x 145 x 4cm • Weight 24.6kg



With 4K content, those eight-million pixels are put to great use watching *Breaking Bad* on the Samsung UE65HU7500

TECH SPECS

Size 65in • Resolution 3840 x 2160 • HDMI inputs 4 • USB inputs 3 • 3D Active • Dimensions (hwd) 87 x 156 x 12cm • Weight 40.7kgv

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This year, Mumbai witnessed something majestic. This edition of the *What Hi-Fi Show* was the biggest one yet. Here's what you missed...



180 BRANDS **35+** HT RECLINERS
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AUDIO EXCELLENCE



The show started with a bang, quite literally. Located right outside the registration desk, visitors were first greeted by the rocking Legacy Audio Aeris loudspeakers being driven by a pair of Parasound JC1 mono amps and the JC2 preamp. It did leave the audiophiles wanting for more, so there was a smattering of other goodies on demo, including the Legacy Audio Focus SE speakers along with Definitive's BP8080 supertowers. Peppared around the room were various models from Definitive's Mythos series of speakers and the SuperCube range of subwoofers along with more Legacy Audio custom install speakers.

Accessory brand and home-theatre design consultants Radio Ga Ga added colour to the room with the addition of their exclusive handcrafted decoratives.





An Elvis Presley limited edition jukebox by Ricatech, a handmade centre-table resembling a cassette tape, and a smattering of items that would transform any good home-theatre into a truly epic entertainment den were on display. There seemed to be something for everyone in the Audio Excellence stateroom!



LAKOZY / AURO 3D / HARMAN



Finally approaching reality is the idea of next-gen surround sound with Auro3D. Bringing it to life at the WHF Show was the Lakozy stateroom which brought together JBL Synthesis and Auro3D for a demo that cinephiles won't forget for quite some time. Barco's massive DP2K-8S projector filled up the screen with brilliant images while a pair of JBL Synthesis 1400 Array L/R speakers, 1500 Array subwoofers and a variety of Revel speakers handled surround and 'Voice of God' duties. The Auro3D processing was handled by the radical-looking Mensa AV processor. Its Auro-Matic upmixing converts any 2.0 or 5.1 channel signal into the room-filling Auro 3D format. An elaborate rig was used to support the top and side surrounds was used to make this a jaw-dropping sonic experience.



Regardless of the size or price of the system, it's the calibration that sets it apart. And to ensure that the hi-fi enthusiasts at the WHF Show got the best demo possible, Chris Robinson from Harman Technical Sales was at hand. Along with the Auro3D and Lakozy team, they managed an impressive demo for all.

NEXUS AUDIO



There are a few fanatics in the world of high-end audio. The good folks at Nexus Audio are brimming with obsessive passion, and that was evident the moment you walked into their stateroom. A spartan set-up compared to others but with a dominant trio of the legendary PMC IB1S mid-field monitors taking centrestage. A huge Screen Research 160in acoustically transparent screen hid the identical centre channel while the SB100 subwoofer filled up the room with more than ample, yet precise bass. A Wolf Cinema SDC-6 projector handled the video along with a pair of PMC DB1 Gold speakers for surround sound. What really set this set-up apart from the rest was its efficacy with both music and multi-channel content. Rarely have we witnessed such splendid integration.



The combination of a Yamaha AVENTAGE AVR with serious PMC kit might raise some eyebrows, but the sound of this room was sublime with any kind of content. Set-up after an intense calibration process that took all day and all night, it was truly a system for the non-compromising music and movie lover.

KEI / DOLBY



Where there is Auro3D, Dolby can't be far behind. The *What Hi Fi Show* became the first exhibition to have both brands demo their wares to the enthusiasts on the same floor. KEI, distributors of fine brands like Elac, Tannoy, Denon and Inakustik put in tremendous effort to create a full-bore Dolby Atmos set-up with more speakers than we could count! Using the spectacularly resolved Elac FS-509 VX-JET front speakers and the Elac Sub 2070 and Tannoy Definition subwoofers, the room was heard literally across the floors of the Palladium Hotel! Denon's latest AV receiver, the AVR-X7200W with Dolby Atmos on-board was used as the centrepiece of this powerful demo where visitors were left shaken and stirred right down to the bone.



Two of the finest speaker brands from Germany and England were on hand at the KEI stateroom to wow visitors. The Tannoy DC-6i and the Elac WS1665 are great examples of small speakers that do not give up dynamics or resolution in favour of room-friendly design. This was a room tuned for movie fanatics.



SONODYNE



No *What Hi Fi Show* would be complete without a few Sonodyne rooms. The Indian Hi-Fi juggernaut has established quite a name in the international hi-fi industry and rightly so. From award-winning studio monitors to enchanting home loudspeakers, Sonodyne has made India proud, and have been a part of the *What Hi Fi Show* year after year.

What you see here on the right are the beautiful and elegant Sonodyne Avant T1 3-way loudspeakers. These beauties are clad in a lovely MDF cabinet that has a vented design and were powered by the capable and slim, Sonodyne DSA 320 integrated stereo amp. For those of you who don't already know, on top you see the Sonodyne SRA 3020 loudspeakers with Kevlar and silk tweetersthat are housed in a custom waveguide for controlled dispersion and accuracy.

These were also on full-swing at the *What Hi-Fi Show Delhi* and impressed many at the Mumbai show too. They were paired with the Sonodyne DAC P1 and the Rotel RCD-12 CD player.





Along with the brilliantly capable Sonodyne Avant T1 and the Sonodyne SRA 3020, there was also the SRT 310 home theatre setup. It costs a cool ₹7.50 Lacs and features the trademark Kevlar woofer, Kevlar midrange and silk dome tweeter in a rotatable waveguide. The internal crossover is handled via DSP (Digital Signal Processing).

Sonodyne combined technologies with their professional studio range for the SRT Series which results in loud and detailed sound that many enjoyed at the show. The SRT 310 was set up in a 5.1 home theatre configuration and wowed everyone that had the chance to audition its capabilities.

Also present at the show was the Sonodyne SRP 202, SRA 2010 and Sonodyne SUB 8 subwoofer. Sonodyne had also brought along the relatively new SBP 101 Bluetooth receiver and the 2.1 PQube 201 active speaker system that is remote controlled. All-in-all Sonodyne once again proved its might and much lauded sonic capabilities.



CINEBELS



Danish delights are always welcome at the *What Hi-Fi Show*. Satisfying the need for good sound, was Cinebels' plethora of Jamo and Klipsch loudspeakers.

Above, you see the Jamo C 109 floorstanders resting besides the smaller, yet power-packed C 97 floorstanders. Atop the C 97 lay the Jamo S 35 satellite speakers. These round pieces of fine craftsmanship draw inspiration from nature and boast an organic, curvaceous shape that produces immersive and vivid sound in all directions. These little ones created both, a visual and acoustic statement at the *What Hi-Fi Show*.

In the middle, you see the Jamo D600 home cinema system. The D600 meets THX Ultra 2 standards and sports a 15in/1600W subwoofer that is equipped with 'Motional Feedback' technology. Cinebels also had a range of in-wall speakers available for viewing. These included the Jamo IO 600, Klipsch R2650, R3650 and the THX - certified Klipsch KL 7800.

Powering the mighty Jamo S626XCS 3-way speaker that features a side-mounted 8in woofer, was the equally capable Marantz 7002 AV Receiver.





If you thought the previous page was all that Cinebels had to offer, you were wrong. Cinebels brought along much more at the *What Hi Fi Show* than what you might have thought. Standing tall and clad in an exotic zebra-grain Linia wood veneer cabinet, is the Klipsch P-37F floorsanders above. The P-37F packs in a 0.75in horn-loaded tweeter, 4.5in midrange and triple 7in woofers. Needless to say, these were quite an attraction at the show. Beside the P-37F stands top-of-the-line Klipsch RP-280 home theatre system. The system consists of the RP-280F Ebony floorstanders, RP-450C center speaker, RP-250S surround speaker and the R-115SW subwoofer. The tiny speakers atop the RP-280Fs are part of the Klipsch Quintet home theatre system. It utilises Tractrix horn technology and lightweight aluminum drivers for crisp, clear and uncompromising sound quality. All of this was powered by the Marantz 5009 AVR and Roksan K2. Apart from these big boys, Cinebels had a range of Klipsch in-ears for sale and Rock speakers. Projection was handled by the Vivitek H5080 DLP projector.



SOUND & VISION



Building some of the best custom, ultra high-performance loudspeakers, amplifiers, DSP's - Digital Signal Processors since the '90s, is California Audio Technology. Bringing this beauty of a brand the *What Hi-Fi Show* is Pune-based Sound & Vision. The room was filled to the brim with hi-fi kit. The CAT-600 and CAT-400 loudspeakers stood at the front. They were paired with the CAT Elite S5 subwoofer and driven by the stack of Advance Acoustic X-A220 mono amps. The Advance Acoustic X-A160 stereo amp powered the CAT-200 back surrounds. This room produced some sublime audio and video, thanks to the SDC-12 Wolf Cinema projector, which took care of the visual side of things.



AVENUE SOUND



Avenue Sound had one of the most extensive setups we've seen at the *What Hi-Fi Show*. On demo was the Absolute Tower from NHT. Avenue Sound claims this is a new, sleek and affordable floor-standing speaker solution for high-performance music and home theatre systems.

The Absolute Towers, like all NHT loudspeakers, are finished with two primer coats, seven color coats of polyester paint, and topped with two coats of clear acrylic polymer. This piano-gloss black finish looked absolutely stunning at the show.

The RtR speaker line from BIC America was also on standby. The speaker line ranges from in/outdoor speakers to 3-way-15in towers and promise superb quality audio at affordable prices. The NHT Absolute Zero surround speakers were also used along with the pricey Rythmik Audio F12 subwoofer. Electronics included the Imotiva XPR-5 stereo amplifier, Audio Control AVR-6, Audio Control Architect 210 EQ, BIC America RTR 830 and the Pioneer VSX-524-K. Avenue Sound also got with them the brilliant Synology DS 713+ media server with Plex. They offer Control 4 home automation as well.



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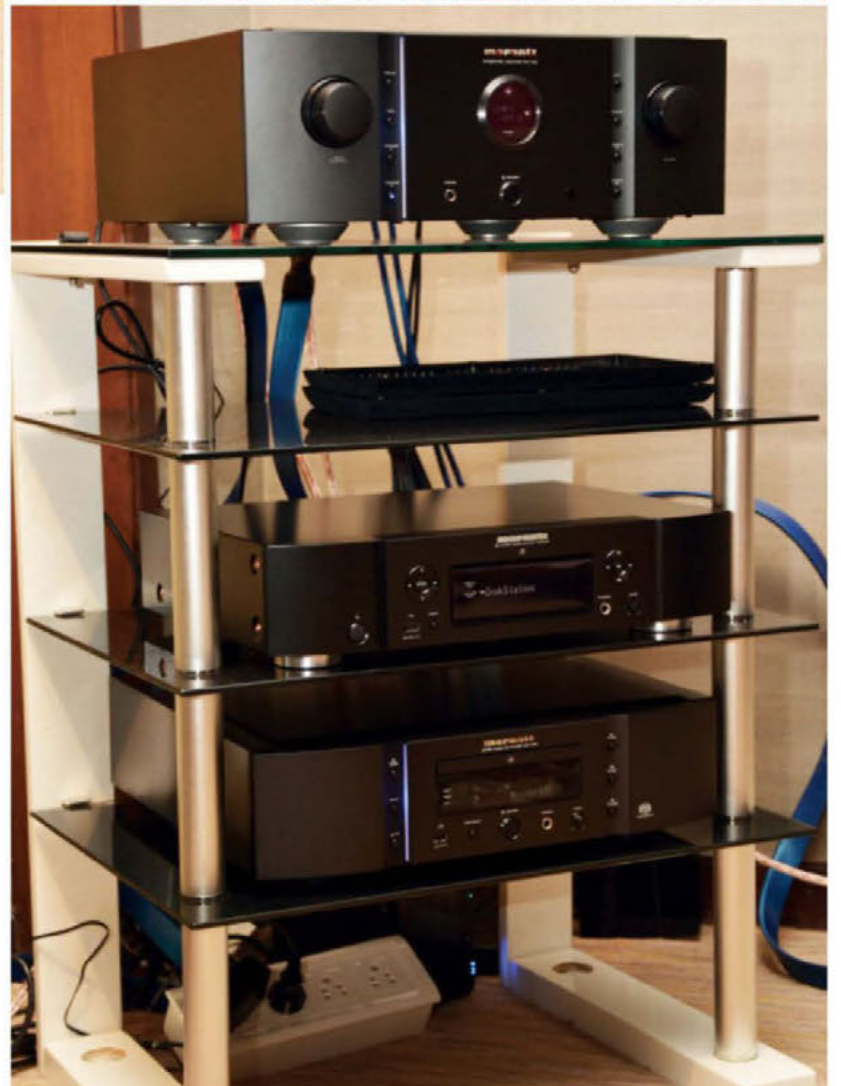
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B &W snuck a back door entry at the show with their flagship bookshelf monitor. Brought along this time by MZ Audio, the Bowers & Wilkins 805 Diamonds.

Competing with them were the lovely PMC twenty 24. ATL technology is housed within these slender and elegant PMC 24s that helps deliver deep, articulate bass that also improves resolution.

These two mammoths were powered by the Marantz PM-1153 stereo amp, SA-1153 SSAD CD player and the Marantz NA-8005 media player was also a part of the party.

Libratone was also launched by MZ Audio at the *What Hi-Fi Show*. The Libratone Zip, Live, Loop and the Lounge Diva caught many a ear and eye balls at the show.





It was a sight to behold and an audiophile's dream come true.

One of the many KEI demo rooms consisted of the Tannoy Prestige Kensington GR along with the Tannoy Sterling GR. And to top it off, KEI also got the flagship of the Tannoy Definition range - the DC10A.

The Tannoy Prestige GR has a cabinet of the finest mahogany plywood that is extensively braced to house Tannoy's flagship 10in Gold Reference Dual Concentric driver. It's high-efficiency compression driver with 2in heat-treated dome, Alnico motor system and new, stiffer cone materials can make any audiophile weak in the knees.

These prestigious loudspeakers were driven by the Hegel 300 amplifier and Norma Audio Revo DS-1 CD player. Inakustik cables were used.





Adding a bit of color to the *What Hi Fi Show* was KEI with a bright range of Elac loudspeakers. The Elac BS 314 (below) may seem small, but trust us, these created quite a stir at the show with a soundstage and scale that belied their small form factor.

To the left, in blue, is the lovely Elac FS 407 showing off the fresh custom lacquer finish that you can get on these lovely speakers.

The Elac BS 314 was powered by the relatively new to the Indian market, Hegel H20 amplifier that is capable of an output of more than 200W + 200W in 8 ohms, dual mono. The Hegel P20 pre amplifier, HD25 DAC and DCD 2020 CD player made up the rest of the system.



It may not look like much is going on in the above setup. But you are wrong. The Elac FS-267 floorstanders were paired with the Denon AVRX-5200 receiver and Denon DBT-1713 and Denon 3313 players.

The highlight? Elac TS-3000 top-firing Dolby Atmos-enabled speakers on top of the FS-267 floorstanders. The Elac BS 263 along with the Elac 2030 subwoofer was used as the surround speaker units.

The TS-3000 comes in a non-reflective housing color, which is especially good for home theatre. The unit is placed on top of the floorstanders, so it fires upwards, the sound is then reflected from the ceiling and down at the listener. This type of audio wizardry isn't new but was pretty well received by those attending the show. The walk way to the demo rooms was not spared either. Portable speakers such as the Denon Envaya and Envaya Mini were lined up for display by KEI and are the newest in the Denon portable line-up.





The final room of KEI had a smattering of hi-fi. KEI decided to bring along the Tannoy Revolution XT 6F and flagship XT 8F floorstanders.

Revolution XT is the latest development of Tannoy's affordable loudspeakers to feature the world-renowned Dual Concentric driver.

The Tannoy Revolution XT 8F features a combination of an 8in Dual Concentric driver and an 8in auxiliary bass driver. It also features the new Omnimagnet Dual that is said to further refine bass performance with its linear LF response and exceptional timbre accuracy. All great news for audiophiles.

The smaller, Revolution XT 6F features a 6in Omnimagnet Dual Concentric driver that is augmented with a matching 6in bass driver. Together, this combination delivers an LF extension down to below 40Hz! Which is some seriously impressive stuff and a result of superb engineering.

Taking turns to audition, they were powered by the Hegel H160 amplifier (150W/pc into 8 Ohms, 250W/pc into 4 Ohms), PeachTree Nova220SE, Denon PMA-2020, Denon DCD-1520 and the Denon DA-300 DAC.





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Our all-time favourite room at the *What Hi-Fi Show* has always been the Little Nap Recliners demo room. After a hard days work around the show, they provide the perfect respite! The beautiful yellow chair you see below is the Little Nap Livo.

We also got to 'audition' the Little Nap Signature, Moderi and the beautiful, comfortable Millor range of recliners. Yes, we love Little Nap. But we've heard its got competition.



FAIRDEAL ELECTRONICS



As if praises at the Delhi show were not enough! Sitting proud in the Fairdeal Electronics demo room, the Focal Dimension Soundbar once again managed to impress the crowd.

This room also had the Epson EH-TW8200 Full HD projector. The projector packs in Lamp Boost Technology that excels in delivering high colour brightness of about 2,400 lumens. Epson's proprietary C2Fine (Crystal Clear Fine) Technology and inorganic LCD panels with Vertical Alignment (VA) technology brought out deep blacks and translucent whites in 3D and Full HD at the show.

Complementing the feature-packed Epson projector were the Focal Electra 1038 BE towers, Electra CC 1008 BE centre loudspeaker, Electra SR 1000 surround speakers and the Electra SW 1000 subwoofer.

