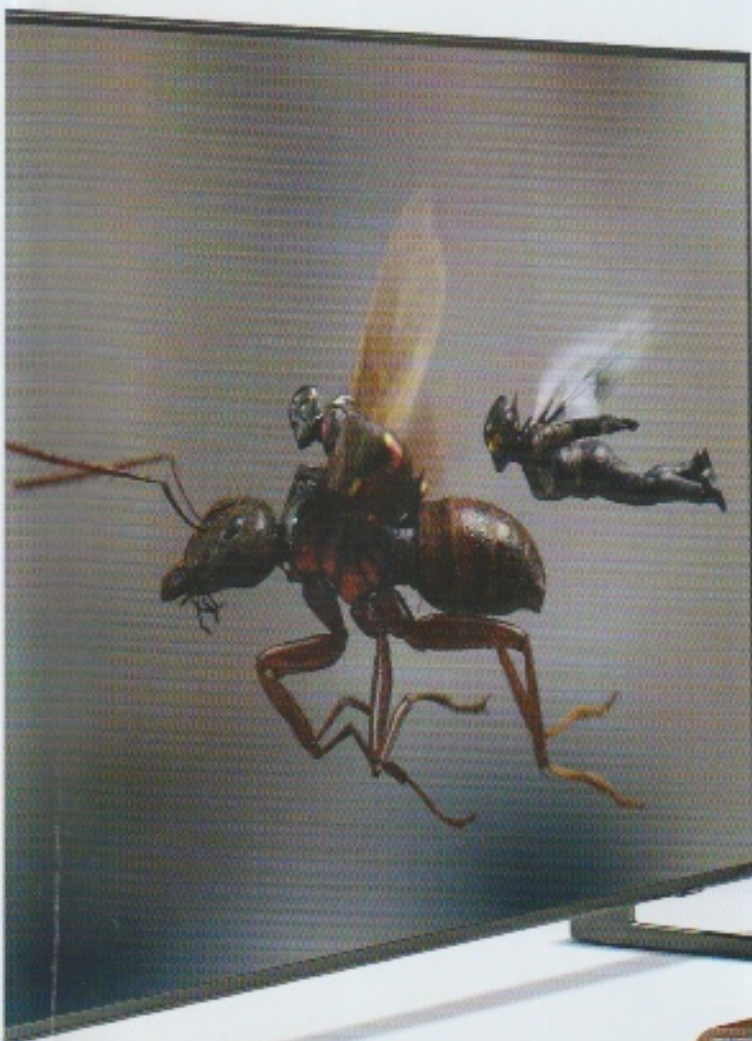


**INSIDE: THE UK'S FIRST DOLBY CINEMA**

# WHAT HI\*FI?



## 8K vs 4K THE FUTURE OF TV

**PLUS TV tech in 2019**

Next-gen sets revealed

**PLUS 4K projectors**

If your TV just  
won't cut it...



## TECHNICS' NEW DECK!

First look at the new offering  
from the DJ-deck legend



**OUR FAVOURITE  
SPEAKERS  
UNDER £500**



**Our pick of the top 4K Netflix shows available now**

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Were these B&W 606 speakers worth the wait?



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Some time alone with Technics' updated classic DJ deck? Yes please



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Ten pairs, from floorstanders to desktops. If your budget is under £500, this is the place to look



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## CHOOSING SPEAKERS

Standmount or floorstanders? It's the first question you need to ask



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We travelled to Las Vegas for CES 2019 and here are some of the highlights



50 **8K VERSUS 4K TV**

Samsung's 8K TV takes on its 4K equivalent... but which is the better buy?



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WORTH  
£60

# CABINET MEETING

Ten pairs of superlative speakers, but which gets your vote?



View offers

whf.cm/F302  
**Fyne Audio F302** £400  
(page 43)

View offers

whf.cm/Concept20  
**Q Acoustics Concept 20** £300  
(page 41)



View offers

whf.cm/QX2  
**Mission QX-2** £395  
(page 42)



View offers

whf.cm/Egg  
**KEF Egg** £350  
(page 47)



View offers

whf.cm/LX2  
**Mission LX-2** £160  
(page 36)



**Y**ou can't get anywhere without a pair of speakers. The goalposts may have shifted when it comes to what constitutes a hi-fi system, and the kit required in order to hear top-quality two-channel audio, but no matter how you choose to do it, you'll always need a pair of speakers in your system.

You may opt for a streamer instead of a CD player, or to use a one-box streamer and amp instead of two separate boxes, but you'll still need a pair of speakers at the end of the chain. And, in many ways, your speakers are the most important part of the chain.

The quality of your music (the file itself, not whether you listen to Cliff Richard or not), amplification and source all play a crucial part, but there's a fair argument - and it often does turn into an actual argument - that the speakers

will do most to influence the overall character of your system's sound.

