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Above: Wharfedale DS-2 stereo Bluetooth speaker system

Wharfedale's dinky desktop divas

DS-2 stereo Bluetooth speaker system delivers hi-fi sound in miniaturised form – perfect to place on a desk, table or shelf

Cambridgeshire, England – Bluetooth speakers are wonderfully convenient, but all too often their sound disappoints. This is especially true of many models below £200, their lack of proper stereo, poor sonic definition and small-scale soundstage leaving music sounding distinctly flat.

Wharfedale's new DS-2 stereo Bluetooth speaker system is an entirely different proposition. It's based on the now-discontinued DS-1, a similarly diminutive pair of Bluetooth speakers widely acknowledged as the best available under £200 – “petite little desktop speakers that sound fantastic for the money,” said *What Hi-Fi?* whilst presenting them with an Award in 2015.

The DS-2 reconstructs the original DS-1 concept with an all-new design, delivering even better sound-per-pound performance. In contrast to most Bluetooth speakers, the DS-2 is a pair of proper two-way hi-fi speakers shrunk to desktop size, standing just 190mm high, 120mm wide and 140mm deep.

Powerful pedigree

Wharfedale is Britain's most famous loudspeaker brand, with an audio engineering heritage stretching back to 1932. The company invented the concept of the two-way speaker – utilising separate drive units for high- and low-frequencies – so it's no surprise that each DS-2 contains two high-performance drivers: a 19mm silk dome tweeter and a 75mm mid/bass driver.

The mid/bass driver's cone is fashioned from woven polypropylene, chosen for its ideal combination of lightness, strength and low coloration. Both drive units are protected by specially designed metal grilles, while a rear-firing port augments low-frequency performance to provide bass that's surprisingly deep and punchy for the speakers' size.

Inside the master speaker nestles new-generation, high-performance digital amplification outputting 2x15W continuous and 2x30W peak. This drives the treble and mid/bass units via a high-quality crossover network containing select audio-grade components – superior to the cheap, single-component crossovers used by many compact speakers.

Bluetooth provides simple wireless pairing with smartphones, tablets, PCs and Macs, complete with support for the sonically superior aptX codec. Flexibility is further enhanced by a 3.5mm analogue stereo input and supplied cable – this is positioned on the side of the master speaker, along with the volume and pairing controls.

The DS-2 makes full use of Wharfedale's award-winning acoustic engineering expertise, exhibiting their sibling's hi-fi pedigree. Their sound is impressively agile and articulate for their size and price, delivering engaging musicality and a spacious stereo soundstage that their Bluetooth price-rivals cannot muster. Add the speakers' smart, rigidly constructed cabinets, complete with curved corners and a high-gloss finish offset with tactile leatherette, and these diminutive sonic stars should top the list for anyone seeking a compact, affordable, high-quality stereo Bluetooth speaker system to place on a desk, table or shelf.

“The award-winning DS-1 desktop Bluetooth speakers were a tough act to follow,” said Peter Comeau, Wharfedale's Director of Acoustic Design, “but we've really brought the design forward with the new DS-2. These are low-cost stereo Bluetooth speakers that punch above their weight, robustly built with a musical performance that belies their compact size. We spent a great deal of time voicing these speakers to ensure they're perfectly balanced for use on a shelf or desktop and can be positioned close to a rear wall for hefty, yet agile, bass output.”

The Wharfedale DS-2 stereo Bluetooth speakers are available from March in a choice of black or white, at an RRP of £179.95. Whether used to enhance sound from a computer, hook up a turntable to create an elegant vinyl system, or simply stream music from a phone or tablet, they are a flexible, convenient and affordable way to enjoy great sound from a wide range of devices.

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British loudspeakers have always enjoyed an excellent reputation around the world, and Wharfedale is perhaps the most famous brand of all. Stretching back to 1932, when Wharfedale's founder Gilbert Briggs built his first speaker in the cellar of his Yorkshire home, Wharfedale has been responsible for some of the most important loudspeakers ever produced, introducing many techniques and technologies that became commonplace such as the two-way loudspeaker (invented in 1945) and the use of ceramic magnets (pioneered in 1962). As Wharfedale enters its 87th year, the company continues its quest to deliver excellent sound quality and value-for-money with a wide range of class-leading speakers, both traditional and wireless, including the latest iteration of the famous Diamond line – the classic entry point to high-fidelity sound.

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