The entire setup was manned by the utterly astounding and beautiful ADA Cinema Rapture Integrated Controller. The Cinema Rapture decodes all the latest Dolby TrueHD, DTS-HD Master Audio and Multi-Channel PCM soundtracks found on Blu-ray DVDs without breaking a sweat.





Trust PTC to bring out the big guns. Yup, you guessed it right. Standing in all their glory, were the Focal Scala V2 Utopia. These speakers from the Utopia III line, were finished in a special 24- karat-gold leaf, that, needless to say, wowed many listeners at the show.

The Scala V2 Utopia loudspeakers were driven by Accuphase electronics. The Accuphase P-4200 monoblocks, C2120 Preamp along with the Esoteric player brought these wonderful speakers to life.

With a price tag of ₹60 Lacs a pair, it would be safe to say that this setup was one of the most expensive at the show.



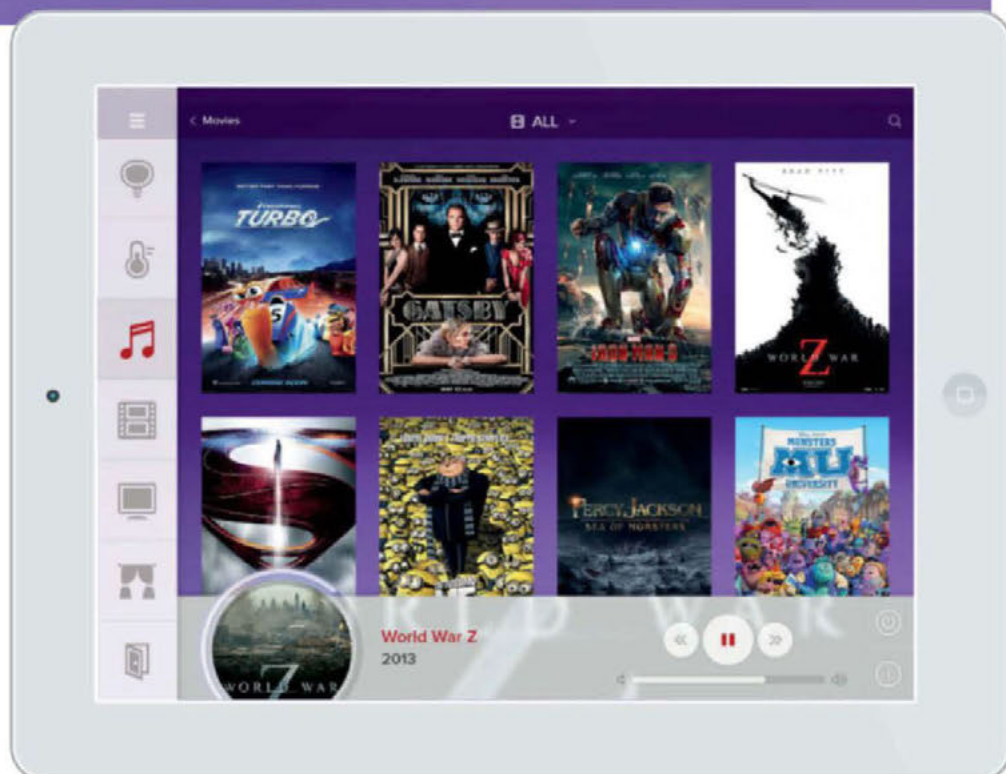
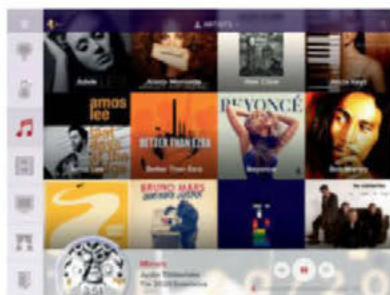
CASADIGI



Casadigi is a well known name in the business of automation.

With clients such as the Armani Hotel in Dubai, The Oberoi in Bangalore, The Leela Palace in Delhi and many more, Casadigi has proved its might.

Casadigi was at the show to tell people that they too, can have their homes automated. It involves a box, an app and a little pinch of magic to convert your home into the perfectly automated home you imagined. The Casadigi app has a mood setting too. Feeling peppy?



LEVIATHAN

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A simplistic, yet classy stereo system was on display at Leviathan's exhibit. A pair of Burmester B50 powered by the Burmester 911 MK3 power amplifier was on demo. A Burmester 948 Power Conditioner providing active DC power compensation, in-line with a Burmester 111 Music Centre as the source were used to complete the Burmester setup.

A pair of active Audiovector SR 1 Avantgarde Arrêté Active Discreet loudspeakers was the second stereo system on demo. A Micromega IA 180 integrated amplifier and Micromega CD30 player were also on display. The stereo systems enthralled one and all at the show.



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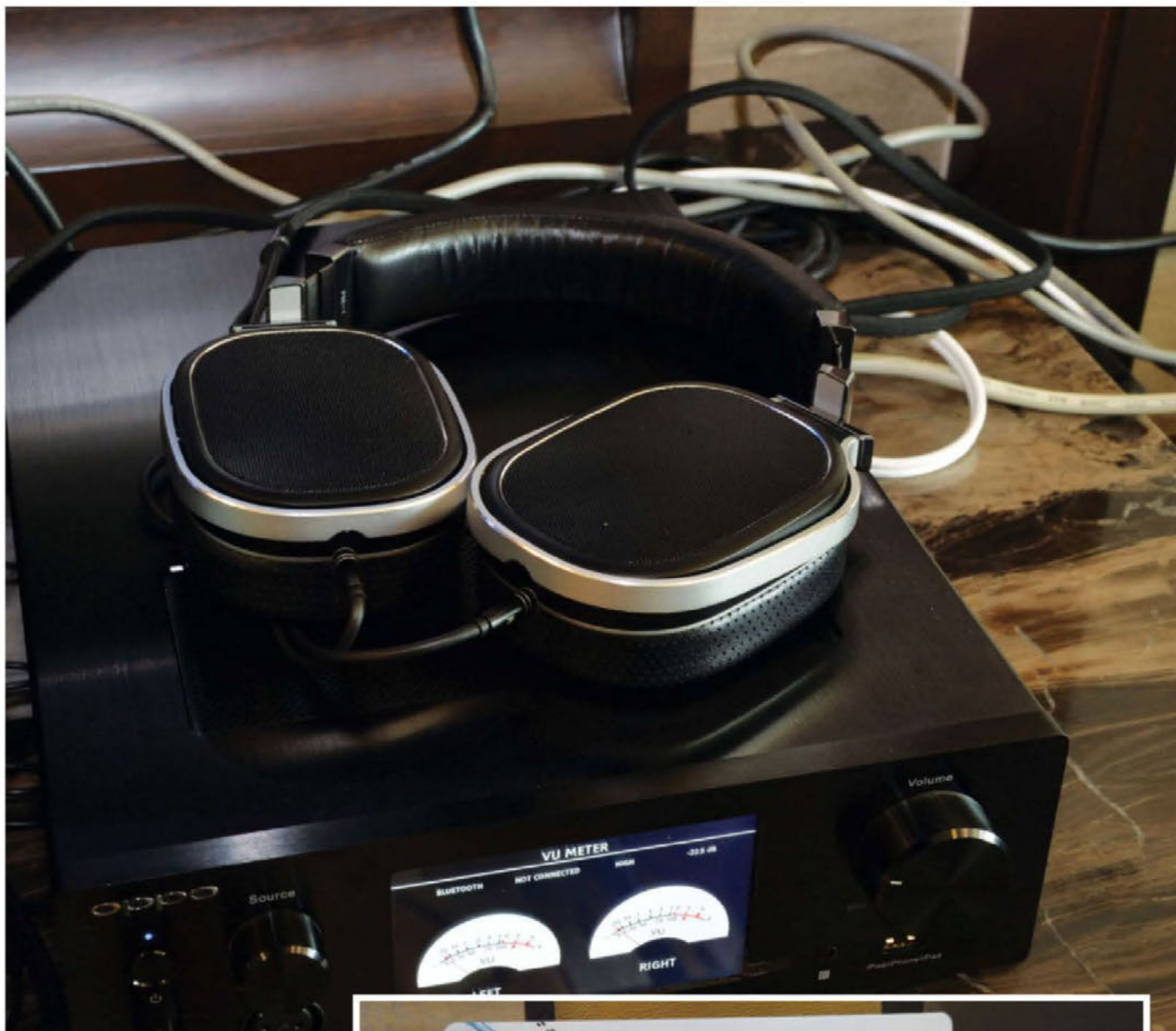
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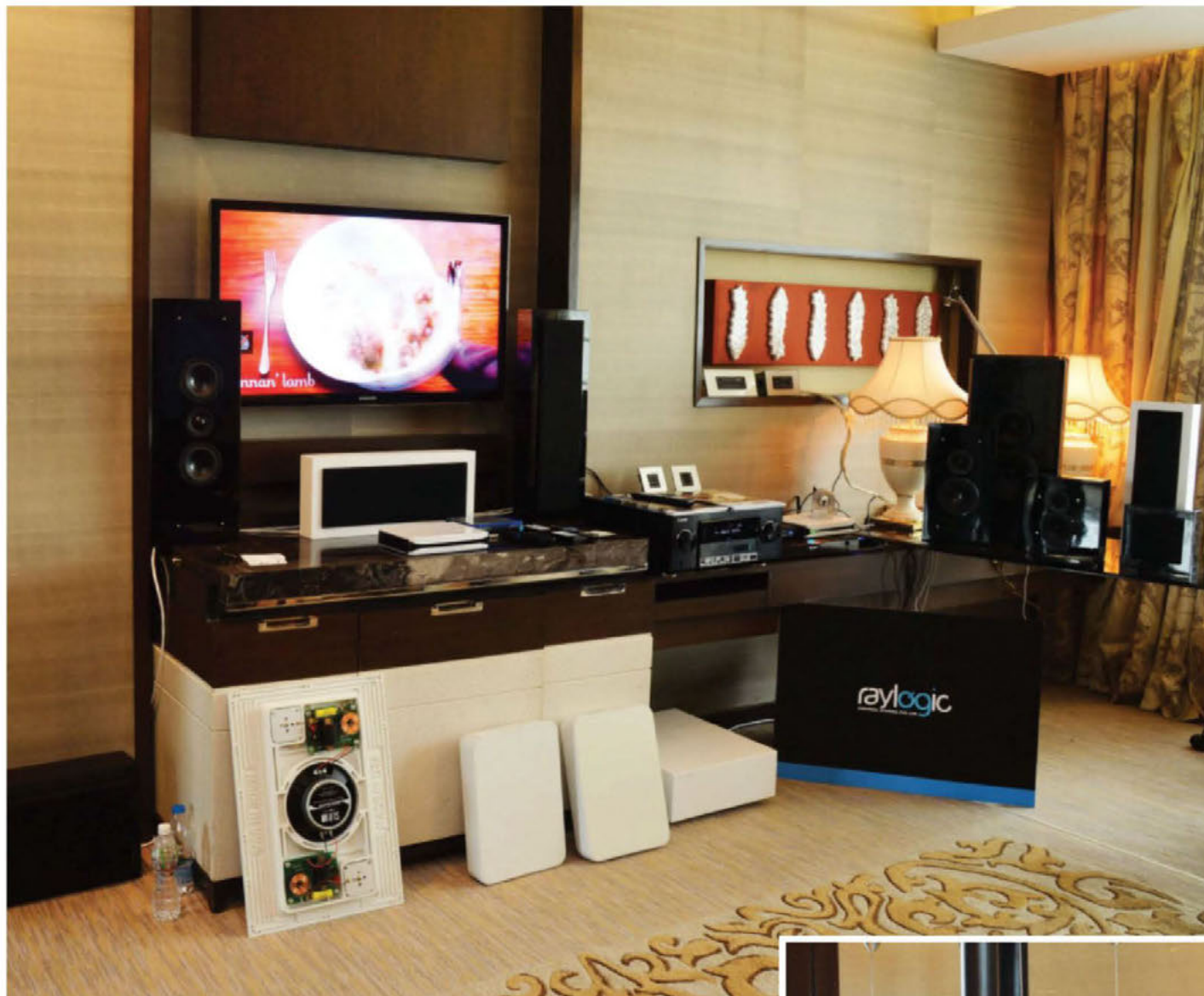


Oppo has been making some huge strides in the audiophile industry, what with their products featuring on good setups everywhere.

The Oppo PM-1 Planar Magnetic Headphones, a product reviewed by *What Hi-Fi* (we loved it!), along with the Oppo HA-1 Integrated DAC and headphone amplifier left connoisseurs of good audio vying for more. These were fed from a source that comprised of an Oppo BDP-103D Blu-ray disc player and a Cocktail Audio X30 music streamer for some quality listening experience. On passive display were the Wharfedale 230 floorstanders, Wharfedale Tandem portable wireless speakers and SIDigital's S1 server, which is a multi room audio video server.



PRINCE AV CONCEPTS



Prince AV Concepts had set up an active 5.1 system using DLS and EBTB speakers for demo.

The DLS L was used as the centre channel, placed horizontally, while two DLS XL took up the sides. A pair of yellow EBT Luna V2 (pictured) loudspeakers were used for the surrounds with a DLS Flatsub Midi subwoofer. The Pioneer SC-LX57 AV receiver was used to drive the components, along with a Panasonic Blu-ray player. The DMP-BD 30 as the source.

A range of products from DLS's flatbox series, Starke Sounds's IC-H3 Elite, Micromega MySpeaker speakers, DLS outdoors and In wall series, Stealth Acoustic's all-weather and concealed speakers to EBTB speakers (EBTB speakers: Blue speaker in pic) were all on passive display. ICE cables were used for the entire setup.





Prince AV Concepts' second room had a heavy 5.1 setup that involved Procella Audio components. Procella P28 loudspeakers were used as centre, left and right channels while the Procella P6 was used for the surrounds. The Procella P15 passive subwoofer was employed. A Procella DA2800 DSP amplifier powered the front speakers while the DA2800 non-DSP amplifier powered the surrounds. A Sim2 Crystal 35 projector was used for the visuals. A Marantz 7702 AV receiver and an Oppo BDP-93 Blu-ray player completed the setup.



SAVOY (JSE)



Savoy had a full house on display, wherein a 5.1 surround audio and stereo setup were on demo along with a host of products from Mission, Yamaha, and Pure Acoustics on passive display. The 5.1 setup consisted of Pure Acoustics RB 6 C for centre channel, Pure Acoustics RB 6 F floorstanders for front channels and Pure Acoustics RB 6 S as surrounds and a Pure Acoustic RB Sub 1200 active subwoofer.

The entire setup was powered by a Yamaha RX-V477 AV receiver. There were three stereo systems that comprised of the Mission VX4, MX4 and SX4 floorstanders, all powered by a Yamaha A-S500 integrated amplifier. The source was an Olive HDD-1 media player and a Yamaha CD-S1000 CD player. Smaller systems for different purposes like the Mission M-Cube home theatre system, Mission VX-1 Bookshelf speakers, Yamaha MCR-042, outdoor and in-wall speakers from Pure Acoustics and others were also on passive display.





Turntable magic reigned supreme in this demo room. Savoy's analogue prowess was on full display with a stereo system that comprised of a Pro-Ject 6 Perspex Turntable with Ortofon Rondo Red Cartridge as the source. Advance Acoustic MPP1000 pre-power amp and an Advance Acoustic X-A160 amplifiers were used to power the wonderfully detailed Dynaudio Focus 340 floorstanders. A plethora of classic vinyls, playing Fleetwood Mac, Santana's layered guitars and Sinatra's lilting baritone commanded awe and respect at the demo.

Dynaudio XEO3 bookshelf speakers, Dynaudio Contour S 1.4 speakers, Dynaudio Excite X34 and X38 floor standers were on static display. Giving that static display company was Dynaudio's in-wall series of loudspeakers, such as the IP 24, IP 17, IW 17 and the IW 17Z.



RECLINERS INDIA



Recliners are a quintessential aspect of setting up a good home theatre. And Recliners India, with their array of recliners featuring various in-built goodies for enhancing the average movie-watching experience, drove home the point. On display were the 899iM, White Piping III, 086, 802M, Diamond Stitches and other beauties in different hues. With features ranging from inbuilt Bluetooth-enabled double motor systems, massages with heating options, cup holders with chillers among others, patrons definitely were spoiled for choice.

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Zvox couldn't have chosen a better venue to debut its revolutionary range of soundbars that claim to offer a surround sound effect from the humble-looking, slim unit. The *What Hi Fi Show 2015*, Mumbai was venue of choice for launching Zvox's competitively-priced Platinum Series Soundbase. The Soundbase 350, 450 and 570 were on static display (stacked one on top of the other) while the Zvox Soundbase 670 was on active demo.

The Platinum series comprises of the Zvox Soundbase 570, 670 and 770. The Soundbase offers Bluetooth wireless streaming and have three, powered in-built subwoofers in all the Platinum Series models, except in the Soundbase 570.



PANDAM



Pandam had an extensive display of Genelec monitors on display.

The brand, established for active studio monitors were divided into a powerful 2.1 stereo demo setup and a live lineup that showcased a variety of Genelec' loudspeakers. The setup consisted of two Genelec 8260A Smart Active Monitor (pictured above, on stands), along with a Genelec 7270A Active DSP subwoofer to round up the 2.1 stereo setup.

On static display were the Genelec 8010A and 8020A satellite speakers, Genelec M030, 8030, 8040 and 8050 series of monitors along with Genelec F One and F Two subwoofers. Also on static display were the Genelec AIW26 in-wall speakers and Genelec 6000A tube loudspeakers.