Just as crucially, if you're wondering whether it's worth having a proper stereo system over a one-box set-up, this is the place to start. As much as we love many of the one-box systems and speakers on the market, they're no match for a proper pair of speakers. And that's just what we have here. Not one but 10 pairs of excellent speakers, all available for under £500, and all enticing in their own way.

Whether you want a pair of floorstanders for serious volume, bookshelf speakers for better low-level dynamics or wireless desktop units for the ultimate office system, there's something here for you. And with prices here from just £160, no matter where you place your hi-fi goalposts, these speakers all hit the back of the net.



View offers

[whf.cm/Spektor2](http://whf.cm/Spektor2)  
Dali Spektor 2 £200  
(page 37)



View offers

[whf.cm/Bronze2](http://whf.cm/Bronze2)  
Monitor Audio Bronze 2 £250  
(page 40)

View offers

[whf.cm/3020i](http://whf.cm/3020i)  
Q Acoustics 3020i £249  
(page 38)



View offers

[whf.cm/Q350](http://whf.cm/Q350)  
KEF Q350 £499  
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View offers

[whf.cm/MR1Mk2](http://whf.cm/MR1Mk2)  
Ruark MR1 Mk2 £329  
(page 46)



## FLOORSTANDING SPEAKERS

## Fyne Audio F302

£400

**FOR** Full-bodied, entertaining presentation; fantastic timing and dynamic range

**AGAINST** May need some care for the best system matching



**H**omonyms hold the key to around 90 per cent of dad jokes, and for that we must be grateful to our language. But when it comes to Fyne Audio, the fledgling Scottish company's rhyme-sake doesn't describe its brilliance quite aptly enough.

Though in its infancy as a brand, Fyne's seven-strong management team represents a kind of supergroup of industry minds. It has more than 200 years of experience, but with a result



Unremarkable design but a remarkable sound

that actually totals the sum of its parts, if the first of its loudspeakers to arrive in our test rooms are anything to go by.

If that tantalisingly low £400 price tag doesn't already have you rushing to dig out your credit card, we wouldn't be surprised if you're entering your bank details before the end of this review.

### Sturdy, substantial cabinets

A two-way, rear-ported design, the F302s house a 25mm polyester dome tweeter and 15cm multi-fibre mid/bass driver in each of their relatively sturdy cabinets. With the stands adding a little more width to the overall footprint, while you won't be greasing the sides to squeeze them in to your living room, it feels we're getting a lot of speaker for the money.

The F302s are available in walnut, black ash or light oak finishes – described by Fyne as 'superior vinyl'. It's an understated look, offset by a glossy black headband framing the tweeter. There is further detail surrounding the mid/bass driver too, though this is more than mere aesthetic flourish: the tyre-like design aids solidity and makes it more difficult to tear the material.

Uncomplicated in design, their performance sets the F302s apart as consummate class leaders. We listen to every album from beginning to end, an acid test passed only by the most engaging products that cross our path, and there's no greater praise we can offer Fyne than that.

We play Bon Iver's *22, A Million* and from the outset we're met with a confident, forward presentation, but one that has all the detail and refinement we might expect from the best standmounters at this price.

### Voice recognition

The texture in those opening vocal loops offers a sense of movement and anticipation over a flatlining drone, and quite luscious warmth to Justin Vernon's trademark choral harmonies. The presentation is wonderfully spacious too.

The size of the cabinet suggests a wealth of low-end, but that too is taut and doesn't obstruct the F302s' keen rhythmic sense. Timing and dynamic range are often neglected characteristics in floorstanders at this price – favouring instead power and a grander soundstage – so it's worth highlighting just how adept Fyne is here at capturing both.

That means harnessing the grimy percussive loops of tracks such as 10 d E A T h b R E a s T, while allowing 29 #Stratford APTS to trickle downstream without fear of becoming stagnant. It builds the intensity of 8 (circle) nicely as it reaches its anthemic conclusion. These tracks also highlight how adept these Fynes are at capturing the production as well as the character of the music.

If there is one caveat, it is that some care needs to be taken with system matching. While the balance is far from skewed, there is a little brightness in the treble that should be tempered by pairing the F302s with a suitable amplifier and source.

At this price, we'd recommend something such as Marantz's PM6006 UK amp, perhaps with the company's CD6006 UK as a source.

That said, even testing with our Cyrus CDi/Rega Elex-R combo, each of which tends to highlight any treble coarseness, was a delight. So it's more that you'll get the best from these speakers with some careful matching rather than being forced to avoid them without.

### A rare find

It's rare to find floorstanding all-rounders at less than £500 that are able to compete in every respect with the wealth of quality standmount speakers at the same price. This serves only to further impress just what a sterling job Fyne has done with the F302s.

### WHAT HI-FI? says

Rating ★★★★★

SOUND ★★★★★

COMPATIBILITY ★★★★★

BUILD ★★★★★

**VERDICT** Whatever the music, these exceptional floorstanders revel in – and excel at – their task

"If the price doesn't have you rushing for your credit card, we wouldn't be surprised if you're entering your bank details before the end of this review"