RIVERA



Keeping it simple and elegant was the theme for Rivera International's demo room with a humbling stereo system and minimalistic but well-measured static display of components from various brands. The stereo system comprised of a pair of Sonos Faber Olympica III floorstanding loudspeakers powered by a McIntosh MA8000 integrated amplifier. The lifestyle products on static display were the McIntosh MXA70 stereo system, McIntosh McAire integrated audio system (under review).

Also on static display were the Triad Bronze/4 LCR in-wall speakers, Bronze LCR on-wall speakers and Bronze/4 SlimSub in-wall subwoofer. The Pioneer PLX1000 (pictured) got a lot of attention while Rock speakers, ceiling and on-wall speakers along with volume controls from Niles made for an interesting array of components for the visitors.



AUDIO CHECK



Audiocheck's demo room was in full-blown stride as far as displays were concerned. A lot was on display, and by a lot, we do mean a lot! Definitive Technology's stereo demo consisted of a set of Studio Monitor 55 bookshelf speakers paired with a Pro Cinema 600 subwoofer. Definitive Technology had a whole range of products from soundbars (W Studio), wireless music adapter (W Adapt), W7 and W9 wireless powered speakers, Pro Cinema 400 home theatre system along with portable music systems like Cube and Sound Cylinder.

Marantz's IS301 wireless iPad dock and Consolette powered speaker/iPod dock with AirPlay, M-CR 603 integrated stereo network, NAD VISO1 wireless music system along with PSU's M4U1 and M4U2 headphones and an Elvis Presley Limited Edition Turntable from Ricatech (EP1950) and a host of others were on static display.





Philips' HTL9100 Fidelio wireless soundbar was the centre of attention at this demo.

With detachable elements that can be used as rear surrounds, the wireless wonder also included a wireless subwoofer and was quite chic. Also on static display was the HTL6140 Fidelio soundbar and the HTB5580 5.1 home theatre system. Philips had a whole section dedicated to its headphones, namely the banging new Philips M1 MKII and the Fidelio M2BT, which sound great for the price bracket they're in.

Amongst the headphones, other models on display were Philips Digital Wireless headphones that sat niftily in its dock and the Frames Cityscape that had a nice wooden finish that exude an earthy feel. Patrons enjoyed plugging these headphones into listening devices which were either supplied by Philips or into their smartphones, to enjoy a unique audio experience.



ABSOLUTE SOUND



The good folks at Absolute Sound have a reputation, that of being eccentric genius' as far as audiophiles are concerned. One walk into the demo room and the setup hits you with a reverence that is truly deserving. The stereo setup comprised of the Netherland-based Mola-Mola amplifiers which were launched at the *What Hi Fi Show 2015*. The source was the Bel Canto CD2 with the DAC 3.5 MK II and Bel Canto VBS1 power supply.

A Mola-Mola Makua pre-amp was coupled with a Mola-Mola Kaluga power amp for power. Transparent Audio's Reference series of speaker cables, interconnects and power conditioners were used along with the Stillpoints Ultra SS and Ultra S, which were employed for isolation. A pair of Joseph Audio Pulsar loudspeakers delivered the fruits of the carefully calibrated system and kept listeners mesmerized across the three day show.





A 5.2.4 Dolby Atmos setup, made sure that patrons experienced the latest in immersive audio.

The setup comprised of an Onkyo BD-SP809 Blu-ray player as source with an Onkyo TX-NR1030 9.2 channel Dolby Atmos Network AV receiver, both of which are THX certified. Cerwin Vega's XLS-6C, XLS-12 and XLS-6 were used as centre channel, fronts and surrounds respectively, while four Cerwin Vega SL-5M were used for the height element.

Two Cerwin Vega XLS-12S subwoofers provided ample bass to complete the setup with Eagle cables used for wiring. There was one more set up comprising of Cerwin Vega's SL-45C as centre, SL-28 and SL-15 as fronts and SL-5M as surrounds with an SL-10S subwoofer. This was powered by a 9.2 channel, THX certified Onkyo TX-NR929 AV receiver. Also on display were a host of Onkyo systems. Gibson guitars (part of the Onkyo group along with Teac), with their retro-look and shiny appeal made sure guitar-playing enthusiasts had a blast playing the beauties.





Lakozy's elegant stereo system display had a NAD M50 as the source with a NAD M12 pre-amp and NAD M22 power amp, all from its Master Series. PSB Imagine T3 floorstanding loudspeakers did justice to the setup, where Supra Sword-ISL interconnects and speaker cables were used with a Supra Powerstrip and power cord. On static display was an appreciable range of Bluesound products like the Bluesound Pulse (portable BT speaker), Vault, Node, Power Node, which are multi-room streamers, along with the Duo 2.1 loudspeakers. Also on passive display were NAD's digital amps, the D 3020, D 7050 and C510 DAC, CI 980 multi-channel amplifier, and T 757 AV surround sound receiver.

PSB's Imagine Mini, B and C3 speakers, M4U2 headphones, VS21 soundbar and SubSeries 200 and 125 subwoofer were there too. DSPeaker Anti-Mode 2.0 Dual Core, an audio processor for room correction, was also on static display.



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On a floor having an Atmos setup, how could an Auro-3D demo be behind?

Audio Excellence submerged its listeners in an immersive Auro3D 10.1 setup, bar none. Comprising of Definitive Technology speakers, RLS II were used as fronts and centre channel with 5.5S and 5.5LCR as front heights. Main surrounds were by Definitive Technology's 5.5BPS while extended surround was by the 5.5S again. Voice of God was handled by Definitive Technology 6.5LCR while the lows were taken care of by a SuperCube 6000 sub.

A Crystal Cube Sim2 projector was used while the entire unit was powered by a Parasound A51 (5-Channel amp) with an Auro3D Crux processor, in line with Parasound's 2125 for the surrounds and 275 v.2 for the VOG. The source was an Oppo BDP-93 Blu-ray player. A SuperCube 8000 subwoofer was also kept but on static display.



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Arcam D33 DAC / UDP-411 BD/SACD Player

Capable of full high-resolution 24-bit/192kHz processing and SACD playback, this duo is state-of-art audio/video decoding



Denon AVR-X7200W

Dolby Atmos out of the box and an upgrade to Auro 3D on its way, this is the most future-proof AVR we could get our hands on, yet.



BlueSound Vault

All our CDs and music get stored and served by this elegant solution from the boys at NAD



Mark Levinson No. 585

An integrated amplifier with (almost) no equal, this 200 w/pc dual mono design is the pinnacle of cutting-edge tech along with a 32-bit DAC onboard for added ammo!



AudioQuest cables

Working truthfully between the various components, the DBS-equipped line of cables and interconnects helps us see and hear without any anomalies



PMCTwenty Series speakers

Using the Twenty.26 as mains, Twenty.C for centre, DB1 Gold and Wafer 1 for surrounds, this speaker suite is the ideal blend of neutrality and musicality



REL S5 Subwoofer

The cleanest and fastest way to add real weight and dynamics to our system was to introduce the brilliant S5 to the music and multichannel mix. A true legend



Mark Levinson No. 585 integrated amp/DAC

₹8,28,000

There are few names in the high-end hi-fi business that command respect and awe just with the sheer mention.

Mark Levinson is one of those hallowed brands and has earned its reputation primarily for making no-compromise amplifiers. Any purist might sneer at the idea of an integrated amplifier but when it's built like the No. 585, you might want to reserve your judgement until you hear it. And that's just what we did when Harman International's Luxury Audio Division generously loaned us one of the first units to be shipped out of the factory!

It's been almost a decade since Mark Levinson last released an integrated amp, the No. 383, which was rated at 100 watts/pc. The audiophile scenario has since then moved on to digital media, digital amplification and compressed audio formats. Having had enough time to start from a blank slate, along with a team of talented engineers, now headed by an ex-Krell designer, the No.585 is a ground-up design. This meant that the design team could optimize the amplifier path for a true dual-mono architecture and then add modern functionality like a Hi-Res audio capable DAC, Harman's proprietary Clari-Fi compressed music restoring processing and a bypass mode for use within an existing home-theatre system.

Of course, to offset any initial alarm bells going off with the inclusion of so many 'features', Mark Levinson engineers showered their love and care to the Class A/B amplifier stage. The massive chassis is designed to avoid any sharp edges on the outside and hence the heatsinks are hidden behind the rounded casework. The two-tone finish harks back to traditional Mark Levinson design language, along with the trademark red LED display. A huge 900VA toroidal transformer feeds the left and right power amp channels, rated rather conservatively at 200 watts/pc while the much-revered Mark Levinson preamp stage gets its own linear voltage regulators. This helps keep the noise floor at almost immeasurable levels and adds to the pitch dark background during the silences. This adds a lot to the dynamic contrast to the musical presentation and has been one of the key qualities of vintage Mark Levinson amps.

Adding digital to the analog mix hasn't tarnished any of its credentials though. Top notch components are used in both the sections. An ESS Sabre 32-bit D/A converter with proprietary jitter

elimination, native DSD support and asynchronous USB are some of the headlining features of the digital section and it doesn't look shabby at all. Beyond the specs, there's tons of custom options available that allow you to tweak it to your hearts content. Maximum volume level, renamable inputs, absolute phase polarity, channel balance, display brightness, filter settings for the DAC, 80Hz high-pass filter for the variable line-level output, the list is long. You could control all of this from the substantially heavy remote control but it's not the most ergonomic or intuitive. It's a minor quibble that won't really make a difference once they start listening to the music flowing out of its outputs. So it was about time.

Using our current reference Arcam SuperDAC and the resident Mac Mini, we used the AudioQuest XLR cables to hook up via the balanced inputs. An offbeat choice but we started with Danish electro-producer Trentemoller's *The Last Resort* album. Recorded entirely using synth sounds, it's about as clean as the Mark Levinson's delivery. *Vamp*, which is an avant-garde deep house mix, really punishes your system, testing it's ability to resolve the extended LF clearly from the eclectic harmonic groove overlay. This amplifier grabbed it like rag doll and kept it completely in control and extending the depth of the recorded beyond anything we've heard previously. It exuded a sense of immense power without having to prove it and that gives it the effortless character that the best amplifier designs possess. Moving



The insight into the recording available is tremendous and it does this without sounding fatiguing or over analytical

on to the *Tutti!* orchestral sampler, the attack of a full bore symphony orchestra was superbly reproduced with a three dimensionality that gives Mark Levinson its reputation.

Instruments had the lightness without ever sounding thin, making your speakers disappear from the room. The different filter settings of the DAC need to be experimented with for your liking but in any of those, the immediacy of the music isn't lost a bit. The attack and decay times may differ but the stark black background that the No. 585 creates magic out of a good recording and will drop your jaw on a good one. James Bay's *Let it Go* has some of the better vocals captured in a commercial recording and the rich texture of his voice is reproduced with perfect tonality and squeaky clean midrange.

For anyone moving up from a mid-end amplifier, this would be akin to wiping a layer of dust through your car's windshield. The insight into the recording available is tremendous and it does this without sounding fatiguing or over analytical. Harman engineers have worked hard to make this a musical amp more than a tool to rip apart your favourite artists and that isn't an easy feat to pull off when you have so much resolution built into the system. The rated power is by no means a limitation even for full-size speakers. We used everything from the Totem to PMC and Jamo with it and regardless of speaker load or sensitivity, were able to get the maximum out of them.

With such an arsenal of talents, it's no secret that Mark Levinson will be adding a lot to Harman's bottom line with this amp but audiophiles have no need to worry because they haven't compromised on any of the brands inherent talents while adding new ones. Built like the proverbial tank, versatile enough like a swiss-knife and smoother than an 18 year old scotch, it ticks all the boxes as the last amplifier you will ever need. But its most endearing and attractive quality remains its ability to pull you into the heart of the music.

Rating

FOR Ample power reserves, effortless dynamics, full set of features, build quality

AGAINST Remote control, price tag

VERDICT An accomplished amplifier that straddles traditional build quality with a set of cutting-edge modern day features. Superb!

TECH SPECS

Amplifier Power 200 watts/per channel
THD <0.01% @1kHz **Frequency Response** 20Hz-20kHz Gain 40.7dB **Damping Factor** > 40 **Dimensions (HWD)** 7.59 x 17.25 x 19.95in **Weight** 32.6kgs **Inputs** RCA x 3, XLR x 1, AES/EBU x 1, 2 x SPDIF, 2 x Opt, 1 x USB



NEED TO KNOW

CONSIDER IF

You are willing to spend on one device that puts an end to it all

YOU'LL NEED

Sufficient ventilation and upstream electronics of the same calibre

MAKE SURE

You set the maximum volume to a level your speakers are capable of

AVOID

Using the balance control unless absolutely necessary

HIGHLIGHT?

Powerful and refined sound that makes every recording an experience!



NEED TO KNOW

CONSIDER IF

You want serious, hi-fi speakers that are active and can also go wireless

YOU'LL NEED

To take your time and experiment with placement. Closer to the wall is better

MAKE SURE

You turn the unit off before you switch cables or you might erase files on the amps

AVOID

Playing low quality files, these speakers don't like anything low quality

HIGHLIGHT?

An active bookshelf that can give larger speakers a run for their money

**Audiovector SR1
Avantgarde Arreté
Active Discreet**
₹4,75,000 (approx.)

Slowly churning out sweet notes in the Leviathan Systems' room at the *What Hi Fi Show Mumbai* were the Audiovector Avantgarde Arreté Active bookshelves.

We heard the potential and had to call for them for a private listen. Our review samples came clad in beautiful 'African Rosewood' veneer that is specially selected and pair-matched. There are four other options available to choose from.

Take the magnetic grille off the rigid, extremely well built cabinet, and the first thing you notice apart from the striking industrial look, is the much loved and respected, top-of-the-line Avantgarde Air Motion Transformer. This is used here in a 30 percent rear-firing SEC (Soundstage Enhancement Concept) configuration. This is paired with LCC (Low Compression Concept) technology which is responsible for the fast transient response of all Audiovector SR-series models. With this, the membranes of the drivers move freely under all conditions.

What's more? Audiovector employs a composite sandwich technology involving aluminum rings, high-strength titanium

voice coil formers and a magnesium chassis for the mid/bass driver, all of which claims to reduce hysteresis distortion and provide ample stiffness. Phew! That's a lot of delicate engineering.

And there's more! The speakers are powered by the 24V Discreet external unit that serves as a hub for your connections. The hub uses a patented technology called Actiline to transmit the power as well as

The highs carry a nice, rich texture but also have the right amount of subtlety

the digital audio signal on ordinary speaker wire. The hub provides Bluetooth, two optical digital inputs, a coaxial digital input and an analogue stereo input as well. It also has a subwoofer out and applies a high-precision 4th order digital Linkwitz-Riley filter at 80Hz.

Now, for the main question. How do these sound? Tonally, they're astonishingly spot on. They judge the balance between frequencies beautifully. The highs carry a nice, rich texture but also have the right amount of subtlety. Another striking ability is the immense amount of control. Play something complex like Shubert's *Sonata No. 20 in A Major Adantino* and the Audiovectors do a brilliant job at unravelling the intricate details especially in the complex and fast

parts of the recording. Even the end section is delivered in a cohesive manner with a lot of muscularity and insight.

Vocals, too, are handled well. Bon Iver's voice pushes through with healthy bouts of emotion from amidst a powerful march of drums in *Perth*. The SR1 manages precision and complexity very few speakers can match. Careful positioning (close to the walls and slightly toed in) and a decent level of volume ends up in a focused soundstage and transparency that belies the speakers size, which is no mean feat for a bookshelf. The frequency response ranges from 39-52kHz, and they produce an authoritative bass, but some might find it a tad controlled. Yes, they are expensive, but you get what you pay for - insight, agility, speed and superb dynamics.

Rating

FOR Superb insight, balanced presentation, focused but wide soundstage, superb build

AGAINST Discreet Hub is made of plastic and feels low quality, no dedicated remote

VERDICT Active speakers this good are a rare breed. Wireless ability is the icing on the cake

TECH SPECS

Sensitivity 87.5 db **Nominal Impedance** 8 ohm **Frequency Range** -6 db 139-52 kHz **Internal Shock Absorbers** yes **Finishes** 5 **Powered** yes **Non Parallel Surfaces** yes **Dimensions (hwd)** 37x19x28



RHA T10i

₹14,999

Taking a bow at IFA last year in Berlin, RHA has managed to successfully get us excited about in-ears all over again with the T10i.

There's a bunch of unique hardware elements that come together to make these in-ears truly special. They feature a handmade dynamic driver that has been engineered to "reproduce all genres of music with high levels of accuracy and detail." RHA has also employed a custom-tuning filter system (pictured above), which allows for adjusting frequency, bass and treble.

A custom made, stainless-steel housing plays host to each driver. The housings are subjected to extreme levels of heat to make sure they are optimum shape and density for comfort and durability. A 1.35m oxygen-free copper cable with three-button remote and mic is included, as are mouldable over-ear hooks. While some of that may sound like marketing spiel, we assure you that from the moment you pick these up, they feel like a premium product. Every single aspect of these in-ears ooze quality and on build alone, they could pass as in-ears that cost twice as much.

We went with the 'reference' tuning filters that are present by default, and

The T10is are a supreme example of trickle-down tech and more than live up to their asking price

plugged them in for a listen. After some careful adjustment, they fit snug and isolate you from all background noise. We fire them up with a couple tracks from *Ludaversal* and are instantly impressed with balance of both treble and bass. Mids and highs exhibit dollops of detail as do the lows. Tight and punchy, they round off the sound without ever feeling overpowering.

The T10is are a supreme example of trickle-down tech and more than live up to their asking price. Available now through headphonezone.in

Rating

FOR Premium build, bundled tuning filters, detailed sound, tight bass

AGAINST Ear hooks can get fiddly

VERDICT A fine pair of in-ears that are almost the perfect package. Quality sound combined with top-notch hardware.

TECH SPECS

Driver Dynamic **Frequency range** 16-22000Hz **Weight** 41g **Cable length** 1.35m, **Connections** 3.5mm, gold plated

NEED TO KNOW

CONSIDER IF

You need noise-isolating in-ears that are built tough and look stylish

YOU'LL NEED

A good source to extract their maximum potential in terms of sound quality

MAKE SURE

You try different tuning filters to see which pair suits your taste best.

AVOID

Low-res files or you'll always been disappointed with the results.

HIGHLIGHT

The materials used make this pair look and feel really special



Motorola Turbo

₹41,999

Meet the most powerful smartphone in the world as of 2014. A tag that has now been transferred to newer flagship rivals from Samsung and HTC more recently. Nonetheless, on arrival to our shores, the Turbo was still the most powerful smartphone in the country. Better known as the Droid Turbo in international markets, it's reached us christened more simply, the Moto Turbo.

Coming from a brand that's got dynamite contenders in each price category (we're looking at you Moto E, G and X), we've been particularly excited about this spec-beast.

One look at its resume and you're bound to be impressed - 5.2in QHD screen (565ppi), Snapdragon 805 processor, 3GB RAM, 64GB ROM, 3900mAh battery, 21MP cam with 4K recording and dual LEDs, Android Lollipop out of the box - the kind of stuff that can leave you breathless, literally. Hold the device, and you're immediately

Hold the device, and you're immediately welcomed by the feel of a ballistic nylon back. It's soft, durable and stylish

welcomed by the feel of a ballistic nylon back. Soft, durable and stylish, it's another win for Motorola's habit of experimenting with materials. We wake up its screen with some limited QHD content and are mesmerised by the saturation, detail and inky blacks. Every task it performs seems silky smooth courtesy all the grunt in its guts.

Save for the occasional heat, the Turbo is an all-rounder that can make flagship rivals tremble at this price point.

Rating

FOR Ballistic nylon back, comfortable size, screen, power-packed, battery life, price

AGAINST Gets considerably hot occasionally, camera could be better

VERDICT A worthy successor to the Moto X, the Turbo is a spec-monster that's a great mix of brain and brawn.

TECH SPECS

OS Android Lollipop **Chipset** Qualcomm Snapdragon 805 **RAM** 3GB **ROM** 64 **Camera** 21MP (back), 2MP (front)

NEED TO KNOW

CONSIDER IF

You need a flagship smartphone that looks smart and never stutters

YOU'LL NEED

To invest in a better pair of earphones. The bundled ones are a bit of a disappointment

MAKE SURE

You setup Moto's bundled software to extract maximum performance

AVOID

Nothing of note

HIGHLIGHT

A package that's impressive both inside and out. For the price, you can't do much better

The world's most desirable kit

TEMPTATIONS

“Smoothness, refinement and plenty of authority”

■ **McIntosh MXA70** Stereo system

■ **₹5,06,250 (approx.)** ★★★★★

We like the MXA70 system. It's a concentrated dose of McIntosh's traditional values at a relatively affordable price. Affordable? Don't laugh; judged by the American brand's usual standards this counts as affordable.

Let's get one thing clear. This product's appeal doesn't rest solely on absolute performance. If sound is the main priority there are better ways of spending this amount of money, even if you want to do it in a neat and compact way. We have no doubt something like Naim's SuperUniti with suitable speakers would better this McIntosh for outright performance, and score higher when it comes to features. But we think that's missing the point.

A very particular pedigree

It's a McIntosh product, and for many that will be enough. The company has a massively loyal following and we can understand the appeal. We can't think of another high-end brand with such a long and rich history. Then there's that gothic-tinged, lab-equipment look, those lovely blue backlit power meters and, of course, McIntosh's trademark authoritative yet still refined sonic balance. Add an unerring consistency in engineering approach coupled to high-quality build and it's easy to understand why the company has been trading for over 60 years.

An admirable reputation is all very well, but for us a product needs to offer far more than that. Fortunately for the MXA70 system, it does.

What does the package include? You get a Class A/B stereo amplifier with an output of 50W per channel, on-board

24bit/192kHz digital-to-analogue conversion and a top-class headphone amplifier circuit.

The headphone amplifier is not the afterthought it can be on products of this type. It's a serious design, engineered to get the most from a wide range of 'phones. To this end McIntosh has added an autoformer into the circuit to allow more precise impedance matching. In theory, this is a big advantage as far as sound quality is concerned.

The engineers have also developed a circuit called HXD (Headphone Crossfeed Director; yes, really) that tries to emulate the stereo imaging presentation of speakers. It works pretty well, adding a degree of spaciousness that's not normally part of the headphone experience, but there is a slight loss of bite and clarity.

The MXA70 system can be optimised for use with five different headphones. Each headphone profile remembers

Then there's that gothic-tinged, lab-equipment look, those lovely blue backlit power meters and, of course, McIntosh's trademark authoritative yet still refined sonic balance

Charlie Randall McIntosh President



At McIntosh, we aim to achieve a level of headphone performance beyond that offered by conventional headphone amplifiers. To that end, the MXA70 includes a dedicated headphone amp that employs a new adaptation of our bespoke Autoformer, which we've been using to bring efficient power transfer to speakers for over four decades. By connecting the headphone jack directly to the autoformer, full rated output is delivered to headphones with any impedance rating from 8 ohms to 600 ohms. This is accomplished without compromise in distortion or noise.

Another key McIntosh technology in the MXA70 is our new Headphone Crossfeed Director (HXD). Most recordings are mastered to project an enjoyable soundfield when played through loudspeakers. With headphones, the soundfield is compromised because room acoustics are not included in the headphone image. Our Acoustical and Electronic Engineers collaborated to find the reasons why the soundfield does not sound natural through headphones. After extensive research, we developed an electronic circuit to overcome the root cause for lack of acoustical realism in headphones. The result is our new HXD technology, which we believe takes performance up another notch.

McIntosh has as good a line in brand identity as anyone, but this all-in-one system is not just a looker

The headphone amplifier is a serious design, engineered to get the most from a wide range of 'phones

See overleaf for more detail...



1 An autoformer helps the MXA match to a variety of differing headphones 2 The HXD headphone setting aims to widen the soundfield 3 Speakers' rear 'foot' can adjust their angle

settings for amplifier-current level (it's adjustable through the set-up menus), headphone impedance (likewise), HXD on/off and the bass-boost setting.

Good-looking speakers

A small pair of aluminium-cased speakers complete the system. They're finished in a nice gloss black and built to a high standard. Take off the grille and you'll find a 19mm titanium dome tweeter and a 10cm paper cone mid/bass (tuned by a rear-firing port).

These speakers are small - around 26cm high - but are pretty hefty with it. The company even supplies speaker cable just to make the set-up as painless as possible. If you don't need the speakers, the main unit is available as the MHA100, saving you around ₹1,20,000 approximately.

The main unit looks just like one of





Activate the Future



Optoma 320UST Ultra Short Throw Projector is perfect for schools and colleges and uses a new generation of finger-touch interactive technology. This allows people to work simultaneously on the screen without using pen.

In detail

1 The rear panel is relatively crowded, but the unit itself doesn't run that hot thanks to a relatively large heat sink. The quality of build is high, and the speaker terminals at either edge of the unit are sturdy, substantial affairs.

2 A quartet of digital inputs - including a relatively rare AES/EBU connection - make the MXA suitable for use with a wide range of digital devices. Balanced XLR and single-ended analogue inputs are also on board to cater for more traditional sources.

3 The preamp output can be used independently of the main amp to allow the MXA70 to become part of a more ambitious, full-size system.



the company's traditional integrated amplifiers but scaled down. It's robust and nicely finished. This is an expensive product and certainly feels it. We like the choice of remote too. It's a stubby affair that's both pleasant to hold and easy to use. Astonishing as it might seem, those things aren't normally a given with high-end equipment.

Plenty of input options

Connectivity is decent. There are balanced and single-ended analogue connections, as well as four digital inputs. The digital inputs include the usual trio of USB, optical and coax as well as the less common AES/EBU. You'll need to download specific USB drivers from McIntosh's website if you have a PC, but can use a recent Apple Mac straight away.

As is increasingly common, the USB input works asynchronously, which means the McIntosh takes care of the timing of information flow, not the computer it's connected to. This usually bodes well for sonic performance.

Getting it all up and running is no hassle. That said, you're thinking of using this as a desktop product (as McIntosh suggests) you'll need a pretty big desk. The speakers can be positioned either side of the main unit and have a folding rubber-tipped rear foot to adjust their firing angle.

The system sounds good this way, but treat the MXA70 like a proper piece of hi-fi - good, rigid stands for the speakers and a low resonance support for the amplifier - and it sounds notably better.

Playing Dvorak's *New World Symphony* (from our Apple MacBook via USB), it doesn't take long to realise this

There's enough get-up-and-go here to satisfy with the likes of The Rolling Stones but there's also the finesse to deliver Ólafur Arnalds' *Found Songs* with the delicacy it deserves

system is every inch a proper McIntosh product. Its delivery has smoothness, refinement and plenty of authority.

Those speakers may be small, but they deliver an unexpected sense of solidity and scale. Low frequencies are full-bodied and pack a decent dose of power. Higher up the frequency range we're pleased with the fluidity and articulation on offer. The tonal balance has an element of richness in the midrange and bass, but not so much that it's an issue. While not wholly neutral, the set-up strikes a pleasant balance that retains a good amount of transparency while allowing a degree of forgiveness for harder, harsher recordings.

Insightful, layered delivery

There's plenty of insight here. Subtle instrumental strands aren't ignored, even when the symphony becomes complex. The system's presentation stays impressively stable and composed when pushed.

We like the stereo imaging too; it's nicely layered, solid and precise. The sound-stage is projected well, and with eyes closed it's hard to pinpoint the actual position of the speakers. This quality points to low-resonance enclosures, good drive units and well engineered crossovers.

We switch to headphones - using both Grado PS500s and AKG's K812s - with

good results. The MXA70's sonic character remains unchanged. It's still a smooth, spacious sound with a hint of richness at lower frequencies. There's enough get-up-and-go here to satisfy with the likes of The Rolling Stones but also the finesse to deliver Ólafur Arnalds' *Found Songs* with the delicacy it deserves. Rhythmic drive is good, and dynamics - both small and large scale - are rendered with confidence. By the highest standards we notice small shortfalls in timing precision and outright attack, but these things aren't enough to spoil our enjoyment.

Overall, this is a capable package. It's a compact, classy system that offers a fuss-free way to owning a McIntosh product. The MXA70 isn't perfect but we still want one.

Consider if You want a full dose of the McIntosh sound in a compact package
Highlight We love McIntosh's gothic look and those distinctive power meters

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Fine build; rich, entertaining presentation; impressive DAC and headphone sections

AGAINST Pricey; better sound is available for similar money

VERDICT Lots of McIntosh in a compact package. A deeply desirable - if pricey - system

TECH SPECS MCINTOSH MXA70

Type Stereo system

Power 2 x 50W

Inputs 2 x analogue audio, optical digital, coaxial digital, USB

Outputs analogue audio, headphone

DAC Yes

Dimensions (hwd) 14 x 29 x 39cm

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Shanth Swaroop
Editor, Buyer's Guide



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AV receivers & amplifiers

Budget	Well-equipped and deliver convincing surround sound
Mid	There are gains in features, build quality and sonic performance
Premium	Real powerhouses that pack loads of features and cinema-style sound

Product	₹	Verdict	Channels /power(w)	HDMI in	HDMI out	Networking	3D passthrough	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
Pioneer VSX-522	NA	★★★★☆	An agreeable entry-level amp	5x125	4	1	●	17x44x36
Pioneer VSX-922	NA	★★★★★	A highly specified all-round performer that excels at its new price point	5x125	4	1	●	17x44x36
Yamaha RX-V373	28,990	★★★★★	Best home cinema amplifier (budget), Awards 2012	5x100	4	1	●	15x44x32
Yamaha RX-V375	30,990	★★★★★	Best home cinema amplifier (budget), Awards 2013	5x100	4	1	●	15x44x32
Denon AVR-1912	45,900	★★★★☆	A fine amp bettered by close rivals	7x90	5	1	●	17x44x38
Onkyo TX-NR525	46,000	Not rated	Not rated	5x160	6	1	●	17x44x33
Denon AVR-2113	49,900	★★★★☆	Solid, likeable option for both novices and enthusiasts	7x125	6	1	●	17x44x33
Harman Kardon AVR171	59,990	★★★★☆	Could be subtler but still delivers a powerhouse performance	7x100	6	2	●	12x44x30
Pioneer VSX-923	55,190	★★★★☆	Needs more heft but it's still a compelling and confident amp	7x150	8	2	●	17x44x36
Onkyo TX-NR626	63,000	Not rated	Not rated	7x175	6	2	●	17x44x33
Onkyo TX-NR727	72,000	Not rated	Not rated	7x185	8	2	●	17x44x38
Denon AVR-X4000	1,34,900	★★★★☆	A decent enough AV receiver	7x125	7	3	●	17x43x38
Yamaha RX-V673	56,990	★★★★★	Best home cinema amplifier (budget-mid), Awards 2012. PRODUCT OF THE YEAR	7x150	6	1	●	17x44x36
Pioneer SC-LX57	1,10,990	★★★★★	Best home cinema amplifier (mid), Awards 2013	9x190	9	3	●	19x44x44
Pioneer SC-LX87	1,73,990	★★★★★	Pioneer strikes gold again with this feature laden powerhouse	9x170	7	2	●	17x43x41
Onkyo TX-NR1009	1,30,000*	★★★★★	An incredibly talented amplifier	9x180	8	2	●	20x44x44
Yamaha RX-A3030	1,61,000	★★★★★	Best home cinema amplifier (premium), Awards 2013	9x150	8	1	●	19x44x47
Onkyo TX-NR828	95,000	Not rated	Not rated	7x215	8	2	●	20x44x40
Pioneer SC-LX56	NA	★★★★★	Best home cinema amplifier (mid-premium), Awards 2012	9x170	8	2	●	19x44x44
Arcam AVR750	4,50,000	★★★★☆	It isn't flawless, but it is very good indeed	7x100	7	2	●	17x43x43
Yamaha RX-A1010	89,990	★★★★★	A receiver with huge but fluid delivery	7x170	8	2	●	18x44x43
Yamaha RX-A1020	89,990	★★★★★	Delivering excitement, detail and precision, this is a brilliantly capable all-rounder	7x110	8	2	●	18x43x43
Onkyo TX-NR1010	1,60,000	★★★★☆	Power-packed heavyweight needs a touch more precision	7x200	9	2	●	20x44x59
Onkyo TX-NR3009	1,60,000*	★★★★★	Produces seriously rewarding surround sound	9x200	8	2	●	34x61x60
Onkyo TX-NR3010	1,90,000	★★★★☆	A solid performance but lacks the subtlety to cut it as a complete all-rounder	9x160	9	2	●	20x44x60
Onkyo TX-NR5010	2,20,000	Not rated	Not rated	9x280	9	2	●	20x44x46
Pioneer SC-LX86	NA	★★★★★	Best Home Cinema amplifier (premium), Awards 2012	9x190	8	3	●	19x44x44
Yamaha RX-A3020	1,34,990	★★★★★	A shot across the bows of the class leaders	9x230	8	2	●	19x44x47
Yamaha RX-V377	34,990	★★★★★	Superb surround sound on a budget	5x70	4	1	●	15x44x32
Yamaha RX-A1030	1,04,000	★★★★☆	Not without some niggles, but this receiver delivers big-time power and muscle	7x110	8	2	●	18x43x43
Pioneer SC-LX87	1,73,990	★★★★★	Pioneer strikes gold again with the feature-laden powerhouse	9x220	9	3	●	19x44x44
Arcam AVR450	2,55,000	★★★★☆	There's plenty to like with this receiver, but its rivals better it	7x110	7	2	●	17x43x42

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Surround speakers

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Style	Compact speakers that make a lot of sense in smaller living spaces
Bipole/Dipole	Surround speaker designs that give a more cohesive soundfield

The shortlist



AWARD WINNER
Q Acoustics 2000i 5.1

Awards 2013: Best Traditional Pack (Budget)



PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
Dali Zensor 15.1

Awards 2013: Best Style Pack (Mid)



AWARD WINNER
Cambridge Audio Aero 5.1

Awards 2013: Best Traditional Pack (Premium)

Product	₹	Verdict	Front speaker (hwd, cm)	Center speaker (hwd, cm)	Rear speaker (hwd, cm)	Subwoofer (hwd, cm)	Finishes
Boston Ac. Soundware XS SE	33,099	★★★★★	11x11x9	11x11x9	11x11x9	31x28x40	2
Canton Movie 125 MX	39,375*	★★★★★	12x9x10	9x20x10	12x9x10	43x24x42	3
Canton Movie 130	75,000	★★★★★	12x9x10	9x19x10	12x9x10	41x24x42	3
Wharfedale DX-1HCP	45,000	★★★★★	19x12x12	12x29x12	19x12x12	34x29x32	2
Cambridge Audio Minx S215	58,500	★★★★★	8x8x9	8x8x9	8x8x9	22x21x22	1
SKS HT-528	25,000	Not rated	18x10x12	10x27x11	18x10x12	43x23x41	
KEF KHT3005 HD2	1,08,000	★★★★★	25x13x15	13x25x15	25x13x15	38x37x18	1
Monitor Audio MASS	1,03,000	★★★★★	22x13x13	13x22x13	22x13x13	42x30x38	1
Monitor Audio Vector AV10	59,000	★★★★★	24x15x17	15x35x17	24x15x17	37x32x32	3
Q Acoustics 2000i 5.1	87,750	★★★★★	23x15x20	23x16x12	23x15x20	23x16x12	2
Q Acoustics Q7000	95,250	★★★★★	24x10x16	12x21x16	24x10x16	37x51x22	2
Tannoy HTS-101	60,200	★★★★★	16x11x14	11x25x17	16x11x14	42x38x37	1
B&W MT-50	1,91,250	★★★★★	25x11x16	25x11x16	25x11x16	26x26x33	2
B&W MT-60D	3,28,500	★★★★★	25x11x16	25x11x16	25x11x16	34x27x36	2
Cabasse Eole 2	88,000	★★★★★	13x13x13	13x13x13	13x13x13	33x33x36	2
DALI Zensor 1 5.1	1,12,000	★★★★★	27x16x22	16x44x29	27x16x22	31x29x31	3
DALI Zensor 5 5.1	1,55,400	★★★★★	84x16x27	16x44x28	97x16x23	34x37x38	2
Elipson Planet M 5.1	1,05,000	★★★★★	15x15x15	15x15x15	15x15x15	39x32x32	3
Jamo D500 THX Select 2	2,17,000	★★★★★	26x45x13	26x45x13	26x45x13	42x40x42	2
KEF KHT3005SE	1,08,000	★★★★★	25x12x15	13x30x18	25x12x15	39x44x19	2
KEF Q300 5.1	1,26,000	★★★★★	36x21x30	21x63x30	36x21x30	33x34x33	3
KEF T105	89,900	★★★★★	33x14x44	33x14x44	33x14x44	38x37x8	1
Monitor Audio Bronze BX2 5.1	1,60,000	★★★★★	35x19x26	17x46x17	29x28x11	33x32x33	4
Monitor Audio Bronze BX5 5.1	2,75,000	★★★★★	85x17x25	17x46x17	29x28x11	33x32x33	2
Tannoy Rev. Compact 5.1	1,40,000*	★★★★★	27x15x16	15x30x16	39x31x34	32x29x29	2
B&W CM9 Theatre	7,99,875	★★★★★	102x32x37	22x59x28	34x20x28	32x32x32	2
B&W CT800 system	2,01,65,625	★★★★★	110x33x55	33x110x55	110x33x10	48x48x48	1
DALI Ikon 5 Mk2 5.1	3,21,900	★★★★★	81x15x28	15x57x26	38x27x15	45x41x46	2
Cerwin Vega SL Series 5.1	2,36,000	Not rated	84x36x38	17x28x18	91x42x50	45x13x16	1
Cambridge Audio Aero 5.1	1,57,000	★★★★★	98x24x34	15x32x21	18x46x15	34x33x36	2
KEF R100 5.1	2,47,000	★★★★★	28x18x29	17x53x31	28x18x29	37x33x35	4
Monitor Audio Apex	1,68,100	★★★★★	25x14x14	14x61x10	25x14x14	34x34x41	1
Energy Veritas RC Micro 5.1	47,100	Not rated	12x9x9	9x9x15	12x9x9	32x31x27	2
Monitor Audio PL300 AV	14,10,000	★★★★★	111x41x47	22x58x29	37x22x28	45x48x47	2
Mon. Audio Silver RX6 AV12	2,93,400	★★★★★	85x19x25	19x50x20	30x12x25	34x34x41	6
Mordaunt-Short Aviano 5.1	2,50,800	★★★★★	95x21x32	18x46x23	95x21x30	42x31x36	3
Mordaunt-Short Mezzo 5.1	5,27,200	★★★★★	100x22x28	18x49x22	35x22x28	32x34x35	2
Mordaunt-S. Performance 5.1	13,14,000	★★★★★	121x24x37	60x21x22	121x24x37	50x50x50	2
PMC DB1i 5.1	5,00,000*	★★★★★	29x16x23	16x29x23	29x16x23	55x20x55	4
Tannoy Revolution Signature	1,64,500*	★★★★★	85x17x18	17x45x18	27x17x18	37x34x34	2

CD Players

Integrated Has both a CD mechanism and digital-to-analogue conversion tech
Transport Needs an outboard DAC but can deliver a higher standard of sound

The shortlist



AWARD WINNER
Marantz CD6005

Awards 2013: Best CD Player (Budget)



PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
Naim CD5si

Awards 2013: Best CD Player (Mid)



AWARD WINNER
Roksan Caspian M2 CD

Awards 2013: Best CD Player (Premium)

Product	₹	Verdict	Integrated	Transport	Co-axial out	Optical out	XLR out	RCA out	Headphone out	Co-axial in	Optical in	AES/EBU in	USB in	Finishes	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
Cambridge Audio Azur 351C	30,800	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	9x43x31
Cambridge Audio Azur 651C	46,600	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	9x43x31
Denon DCD-710AE	27,400	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11x43x28
Marantz CD6004	39,900	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11x44x34
NAD C546BEE	41,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	7x44x29
Audiolab 8200CD	80,000*	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8x44x30
Cyrus CDTTransport	1,15,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8x22x36
Cyrus CD6 SE2	1,25,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8x22x36
Naim CD5si	1,25,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	7x43x30
Roksan Kandy K2	68,500	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	10x43x38
Burmester 069	45,00,000*	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	13x48x31
Audio Research CD5	6,18,750	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	13x48x31
Cambridge Audio Azur 851C	1,23,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12x43x34
Cyrus CD 8 SE2	1,82,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8x22x36
dCS Puccini	9,50,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11x46x40
Parasound Halo CD1	3,00,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11x44x34
Naim CD5 XS	2,50,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	7x43x30
Naim CD555	14,00,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11x43x31
Naim CDX2	4,50,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	9x43x31
Primare CD32	1,63,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11x43x38
Roksan Caspian M2 CD	1,98,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8x43x33
Marantz CD6005	41,900	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11x44x34
Esoteric K-05	8,50,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	13x45x36

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DACS

Digital-to-analogue converters take a digital data stream from its source (such as a computer or CD transport) and turn it into an analogue signal that your amplifier can work with. These devices have become more popular in recent years due to the emergence of computer-based audio

The shortlist



HRT microStreamer

Has beaten our 2012 Award-winner

“Truly captivated us with a stunningly agile-paced performance that reveals layers of subtlety hitherto unheard with just a pair of headphones and a laptop.”



Chord Chordette QuteHD

Awards 2012: Best DAC (Mid)

“It’s simple, looks great – and above all, sounds absolutely fantastic. You’ll have to spend twice as much to get something significantly better.”



NAD M51

Awards 2012: Best DAC (Premium)

“The M51 sounds sensational. In fact, we’d go further than that by saying it’s one of the best NAD separates we’ve heard in recent memory.”

Product	₹	Verdict	USB in	Optical in	Co-axial in	AES/EBU in	HDMI in	Wireless	Headphone out	RCA out	Balanced XLR out	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
Audioengine D1	11,789	★★★★★	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	3x9x10
Audioquest DragonFly	18,900	★★★★★	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1x2x6
Arcam rDAC Wireless	36,000*	★★★★★	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4x16x11
Arcam rPAC	19,800	★★★★★	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3x10x6
Camb. Audio DacMagic 100	18,800	★★★★★	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	5x11x13
Camb. Audio DacMagic Plus	38,500	★★★★★	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	5x22x19
HRT microStreamer	20,000*	★★★★★	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1x3x6
Meridian Explorer DAC	31,000	★★★★★	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2x3x10
Micromega MyDAC	32,000	★★★★★	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2x3x10
Musical Fidelity M1 DAC	40,500	★★★★★	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	10x22x30
NAD DAC 2	25,500	★★★★★	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4x14x7
Cambridge Audio Azur 851D	1,03,000	★★★★★	1	4	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	12x43x36
Chord Electronics QuteHD	1,00,000*	★★★★★	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	7x16x4
Meridian Director	65,000	★★★★★	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3x14x8
Audio Research DAC8	5,30,000*	★★★★★	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	13x48x25
Arcam FM/D33	2,34,000	★★★★★	3	2	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	11x43x37
Burmester 113	4,00,000*	★★★★★	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	6x20x17
Rotel RDD-1580	80,000	★★★★★	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	6x43x32
NAD D1050	42,500	★★★★★	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	19x6x21
NAD M51	1,27,000	★★★★★	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	8x44x30
Naim DAC	2,50,000	★★★★★	2	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	7x43x30

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Hi-Fi speakers

Standmounters Usually smaller speakers that need to be put on a stand, not bookshelves
Floorstanders Larger speakers that tend to go louder and deeper than standmounters
Powered Have built-in amplifiers and need mains power to work

The shortlist



Q Acoustics Concept 20

Awards 2013: Best Stereo Speaker (Budget)



AWARD WINNER
KEF LS50

Awards 2013: Best Standmounter (Mid)



AWARD WINNER
PMC Twenty 22

Awards 2013: Best Standmounter (Premium)

Product	₹	Verdict	Standmount	Floorstander	Powered	Finishes	Dimensions (hwd,cm)
Audioengine P4	18,000	★★★★★	●				23x14x17
PSB Alpha T1	37,000	Not Yet Rated		●			91x18x31
PSB Alpha LR1	13,000	Not Yet Rated		●			18x12x16
Waterfall Serio	15,000	Not Yet Rated					5x5x3
Q Acoustics 2010i	19,200	★★★★★	●				23x20x15
Q Acoustics 2020i	25,900	★★★★★	●				26x17x28
Tannoy Mercury V1i	19,800	★★★★★	●				30x17x26
Wharfedale Diamond 10.0	11,500	★★★★★	●				24x15x17
Audioengine A5+	27,980	★★★★★	●				27x18x20
Q Acoustics Q-BT3	39,990	★★★★★	●	●			31x19x24
Boston Acoustics A-26	24,600	★★★★★	●				33x21x27
B&W 685 S2	65,000	★★★★★	●				35x19x32
B&W MM-1	40,000	★★★★★			●		17x10x10
Waterfall Hurricane Evo	31,200	Not Yet Rated					11x7x3
Bose Computer MusicMonitor	28,013	★★★★★	●				12x7x12
DALI Lektor 2	37,500	★★★★★	●				31x18x22
DALI Zensor 3	33,000	★★★★★	●				35x21x29
DALI Zensor 1	23,700	★★★★★	●				27x16x22
Epos Epic 1	32,950	★★★★★	●				31x19x25
Focal Chorus 706V	49,999	★★★★★	●				39x22x29
Focal XS Book	29,999	★★★★★			●		28x11x20
KEF Q300	33,000	★★★★★	●				36x21x30
Totem Dreamcatcher	33,250	Not Yet Rated					11x5x7
Totem Mite	44,750	Not Yet Rated					11x6x8
Monitor Audio Bronze BX2	32,000	★★★★★	●				35x19x26
Monitor Audio Silver RX1	43,900	★★★★★	●				31x19x24
Mordaunt-Short Aviano 1	18,000	★★★★★	●				28x18x27
Mordaunt-Short Aviano 2	23,000	★★★★★	●				32x21x30
Mordaunt-Short Mezzo 2	37,800	★★★★★	●				35x22x28
Q Acoustics 2050i	66,400	★★★★★		●			100x32x27
Quad 11L Classic	38,000	★★★★★	●				31x19x24
Tannoy Mercury V4i	48,200	★★★★★			●		97x20x28
Tannoy Revolution DC4	42,700	★★★★★	●				27x15x16
Tannoy Revolution DC6	70,300	★★★★★	●				36.5x20x25
Triangle Color	49,400	★★★★★	●				29x17x24
Wharfedale Diamond 10.1	18,500	★★★★★	●				30x19x28
Wharfedale Diamond 121	20,000	★★★★★	●				32x17x23
Audio Pro LV2e	86,625	★★★★★					98x14x24
Audiovector K11 Super	TBA	★★★★★			●		98x14x24
Audiovector K13 Standard	TBA	★★★★★			●		98x14x24

SPEAKERS continued

Product	₹	Verdict	Standmount Floorstander	Powered	Finishes	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
Dynaudio DM 2/6	59,000	★★★★★ Best stereo speakers at this price. Just the right amount of sparkle at the top end	●	2	29x17x24	
Dynaudio DM 2/7	66,000	★★★★★ A seriously competitive speaker at this price point	●	1	36x22x27	
ATC SCM 11	93,000	★★★★★ Best standmounter (Mid-Premium), Awards 2011	●	1	38x21x25	
B&W XT2	1,12,500	★★★★★ Classy, sophisticated but the sound lacks bite	●	2	31x15x20	
DALI Ikon 6 MK2	1,26,000	★★★★★ Cleaner, clearer and more insightful than its forerunner	●	3	100x19x36	
DALI Ikon 1 Mk2	60,000	★★★★★ Huge sound and good timing, these Dalis are heartily recommended	●	3	33x15x26	
DALI Mentor Menuet	84,000	★★★★★ These Menuets are something of a gem	●	2	25x15x23	
DALI Zensor 5	54,900	★★★★★ Compact and affordable floorstanders	●	2	84x16x27	
Energy Speakers CF70	78,400	Not yet rated	●	1	103x21x40	
Energy Speakers CF50	67,200	Not yet rated	●	1	98x18x37	
PSB Image T5	67,000	Not yet rated	●	2	94x21x32	
PSB Imagine T	1,39,000	Not yet rated	●	5	94x21x35	
Elac BS142	60,000	★★★★★ An organic sounding and entertaining pair of speakers that are fun to listen to	●	1	26x16x26	
Elipson Planet L	60,000	★★★★★ Charming in many ways, with good transparency	●	3	40x42x43	
Epos Epic 5	66,425	★★★★★ Hugely likeable floorstanders with broad sonic appeal	●	2	92x21x32	
KEF LS50	1,10,000	★★★★★ Best standmounter (Mid-Premium), Awards 2012. PRODUCT OF THE YEAR	●	1	30x20x28	
KEF R100	73,000	★★★★★ These are extremely talented stand-mounters	●	4	28x18x29	
Monitor Audio Bronze BX5	55,000	★★★★★ Easiest floorstanders to live with we've heard in a good while	●	4	85x17x25	
Monitor Audio Silver RX2	65,300	★★★★★ A lot of speaker and a lot of sound	●	6	37.5x23x30	
Monitor Audio Silver RX6	83,250	★★★★★ A sensational product from Monitor Audio – detailed, dynamic and very attractive, too	●	6	91x28x31	
Monitor Audio Silver RX8	1,09,000	★★★★★ If you're addicted to bass, these floorstanders will suit you	●	6	96x28x39	
Mordaunt-Short Aviano 6	41,500	★★★★★ A fine all-rounder, with power and bass in spades, and plenty more besides	●	3	95x21x30	
Mordaunt-Short Aviano 8	52,000	★★★★★ Great speakers for sure, but too controlled	●	3	95x21x32	
Mordaunt-Short Mezzo 6	75,600	★★★★★ Possibly the best in their class	●	2	100x22x28	
Mordaunt-Short Mezzo 8	1,09,000	★★★★★ Not the best all-rounders in the Mezzo range, but still very likeable	●	2	107x22x31	
PMC DB1i	1,20,000*	★★★★★ Superbly detailed and rewarding small speakers	●	4	29x16x23	
Quad 12L Classic	52,000	★★★★★ There's plenty to admire here	●	4	34x21x28	
Spendor S3/SR2	84,500	★★★★★ A little less than the sum of their parts	●	4	31x17x18	
Spendor SA1	1,35,800	★★★★★ Small, top-class standmounts	●	3	31x17x19	
Tannoy Precision 6.1	96,300	★★★★★ Rhythmic, detailed speakers but a lack of solidity leaves them sounding unbalanced	●	2	33x22x26	
Tannoy Precision 8D	60,000*	★★★★★ Solid active speakers that sound good	●	1	44x27x37	
Tannoy Revolution DC6T	1,03,700	★★★★★ Best floorstander (Mid-Premium), Awards 2011	●	1	95x26x29	
Tannoy Revolution DC6T SE	1,10,000*	★★★★★ Best floorstander (Mid-Premium), Awards 2012	●	1	100x31x28	
Tannoy Rev. Sig. DC4	40,000*	★★★★★ DC4s are still appealing across the board	●	2	27x17x18	
Tannoy Rev. Sig. DC6T	1,20,000*	★★★★★ Expensive but fully justify the price tag – expertly balanced performance	●	2	14x9x9	
Totem Rainmaker	59,500	★★★★★ Hugely musical, and a pleasure to listen to	●	4	36x17x23	
Triangle Color 123	77,000	★★★★★ A brilliant desktop speaker package	●	3	14x14x14	
Triangle Comete Anniv.	1,24,000	★★★★★ Ideal for injecting energy into your music	●	1	42x20x34	
Vienna Ac. Haydn Grand	85,920	★★★★★ Beautifully built, they pack a sweet sonic punch that's focused and purposeful	●	5	36x17x27	
Wharfedale Denton	52,000	★★★★★ Relaxed yet engaging sound has a lot of appeal	●	1	32x20x31	
Neat Iota	85,000	★★★★★ Attractive, but with a hefty sound too	●	5	13x20x17	
Elac FS249	2,40,000	Not yet rated	●		115x26x36	
JBL Project Everest DD66000	16,16,999	Not yet rated	●	2	44x38x18	
JBL Synthesis 4700	7,04,599	Not yet rated	●	1	43x20x15	
Neat Motive SX1	2,20,000	★★★★★ Charming, unique speakers - they lean backwards	●	4	93x16x20	
PSB Synchrony One	3,47,000	Not yet rated	●	3	109x23x33	
PSB Synchrony One B	1,49,000	Not yet rated	●	3	99x19x28	
ATC SCM 100A	10,99,000	★★★★★ Massively talented and proportioned	●	4	107x40x56	

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SPEAKERS continued

Product	₹	Verdict	Standmount Floorstander	Powered	Finishes	Dimensions (h/w/d, cm)
ATC SCM40	2,20,000	★★★★★ Among the best at this price level, but is your system good enough?	●		1	97x23x32
Harbeth P3ES-R	1,74,027	Not yet rated Not yet rated	●		4	30x19x20
Harbeth Compact 7ES-3	2,46,089	Not yet rated Not yet rated	●		4	52x27x32
Harbeth Super HL5	3,00,181	Not yet rated Not yet rated	●		4	64x32x30
B&W 800 Diamond	26,71,875	★★★★★ An exceptional performer, and a fine showcase for B&W's range of technology	●		3	118x45x65
B&W 805 Diamond	5,34,375	★★★★☆ Good, but easier to admire than really love	●		3	42x24x35
B&W PM1	2,79,000	★★★★★ Best standmounter (Premium), Awards 2011	●		1	33x19x30
Burmester B10	5,60,000	★★★★★ Well built, well refined and an engaging listen. We're in love	●		3	39x22x28
Neat Motive SX2	1,75,000	★★★★★ Cohesive, authoritative and downright exciting	●		3	39x21x37
DALI Fazon F5	2,49,000	★★★★★ Stylish deliverers of audiophile sound	●		3	92x28x32
DALI Mentor 6	2,55,000	★★★★☆ Dynamic floorstanders that are really fast and agile	●		1	40x8x15
Dynaudio Excite X32	1,94,000	★★★★★ These pack an eloquent, expansive sound	●		4	92x17x27
Dynaudio DM 3/7	1,48,000	★★★★☆ Plenty of positives in this mid-range floorstander	●		2	96x20x27
Dynaudio Focus 160	1,88,000	★★★★★ Just do the job and don't intrude on the entertainment	●		6	35x20x29
Dynaudio Excite X12	80,000	★★★★★ They get enough right to warrant the full five stars	●		4	29x17x26
Focal Diablo Utopia	8,99,999	★★★★★ When it comes to levels of insight, little at this price even comes close	●		Any	43x26x43
Jamo R907	4,98,000	★★★★★ The innovative R907s are stunningly capable speakers	●		1	119x44x19
KEF Reference 207/2	12,50,000	★★★★☆ Big, bold and stunningly built, they major on bass	●		4	123x40x69
Linn Akurate 242	6,74,860	★★★★☆ Very impressive speakers, and ideal in a Linn set-up	●		2	100x21x38
Monitor Audio PL100	2,13,000	★★★★☆ For those who want sonic delivery and insight	●		3	37x23x29
Mon. Audio Platinum PL300	4,78,000	★★★★★ Its been a long time coming, and it is well worth the wait	●		3	111x41x47
Mordaunt-Short Perf. 2	1,56,000	★★★★★ Not all-rounders, but exceptional in some areas	●		3	49x24x36
Mordaunt-Short Perf. 6	2,68,000	★★★★★ Among the most realistic-sounding speakers ever	●		2	121x24x37
Neat Petite SX	1,75,000	★★★★★ Small and perfectly formed standmounters	●		6	31x20x18
Neat Ultimatum XLS	6,20,000	★★★★★ An entertainer of the highest order if partnered with care	●		9	38x22x37
PMCD15-All	2,20,000*	★★★★★ They may not look it, but these PMCs sound like every penny's worth	●		1	29x16x28
PMCFact 3	4,20,000*	★★★★☆ Hugely capable but a touch overcontrolled	●		4	54x16x30
PMCFact 8	5,00,000*	★★★★★ These PMC floorstanders are quite simply magical - even at this price	●		4	103x15x38
PMCFB1i	2,50,000*	★★★★☆ Great all-rounders. They have real long-term appeal	●		4	100x20x30
PSB Imagine Mini	49,000	★★★★☆ Tiny speakers with a surprising amount of heft. Good for a small room	●		5	23x14x21
PMCPB1i	6,50,000*	★★★★★ Simply excellent speakers: big, bold and accomplished	●		1	108x20x40
PMCTwenty 22	2,20,000*	★★★★★ Best standmounter (Premium), Awards 2012	●		4	41x18x37
PMCTwenty 23	3,25,000*	★★★★★ Best floorstander (Premium), Awards 2012	●		4	92x15x33
ProAc Response D18	1,49,625	★★★★★ Best floorstander (Premium), Awards 2011	●		6	93x19x27
ProAc Studio 140 Mk2	1,16,275	★★★★★ An entertaining and dynamic performer	●		4	104x19x28
Quad ESL 2805	5,40,000	★★★★☆ Exceptional electrostatic speakers	●		1	104x70x39
Quad ESL 2812	on request	★★★★★ Still a terrific electrostatic speaker, in certain respects it remains unmatched	●		1	107x69x38
Spendor A6R	2,25,000	★★★★★ An outstanding pair of speakers that do very little wrong	●		5	88x19x28
Sonus F. Cremona Auditor M	4,83,750	★★★★★ One of the best standmounts money can buy	●		2	35x20x37
Spendor A5	1,63,000	★★★★★ The most accomplished speakers for this money	●		4	79x17x25
Spendor A6	2,06,000	★★★★★ Brilliant speakers for the money - a class-leading combination of insight and naturalness	●		4	88x19x28
Spendor A9	4,06,000	★★★★★ Best stereo speakers (Premium), Awards 2010. Stunningly capable	●		4	103x21x35
Spendor D7	3,18,000	★★★★★ The finest Spendors in years	●		6	95x20x32
Spendor SP100R2	6,28,500	★★★★★ Can still compete with the best at this price level	●		2	70x37x43
Spendor SP2/3R2	2,24,500	★★★★★ They're wonderfully natural with a seamless presentation	●		1	55x28x33
Tannoy Definition DCB	2,81,500	★★★★★ Capable of seriously controlled sound	●		3	47x27x26
Totem Mani-2 Signature	2,49,900	★★★★★ When it comes to outright enjoyment we can't think of any rival speakers we prefer for this money	●			44x21x31
Triangle Quartet	2,48,400	★★★★★ Hugely entertaining premium floorstanders	●		2	123x37x39
Wharfedale Jade-5	1,52,000	★★★★★ Floorstanders that pack immense power and poise	●		3	106x25x40

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Stereo amplifiers

Integrated These amplifiers combine a preamp and power section in one box
Power output A higher number usually means louder, depending on speakers
Digital inputs Some amplifiers now have a DAC built in, which could be useful

The shortlist



AWARD WINNER
NAD D 3020



PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
Arcam FMJ A19



AWARD WINNER
Naim Nait 5i

Product	₹	Verdict	Power (w)	DAC	Line level in	MM phono in	MC phono in	USB in	Tape loops	Preamp out	Speaker outs	Tone controls	Headphone out	Remote control	Finishes	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
Arcam FMJ A19	72,000	★★★★★ Picky about partners but wonderfully talented	50	6	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	9x43x28
Cambridge Audio Azur 351A	TBA	★★★★★ Worth considering if you prefer an energetic approach	45	5	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	9x43x34
Cambridge Audio Azur 651A	43,000	★★★★★ Meaty and powerful, but not the most refined	75	5	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	12x43x35
Cyrus 6a	1,24,000	★★★★★ Best stereo amp (Mid), Awards 2012	40	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	7x22x36
Denon PMA-710	29,700	★★★★★ The most enjoyable Denon amp we've heard in ages	50	5	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	12x43x21
Denon PMA-720AE	34,900	★★★★★ Entertaining and capable, but sonically stubborn	50	4	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	12x43x31
Marantz PM6005	41,900	★★★★★ A shot across the bow to Marantz's rivals. An excellent system	45	5	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	11x44x37
Marantz PM6004	39,900	★★★★★ Product of the Year - Stereo amplifiers, Awards 2011	45	5	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	11x44x37
Marantz PM8003	56,700	★★★★★ Built like a battleship and delivers most of the goods	70	5	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	12x44x36
NAD C328BEE	38,000	★★★★★ A really musical amplifier to grace any budget system	50	7	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	10x44x29
NAD C356BEE	57,000	★★★★★ A party animal of an amplifier	80	7	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	13x44x34
Naim Nait 5i	1,00,000	★★★★★ The Nait 5i gets all the basics right and more	50	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	7x44x31
Onkyo A-9030	25,000	★★★★★ Proof that Onkyo knows how to build good stereo gear	65	4	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	14x44x33
Onkyo A-9050	35,000	★★★★★ Lean presentation, but there's plenty to like	75	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	14x44x33
Roksan Kandy K2BT	1,30,000	★★★★★ Full of power and punch, but some heart and soul is missing	140	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	11x43x38
Roksan Kandy K2	82,600	★★★★★ Best stereo amp (Budget-Mid), Awards 2011	125	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	10x43x38
Rotel RA-04SE	45,000	★★★★★ A startling upgrade to an already strong performer	40	4	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	7x44x34
Rotel RA-06SE	91,125	★★★★★ A forceful, articulate listen. Could do with more detail	70	5	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	9x44x34
Rotel RA-10	55,125	★★★★★ Best Stereo Amp (Budget), Awards 2012. PRODUCT OF THE YEAR	40	4	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	27x43x34
Rotel RA-1520	1,05,750	★★★★★ It's got good looks, a good spec, and a great sound	60	5	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	9x43x269
Cyrus 8a	1,82,000	★★★★★ Everything we've come to expect and love about Cyrus	70	5	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	7x22x36
Cyrus 8 DAC	2,19,000	★★★★★ Meticulous and engaging amp and DAC combo	70	6	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	7x22x364
Denon PMA-2010AE	1,39,900	★★★★★ Listen to this amp in full flow and it's a monster	80	4	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	18x43x449
Naim Nait XS	1,75,000	★★★★★ Still a top class premium amplifier	60	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	7x43x30
Quad II Classic Integrated	3,80,000	★★★★★ A fine integrated amplifier with a hefty price tag	25	3	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	20x31x38
Roksan Caspian M2	1,80,000	★★★★★ Best stereo amplifier (Premium) Awards 2012	85	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	8x43x332
Unison Research Preludio	2,40,000	★★★★★ Rubs shoulders with the very best at this price	14	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	20x40x38
Unison Research S6	2,90,000	★★★★★ In the right system, the S6 is truly magical	33	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	21x35x49
Unison Research S9	6,45,000	★★★★★ We can't help but love this quirky valve amplifier	35	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	25x41x57
Unison Research Simply Italy	1,50,000	★★★★★ A well-engineered valve amplifier at a sensible price	12	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	26x19x35
NAD D3020	42,500	★★★★★ Best stereo amplifier (Budget) Awards 2013	30	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	19x6x22
Naim Nait 5si	1,25,000	★★★★★ Best stereo amplifier (Mid) Awards 2013	60	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	7x44x331
Cyrus DACXP Signature	TBA	★★★★★ With the signature update, the DACXP remains a fine product	70	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	7x22x36

Preamps

Preamps are also known as control units. On a most basic level, they perform two functions: source selection and volume control. Most powered preamps also amplify the signal slightly in order to make matching to a power amplifier easier. Some include phono stages.

Product	₹	Verdict	Line level in	MM phono in	MC phono in	Tape loops	Preamp out	Balanced out	Headphone out	Tone controls	Remote control	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
ATC CA-2	1,43,000	★★★★★	A matchless preamp when paired with the P1 power amp	5	0	0	1	●	●	●	●	9x44x32
Cyrus DACXP+	3,28,000*	★★★★★	Massive ability in a small box	2	0	0	1	●	●	●	●	7x22x36
Linn Akurate Kontrol	4,18,600	★★★★★	Part of the Linn Akurate system - and truly awesome	4	1	1	1	●	●	●	●	9x38x38
NAD C165BEE	75,000	★★★★★	A brute of a preamp	4	1	1	2	●	●	●	●	8x44x29
Naim NAC 152 XS	1,25,000	★★★★★	It's good, but could do better with dynamics	5	0	0	0	●	●	●	●	7x43x30
Quad Elite Pre	79,000	★★★★★	Doesn't blow us away, but it's still worth consideration	6	1	1	1	●	●	●	●	7x32x31
Rotel RC-1580	1,59,750	★★★★★	A likeable, fully featured performer that delivers much for the money	5	1	1	2	●	●	●	●	10x43x34
Audio Research LS27	7,31,250*	★★★★★	A fine preamp but struggles to shine in comparison to the Reference 75	6	0	0	1	●	●	●	●	13x48x34
Burmester 808 MK5	25,00,000*	★★★★★	A beautifully constructed, highly versatile preamp for serious devotees	Opt	Opt	Opt	Opt	●	●	●	●	95x48x33
Chord Electronics CPA 8000	20,50,000	★★★★★	A magnificent preamp, but not quite the masterpiece its price demands	0	0	2	●	●	●	●	●	31x42x36
Naim NAC252	6,50,000	★★★★★	Makes a magical combination with the NAP250 power amp	6	0	0	0	●	●	●	●	9x43x31

Power amps

These are effectively the powerhouse of the system. They deliver the high currents necessary to make a loudspeaker work. They can be configured as a stereo unit, or monoblocs, where the circuitry for each channel is housed separately. Don't judge a power amp by its output level.

Product	₹	Verdict	Type	Power (w)	Phono in	XLR in	Dimensions (hwd, cm)	Weight (kg)
ATC P1	2,16,000	★★★★★	A matchless power amp when paired with the CA-2 preamp	Stereo 150	1	1	14x44x35	26
Cyrus Mono X300	3,28,000*	★★★★★	Exceptionally fluid and agile. Recommended	Stereo 235	1	1	7x22x36	73
Linn Akurate 2200	3,33,795	★★★★★	A fine product with a distinctive sonic signature	Stereo 111	1	1	9x38x38	6.5
NAD C275BEE	99,000	★★★★★	A great power amp, best matched with the C165BEE preamp	Stereo 150	1	0	13x44x35	15
Naim NAP 155 XS	1,50,000	★★★★★	It's a good performer, but not the last word in dynamics	Stereo 60	0	0	7x43x30	7.5
Naim NAP 250	3,75,000	★★★★★	Paired with the NAC252 preamp it's magical	Stereo 80	0	0	9x43x32	165
Quad QSP	95,000	★★★★★	Needs to be auditioned - a confident listen	Stereo 140	2	0	15x43x27	14
Rotel RB-1582	1,80,000	★★★★★	Great when paired with the RC-1580 preamp	Stereo 200	1	0	14x43x41	33
Audio Research Reference 75	9,00,000*	★★★★★	A fabulous power amp, match it with care and you'll have sonic magic	Stereo 75	0	1	22x48x50	21
Burmester 911 Mk3	35,00,000*	★★★★★	Awesome price, awesome bit of kit	Stereo 535	0	1	22x48x48	31
Chord SPM 14000 MkII	19,75,000	★★★★★	An awe-inspiring monobloc, yet not quite as sonically rounded as we'd like	Mono 700	1	1	31x48x69	75

Instant expert... hi-fi separates

1. Why matching pairs are a winning combination

We advocate separates over all-in-one systems. Sound-wise, separates tend to perform better, but when buying we still suggest you demo the same maker's matching amp and CD player. The kit usually shares the same design team and will sonically complement each other: if you like the sound of the amp, you'll probably enjoy the CD player, too.

3. Position before you listen - and don't stack it, rack it

You've bought your shiny new system. But you're not going to stack your new amp, CD spinner and turntable on that rickety table, are you? And don't even think of putting the kit on the floor. To sound it's best, hi-fi kit needs a dust-free, level and secure base. Invest pounds in a dedicated rack, and the sonic (and visual) rewards justify the outlay.

2. Listen to your favourite music, not the dealer's

Hi-fi dealers should have a decent CD and vinyl collection for demo purposes, but we suggest you take your own. Take tunes you know so you can concentrate on how the kit is performing, rather than on the new music. And don't just take your 'good'-sounding CDs. If you listen to lots of compressed pop, take it and hear exactly how it sounds.

4. Give your amplifier room to breathe

Well done for buying that nice equipment rack, but before you undo all your good work, make sure you give your stereo amplifier room to breathe. These machines get hot, and the chassis vents shouldn't be covered up. The top shelf of your rack is ideal, but if you also own a top-loading CD player and/or turntable you'll need clearance for all.

5. Keep on running, keep on improving

Hi-fi units are also (sort of) like Spanish footballers. No, not constantly feigning a blown fuse, but happiest playing in the heat. New kit can take weeks to reach optimum levels. Once run-in - unless you have an environmental conscience - we suggest you leave your kit on. Otherwise, give it around half-an-hour to warm up before you hit play.

iPod docks

Docks with power _____ These are ready-made systems for your iPod; usually include speakers
Docks without power _____ These integrate an iPod into an existing system as a line level source

The shortlist



Product	₹	Verdict	AirPlay	Bluetooth	Docktype	Aux	Power(w)	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
Arcam rCube	42,300*	★★★★★			iOS	●	90	20x20x20
Bose SoundDock II	14,513	★★★★★			iOS	●	n/a	17x30x17
Epoz Aktimate Micro	27,500	★★★★★			iOS	●	40	24x15x20
Gear4 AirZone Series 1	19,900	★★★★☆		●	iOS	●	n/a	18x33x19
GenevaSound Model S	24,990	★★★★★			iOS	●	30	14x24x19
JBL OnBeat Venue LT	15,990	★★★★★		●	iOS	●	30	13x42x14
Logitech S715i	9995	★★★★★			iOS	●	70	6x39x13
Logitech UE Air Speaker	TBA	★★★★★		●	iOS	●	n/a	17x53x15
Monitor Audio i-deck 100	20,000	★★★★★			iOS	●	90	25x32x21
Monitor Audio i-deck 200	TBA	★★★★★			iOS	●	140	25x55x21
Revo K2	30,000*	★★★★☆			iOS	●	40	33x11x11
B&O BeoSound 8	92,000	★★★★☆			iOS	●	n/a	24x66x16
Bose SoundDock 10	48,263	★★★★☆		●	iOS	●	n/a	22x43x24
B&W Zeppelin Air	48,000	★★★★★		●	iOS	●	150	17x54x21
Epoz Aktimate Maxi	56,450	★★★★★			iOS	●	60	32x21x265
Geneva Lab Model L	1,10,000	★★★★★			iOS	●	100	29x45x37
Geneva Lab Model M	54,990	★★★★☆			iOS	●	50	20x37x25
Geneva Lab Model XL	2,00,000	★★★★☆			iOS	●	600	79x55x37
JBL OnBeat Xtreme	24,990	★★★★★		●	iOS	●	120	23x44x24
Loewe AirSpeaker	TBA	★★★★★		●	iOS	●	4x20	13x24x244
Marantz Consolette	75000*	★★★★☆		●	iOS	●	150	26x54x21

Wireless speakers

Bluetooth _____ Universal wireless system that's incorporated into most sources
AirPlay _____ Apple's proprietary wireless system; works over your home network

Product	₹	Verdict	AirPlay	Bluetooth	Aux	Charging	Battery	Dimensions (hwd, cm)
B&O Beolit 12	66,600	★★★★☆	●	●	●	●	●	19x23x13
B&WA5	38,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	18x30x20
B&WA7	62,750	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	22x36x16
Bose SoundLink Air	23,513	★★★★☆	●	●	●	●	●	17x31x10
Bose Soundlink W'less Mobile	20,138	★★★★☆	●	●	●	●	●	13x24x5
Cambridge Audio Minx Air 100	36,100	★★★★☆	●	●	●	●	●	18x35x12
Cambridge Audio Minx Go	12,500	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	23x24x6
JBL Charge	9990	★★★★☆	●	●	●	●	●	18x7x7
Bose SoundLink Mini	16,200	★★★★☆	●	●	●	●	●	5x18x6

Headphones

Ear tips Most in-ears come with these. Experiment with sizes to get the best fit.
In-line remote Mostly for Apple devices, but Android-friendly units are growing. Handy.

The shortlist



AWARD WINNER
SoundMAGIC E10



PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
AKG K451



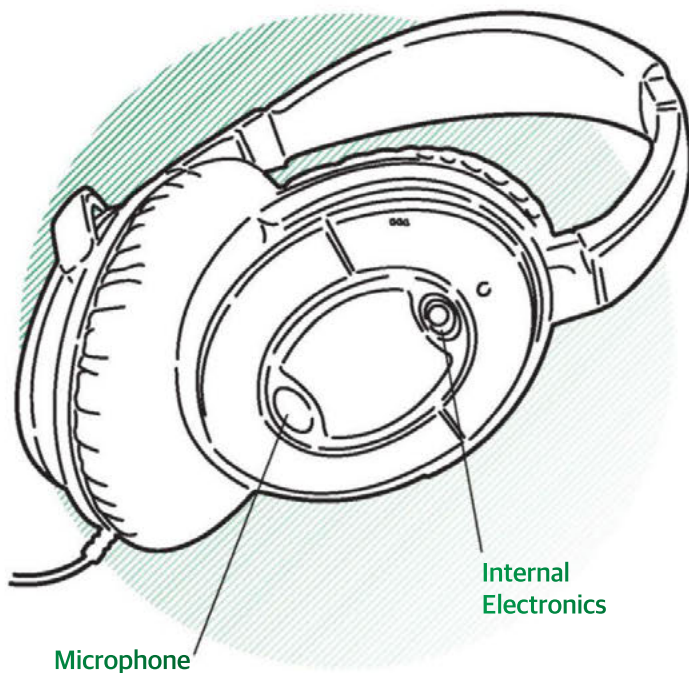
AWARD WINNER
Sennheiser Momentum

Product	₹	Verdict	In-ear	On-ear	Type	Noise cancelling	Wireless	Weight (g)
Audio Technica ATH-CK550	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			8
Audio Technica ATH-CK555i	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			6
Audio Technica ATH-T400	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			260
Beyerdynamic DTX101IE	6795	★★★★★ Best in-ears (Budget), Awards 2012	●		Closed			11
Nokia BH-504	6500	★★★★★	●		Closed	●		108
Panasonic RP-HJE170	799	★★★★★	●		Closed			3
Panasonic RP-HTX7	3999	★★★★★ Best portable on-ears (Budget), Awards 2012	●		Closed			153
Sennheiser CX 300-II	3490	★★★★★	●		Closed			4
Sennheiser CX281	2790	★★★★★	●		Closed			16
Sennheiser HD 202	2290	★★★★★	●		Closed			130
Sennheiser MM 70i	7490	★★★★★	●		Closed	●		12
Sennheiser MM50	4990	★★★★★	●		Closed			7
Sennheiser PX100-II	3990	★★★★★	●		Open			80
Skullcandy Full Metal Jacket	3559	★★★★★	●		Closed			13
Skullcandy Icon 3	1949	★★★★★	●		Closed			45
SoundMagic E10	2500*	★★★★★ Best in-ears (Budget), Awards 2012	●		Closed			11
SoundMagic PL30	1486	★★★★★	●		Closed			10
SoundMagic PL50	2730	★★★★★	●		Closed			8
Sony MDR-570LP	2990	★★★★★	●		Closed			110
B&W P7	33,990	★★★★★ Best portable on-ears, Awards 2013	●		Closed			290
Audio Technica ATH-ANC1	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed	●		100
Audio Technica ATH-ES55	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			120
Audio Technica ATH-ES7	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			160
Audio Technica ATH-ES88	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			130
Audio Technica ATH-EW9	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			33
Audio Technica ATH-M50	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			284
Audio Technica ATH-W1000	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			350
Audio Technica ATH-W1000X	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			350
Audio Technica ATH-W555i	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			165
AKG K3003i	1,00,000*	★★★★★	●		Closed			10
AKG K370	8000	★★★★★	●		Closed			4
AKG K451	5000	★★★★★ Best portable on-ears, Awards 2012. PRODUCT OF THE YEAR	●		Closed			120
AKG Q701	19,990	★★★★★	●		Open			236
AKG Q460	TBA	★★★★★	●		Closed			120
Beyerdynamic DT880	22,399	★★★★★	●		Open	●		340
Beyerdynamic DTX80	4999	★★★★★	●		Closed			12

HEADPHONES continued

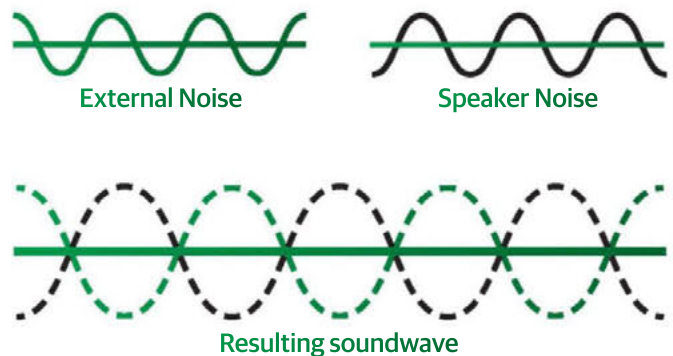
Product	₹	Verdict	In-ear	On-ear	Type	Noise cancelling	Wireless	Weight(g)
Beyerdynamic MMX 101IE	4750	★★★★★ Best in-ears (Mid), Awards 2012	●		Closed	●		11
Beyerdynamic T1	1,00,000*	★★★★★ Best home on-ear headphones (Premium), Awards 2010.		●	Closed			350
Beyerdynamic T50P	11,800	★★★★★ Best portable on-ears (Premium), Awards 2012	●		Closed			174
Bose Around-ear 2	8663	★★★★★ Packed with clever technology and work well		●	Closed			142
Bose MIE2i	7650	★★★★★ A perfect headphone meets microphone solution		●	Closed			19
Bose Mobile in-ear headset 2	8213	★★★★★ Unobtrusive in place, but lacking in excitement		●	Closed			18
Bose QuietComfort 15	17,550	★★★★★ Best noise-cancelling headphones, Awards 2012	●		Closed	●		227
B&W P3	16,500	★★★★★ Stylish and sonically talented on-ear headphones		●	Closed			130
B&W P5	23,500	★★★★★ Aesthetically beautiful and aurally accomplished too		●	Closed			195
Focal Spirit One	19,999	★★★★★ Refined enough, but not the most exciting		●	Closed			225
Grado SR80i	12,000*	★★★★★ Best home on-ear headphones (Budget-Mid), Awards 2012.	●		Open			200
Harman/Kardon CL	9990	★★★★★ An impressive headphone debut for Harman/Kardon		●	Closed			195
Klipsch Image One	6600	★★★★★ Perfect for those who enjoy a lot of bass		●	Closed			138
Klipsch Image X5	9750	★★★★★ Still a great buy, with a very balanced sound		●	Closed			11
Klipsch Image X10i	12,000	★★★★★ Best in-ears (Premium), Awards 2011		●	Closed			320
Klipsch S4i	4490	★★★★★ These Klipschs are great all-rounders, with an exciting edge		●	Closed			12
Logitech UE 9000	31,995	★★★★★ Could be more refined, but make up for this with bundles of energy			Closed	●	●	378
Martin Logan Mikros 70	TBA	★★★★★ If you like your music to be presented with a matter-of-fact approach, these are just the job		●	Closed			13
Monster Beats by Dre iBeats	15,000	★★★★★ For smooth, bassy sounds they're ace		●	Closed			n/a
Monster Beats Pro by Dre	38,000	★★★★★ Brilliant at what they do well		●	Closed			299
Oppo PM-1	79,999	★★★★★ Oppo's first pair of headphones are a resounding success		●	Open			395
Philips Fidelio M1	16,000*	★★★★★ Best portable on-ears (Mid-Premium), Awards 2012	●		Closed	●		166
PSB M4U2	28,000	★★★★★ PSB's first headphones are truly brilliant. Hear them now!		●	Closed			362

How Does Noise Cancelling Work?



This kind of design is usually battery-powered and will reduce background noise. They contain microphones that pick up external noise, and then invert its waveform electronically before outputting it to your ears. This inverse wave works against the original, and greatly reduces the amount you hear.

It works best on continuous low-frequency sounds such as plane engines and Brian Blessed humming. It's not unusual for such designs to tweak tonal balance to improve things, although some add a degree of hiss in the process.



Try these

Bose QuietComfort 15 ★★★★★ ₹19,013
"The noise-cancelling is so effective it can feel like silence is being pushed into your head. Mid-tune, it's almost as if the outside world disappears completely."

Logitech UE9000 ★★★★★ ₹35,000
"They could do better in terms of refinement - but if it's energy and entertainment you're after (as well as Bluetooth), they're pretty much spot-on."

PSB M4U2 ★★★★★ ₹28,000
"If you want to turn your office, flight or train journey into a private listening experience of exceptional quality, these are the headphones to get."

HEADPHONES continued

Product	₹	Verdict	In-ear Or-ear	Type	Noise cancelling Wireless	Weight(g)
Sennheiser HD 380 Pro	9990	★★★★★ Still seriously good headphones, but rivals have caught up	●	Closed		220
Sennheiser HD25-1 II Adidas	3990	★★★★★ Stylishly excellent all-rounders	●	Closed		140
Sennheiser HD 800	84,990	★★★★★ They offer much, but close rivals pip them to the post	●	Open		350
Sennheiser IE 8i	24,990	★★★★★ Enjoyable enough, but need a better tonal balance	●	Closed		18
Sennheiser IE80	27,990	★★★★★ Expensive, but a truly quality option	●	Closed		5
Sennheiser MM 400-X	17,990	★★★★★ Best wireless headphones, Awards 2012	●	Closed	●	105
Sennheiser Momentum	24,990	★★★★★ Smooth, punchy, refined all-rounders	●	Closed		190
Sennheiser PXC 450	27,990	★★★★★ Excellent fit and great performance, but now beaten by newer rivals	●	Closed		240
Sennheiser RS 160	13,490	★★★★★ An exciting, affordable option but tiring over longer periods	●	Closed	●	226
Sennheiser RS 180	21,990	★★★★★ These comfortable, wireless headphones justify their premium price	●	Open	●	204
Sennheiser RS 220	29,990	★★★★★ A very neat wireless solution with great sound quality	●	Open	●	329
Sennheiser X 320	7990	★★★★★ The best Xbox gaming headphones we've heard so far	●	Closed		280
Shure SE115	8200	★★★★★ These Shures aren't only a colourful upgrade but a sound investment	●	Closed	●	30
Shure SE310	21,000	★★★★★ Detail and clarity is first class	●	Closed		7
Shure SE420	29,000	★★★★★ Once in your ears they offer a dynamic sound	●	Closed	●	29
Shure SE535	31,000	★★★★★ Still good but no longer the best	●	Closed	●	272
Shure SRH1840	49,778	★★★★★ Not cheap, but worth every rupee	●	Open		268
Sony MDR-1R	TBA	★★★★★ Detailed and airy, but need more kick	●	Closed		240
Sony MDR-Z1000P5	19,990	★★★★★ Impressive sounding cans - with good flexibility	●	Closed		270
Sony XBA-3iP	7990	★★★★★ Best in-ears (Premium), Awards 2012	●	Closed	●	7
SoundMagic HP100	15,000*	★★★★★ Sparkling detail, spacious character	●	Closed		228

Headphones Jargon Buster

OVER-EAR



The most popular hi-fi headphone design (also called circumaural), these cup your ears completely, usually with semi-air-tight earcups. You'll notice cans of this type used as monitors in recording studios: depending on the type of design they use they can be extremely effective at cutting out the outside world.

ON-EAR



Supra-aural or on-ear designs tend to be smaller and lighter than circumaural models. They sit on your ear rather than over it, usually pressing on to it as well. Some listeners find them lighter and easier to wear for extended listening than over-ear models, but they do tend to allow in more sounds from outside.

IN-EAR



Gone are the days when everyone else needs to hear your music. In-ear buds are a great way to isolate yourself in sound. Nowadays, in-ears usually come with rubber tips, which provide a good seal and help the music travel only down your ear canals. A better fit means better sound, so experiment with tip sizes.

Try these

AKG K550 ★★★★★

"The K550s are sweetly communicative, handle tempos in a natural, unforced manner and punch into and out of low-frequency information with precision."

Philips Fidelio M1 ★★★★★

"A rounded, refined presentation. Vocals have room to breathe, while high-frequency sounds are natural and don't harden up when you crank the volume."

Sony XBA-2iP ★★★★★

"Agility and precision is up there with the very best at this price, and the spacious delivery allows for plenty of detail all the way up the frequency range."

Stereo systems

This category includes a wide range of products including all-in-one packages where the speakers are part of the system, through to micro systems where the electronics are housed separately from the speakers. A streaming option is available on many newer systems.

The shortlist



PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Denon D-M39DAB

Awards 2012: Best Micro System



Ruark R4i

Awards 2012: Best All-In-One Music System



Onkyo CR-N755

Awards 2012: Best Networked Micro System

Product	₹	Verdict	CD	Streaming	Internet Radio	DAB	FM	Analog inputs	Digital inputs	Headphone out
Denon CEOL Piccolo	39,900	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Denon D-M39	44,900	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Marantz M-CR502	31,758	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Onkyo CR-N755	32,000*	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Marantz M-CR610	54,900	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Arcam Solo Mini	87,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Arcam Solo Neo	1,38,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Denon CEOL (RCD-N7)	39,900	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Linn Majik DSM	3,85,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Marantz M-CR603	39,900	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Naim Uniti 2	3,25,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Naim UnitiQute 2	1,25,000	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ruark Audio R4i	60,000*	★★★★★	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Media streamers

These access the music or video files you have stored on your network. Check for file compatibility and decent control apps that improve usability.

Product	₹	Verdict	HDMI out	Optical out	Co-axial out	HDMI in	Optical in	Co-axial in	USB in	Wireless	Resolution (Bit/KHz)	Video
Apple TV	8900	★★★★★	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	16/48	●
Asus O!Play HD2	8595	★★★★★	1	1	1	0	0	0	3		20/48	●
Cambridge Audio NP30	38,400	★★★★★	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	●	24/96	
Denon DNP-720AE	29,990	★★★★★	1	0	0	0	0	1		●	24/192	
Camb. Audio Stream Magic 6	69,700	★★★★★	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	●	24/96	
Cyrus Lyric 09	4,40,000	★★★★★	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	●	24/192	
Pioneer N50	NA	★★★★★	0	1	0	0	1	0	1		24/192	
Rotel RT-09	NA	★★★★★	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	●	24/192	
Cambridge Audio MinxXi	55,500	★★★★★	0	0	0	1	1	1	1		24/96	
Cyrus Stream X2	1,45,000	★★★★★	0	0	1	0	2	3	1	●	24/192	
Cyrus Streamline2	1,75,000	★★★★★	0	0	1	0	2	3	1	●	24/192	
Cyrus Stream XP2-QX	3,08,000	★★★★★	0	0	1	0	2	3	1	●	24/192	
Linn Kiko	3,20,000	★★★★★	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	●	24/192	
Naim NDx	3,50,000	★★★★★	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	●	24/192	
Naim Uniti 2	3,25,000	★★★★★	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	●	24/192	
Naim UnitiLite	2,00,000	★★★★★	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	●	24/192	

Tablets

- Android Offers great flexibility and innovation
- Apple iOS Fantastic ease of use; massive choice of quality apps
- Windows New kid on the block. Watch this space

The shortlist



Apple iPad Air



Apple iPad Mini Retina



PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
Google Nexus 7

Product	₹	Verdict	OS	3G	Screen size (in)	Resolution	Storage (GB)	Dimensions (hwd, mm)
Amazon Kindle Fire HD 16GB	14,590	★★★★★ A solid option for Amazon users, but no Apple-beater	Android	●	7	1280x800	16/32	241x186x9
Apple iPad 2 16GB Wi-Fi	24,500	★★★★★ Best tablet, Awards 2011	iOS	●	9.7	1024x768	16/32	241x186x9
Apple iPad Mini 64GB Wi-Fi	33,900	★★★★★ It's pricey, but it feels and performs as it should	iOS	●	7.9	1024x768	16/32/64	200x135x7
Apple iPad 4 32GB Wi-Fi	37,900	★★★★★ iPad tweaked and improved, again	iOS	●	9.7	2048x1536	16/32/64	240x190x9
Asus Eee Pad Transformer	49,999	★★★★★ A competitive tablet with a keyboard dock	Android	●	10.1	1280x800	16/32	271x177x13
Asus Eee Pad Trans Prime	42,999	★★★★★ A slim and smart tablet that we love	Android	●	10.1	1280x800	16/32	181x263x8
Google Nexus 7	9999	★★★★★ Best tablet (Budget), Awards 2012. PRODUCT OF THE YEAR	Android	●	7	1280x800	16/32	99x120x11
Google Nexus 10	34,413	★★★★★ Great performance and price: a real iPad-botherer	Android	●	10	2560x1060	16/32	264x178x9
Amazon Kindle Fire HDX 7	25,000*	★★★★★ An excellent tablet but Android fans might find it a little restrictive	Android	●	7	1920x1200	16/32/64	186x128x9
Apple iPad Mini/Retina display	28,900	★★★★★ An absolutely superb tablet that shows its rivals how it's done	iOS 7	●	7.9	2048x1536	16/32/64	200x135x7
Apple iPad 4 16GB Wi-Fi	31,900*	★★★★★ Best tablet over 8in, Awards 2013	iOS	●	9.7	2048x1536	16/32/64	240x190x9
Apple iPad Air	35,900	★★★★★ Refined and improved, the iPad Air is a stunning piece of technology	iOS 7	●	9.7	2048x1536	16/32/64	240x170x8
Google Nexus 7 (2013)	20,999	★★★★★ Best tablet up to 8in, Awards 2013. PRODUCT OF THE YEAR	Android	●	7	1920x1200	16/32	200x114x9
Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1	49,470	★★★★★ A great screen that's let down by a cluttered interface	Android	●	10.1	2500x1600	16/32/64	171x243x8
Sony Xperia Tablet Z	46,990	★★★★★ Sony fans will love it, but there are tablets out there for less money	Android	●	10.1	1920x1200	16/32	172x266x6.9

Things to consider: tablets



Camera

Most tablet cameras are decent, but they won't be able to beat a dedicated camera in terms of picture quality. Think long and hard if you're looking to capture footage as quality can be inconsistent.

Apps

iOS is the king of apps, but Android is hard on its heels and Windows is catching up. If apps are your thing then your choice may come down to which ones are available on each platform, rather than quantity.

Keypad

Want to increase productivity? On-screen keypads are a mixed bag, but some have optional (and expensive) physical keyboards. Keep that in mind if you're looking to do some work on the go.

Ecosystem

iOS, Android and Windows 8. Each one is better (or worse) than the other, in some way. Apple has the apps, while Android is customisable and Windows offers a lot in terms of functionality.

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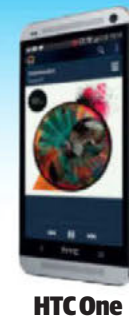
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Smartphones

- Android Offers great flexibility and innovation
- Apple iOS Fantastic ease of use; massive choice of quality apps
- Windows New kid on the block. Watch this space

The shortlist



Product	Verdict	OS	4G	Screen size (in)	Resolution	Storage (GB)	Dimensions (h/w/d, mm)
Google Nexus 5	★★★★★ A powerhouse of a smartphone in every respect	Android	●	5	1920x1080	16/32	138x69x9
Apple iPhone 5	★★★★★ Faster, lighter and better: iPhone gets its annual facelift	iOS	●	4.0	1136x640	16/32/64	124x59x8
Google Nexus 4	★★★★★ A top performer and a brilliant realisation of Android power	Android	●	4.7	1280x768	8/16	134x69x9
HTC One Max	★★★★★ A fine performer but could make better use of its big screen	Android	●	5.9	1920x1080	32	146x71x9
HTC One X+	★★★★★ Well worth considering: good for music and a joy to use	Android	●	4.7	1280x720	32/64	
LG G-Flex	★★★★★ All the pros of the G2 and more, but with a low-res screen	Android	●	6	1280x720	32	161x82x8
Nokia Lumia 920	★★★★★ A promising start for Nokia's flagship	Windows	●	4.5	1280x768	32	130x71x11
Nokia Lumia 1520	★★★★★ Apps still disappoint, but this is the best Windows Phone yet	Windows	●	6	1920x1080	32	163x85x9
Oppo N1	★★★★★ Quirky and flexible, this is a great effort from a promising brand	Android	●	5.9	1920x1080	16	171x83x9
Samsung Galaxy Note III	★★★★★ The original phablet. Updated and still among the best	Android	●	5.7	1920x1080	16/32	151x80x8
LG G2	★★★★★ Unbridled power and thoughtful design. A fantastic phone	Android	●	5.2	1920x1080	16/32	139x71x9
Samsung Galaxy S III	★★★★★ Best smartphone, Awards 2012	Android	●	4.8	1280x720	16/32	137x71x9
HTC One M8	★★★★★ Improves considerably on its predecessor. Does very little wrong	Android	●	5	1920x1080	32	146x71x9
Sony Xperia Z1	★★★★★ Sony fans will love it. A speedy, sleek and impressive smartphone	Android	●	5	1920x1080	16	144x74x9
HTC One	★★★★★ A true marvel in terms of smartphone tech	Android	●	4.7	1920x1080	16	
Apple iPhone 5S	★★★★★ Best smartphone, Awards 2013. PRODUCT OF THE YEAR	iOS	●	4.0	1136x640	16/32/64	124x59x8
Google Nexus 5	★★★★★ A powerhouse of a phone in every respect	Android	●	4.95	1920x1080	16/32	138x69x9
Nokia Lumia 925	★★★★★ The best Windows Phone yet	Windows	●	4.5	1280x768	16/32	129x71x9
Samsung Galaxy S4	★★★★★ Better than its predecessor but not as good as its rivals	Android	●	5.0	1920x1080	16/32/64	137x70x8

Consider these

Wired cans sound better, but wireless is catching up. Here are the best on offer



Logitech UE 9000

Solid build and effective noise-cancelling features make the UE 9000 a fine proposition. The wireless connection is a tad unrefined but the energy produced is excellent. Good for six hours' use.



Parrot Zik

Stylish and advanced, the Zik features the 2.1A2DP variant of Bluetooth which doesn't quite match aptX. Still, with NFC on board and a detailed sound to boot, the Zik should be on your list.



Philips Fidelio M1BT

Our 2013 Award-winners boast aptX compatibility and easy-to-use controls. Its in the sound where they really shine, showing off an excellent turn of pace with bags of detail. Good for 10 hours' use.

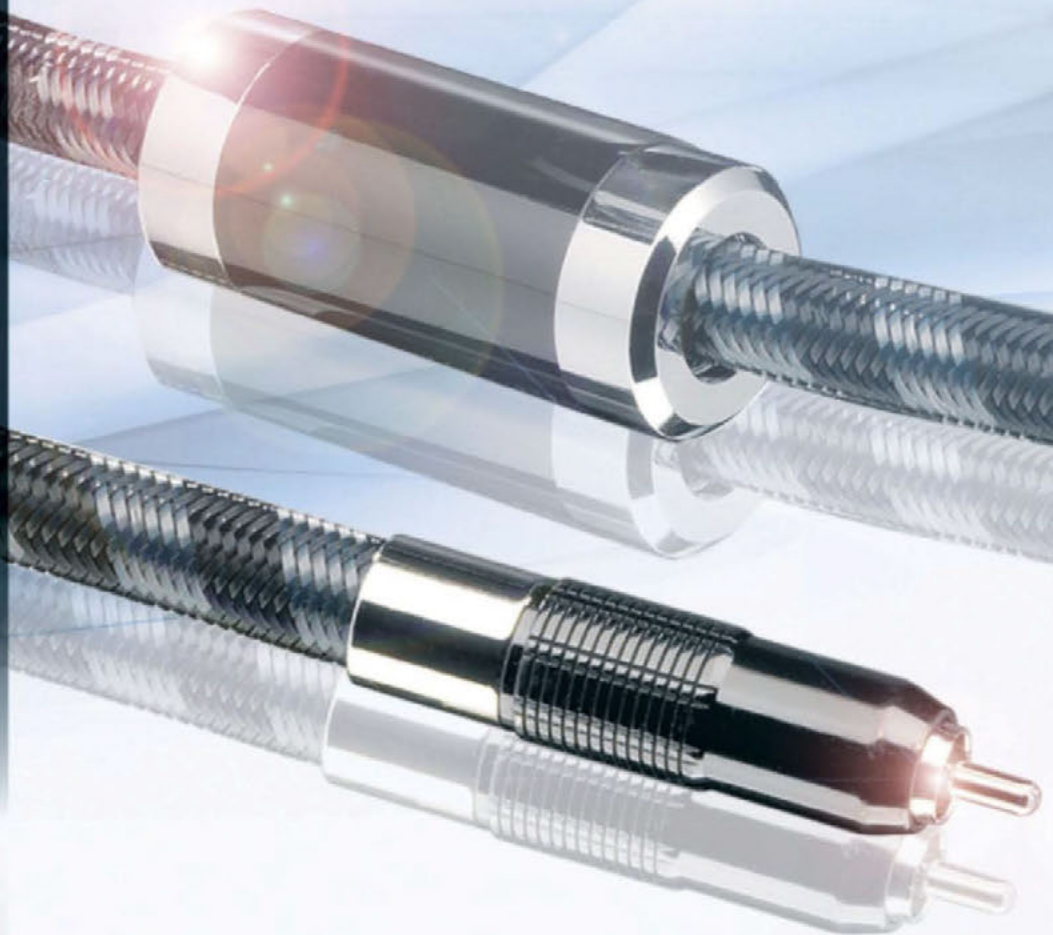


Sennheiser MM 400-X

A compact, portable design and low(ish) price make these cans quite enticing. Vocals have plenty of detail and directness, and with aptX along for the ride too, these are some capable headphones.

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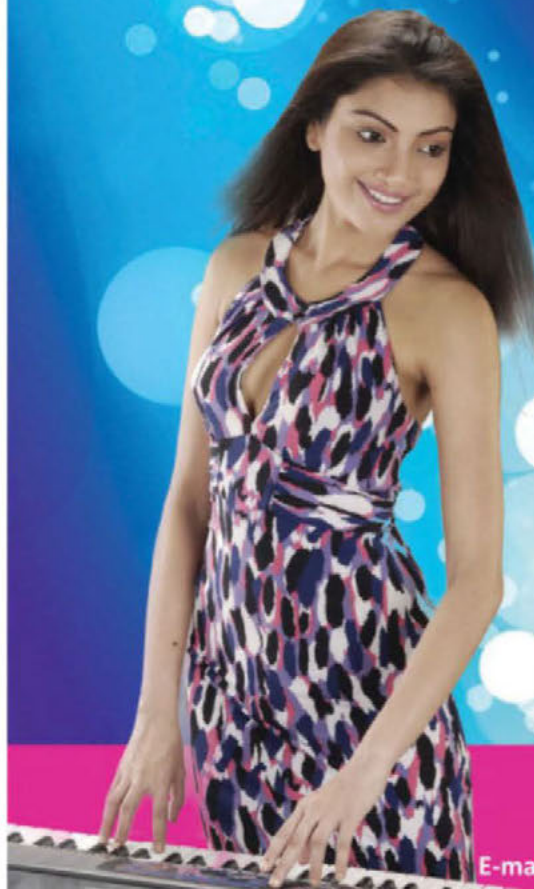
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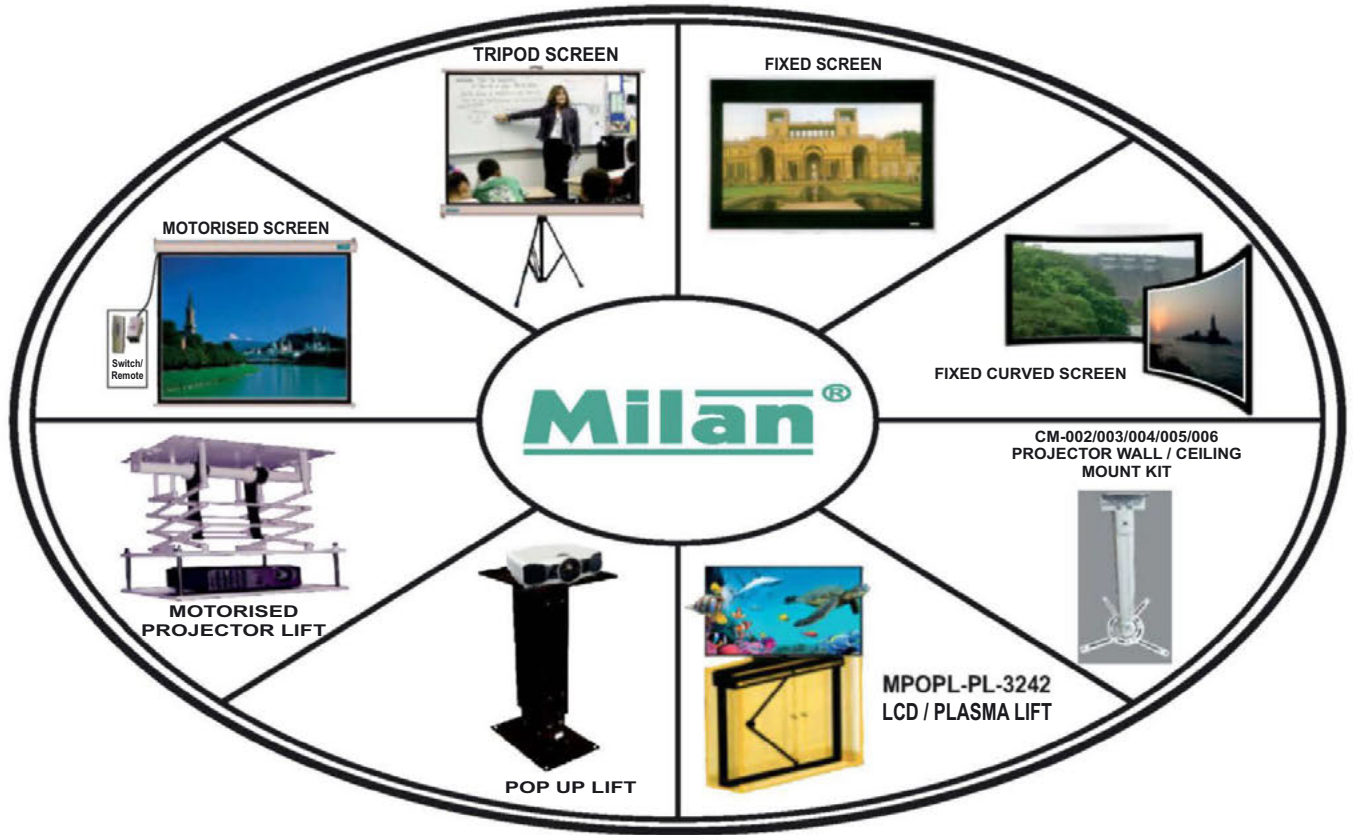
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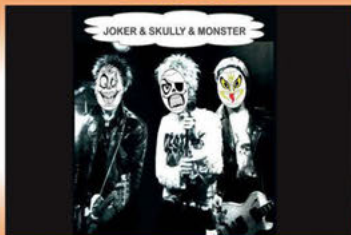
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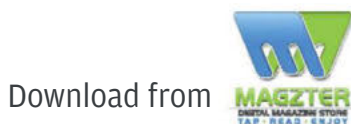


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ScreenResearch's new UHD spec projection screen wows us!



Choosing the right projection screen for your new AV den is never an easy task, thanks to the plethora of brands available, each offering something better when it comes to features. Without dwelling too deep, we can all agree that a projection screen of choice depends on your personal requirements. These include room size, viewing angle, audio setup and so on. You will need to pick a projection screen carefully too and if you have a bit of control on how much light enters your room, half of that problem is solved. If you intend to place the front L+R speakers behind the projection screen, you will have to look at an acoustically transparent screen to let the sonics pass unobstructed. That brings us to the size of the projection screen and anywhere between 100 - 130in should be a good range. Now that all of that is out of the way, say hello to the ClearPix 4K White 1.0 projection screen by Screen Research. It is designed specifically for new

UltraHD resolutions (up to 4K and beyond), and features the very best tech to offer crisp imagery from your HD source. Screen Research, founded in 2001, is a French projector screen company that is best known for its acoustically transparent screens.

Their screens have received THX and ISF certifications, and are available in motorized, fixed, and curved forms. ClearPix 4K builds on its earlier range and offers true acoustic transparency that is even better than that of the award-winning and patented ClearPix 2 screen material. Its non-geometric structure allows sound to pass through with no attenuation and therefore no modification of the loudspeaker response curve is necessary. A perfectly flat-spectral color response is maintained even off-axis throughout the whole recommended viewing angle. All ClearPix screens feature a StopLight black backing layer as standard. This stops projected light from passing through the

screen surface and causing distracting reflections from any elements placed behind the screen. If you plan to invest on a high-end projector and are looking for a projection screen that will match up to it, the ClearPix 4K makes a great choice and renders your kit future ready!



On display is the ClearPix 4K White 1.0 projection screen with support for UHD resolutions



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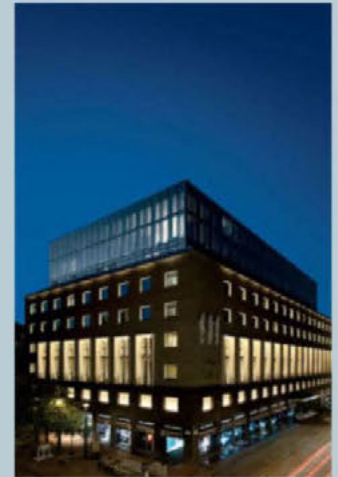
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