

Press release

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Above Quad Artera Solus Play one-box hi-fi system with silver front panel

One box to rule them all

By incorporating Play-Fi within the Artera Solus one-box hi-fi system, Quad adds hi-res Wi-Fi streaming and multi-room capabilities – meet the remarkably versatile Artera Solus Play

Cambridgeshire, England -- Quad, the distinguished British audio brand, is launching a new version of the acclaimed Artera Solus 'just add speakers' single-chassis hi-fi system, adding network streaming to the multi-tasking mix.

The new Artera Solus Play offers every facility modern-day music lovers could wish for – hi-res streaming via Wi-Fi and Ethernet cable, the ability to form part of a synchronised wireless multi-room system, Bluetooth reception, CD playback, full DAC and preamp facilities to hook up other audio devices and powerful stereo amplification, all packed into a single, elegant chassis.

From listening to internet radio and online streaming services, to playing your treasured CD collection, to connecting external sources via digital and analogue inputs, the Artera Solus Play offers the perfect compact system solution coupling cutting-edge versatility with the exemplary sound quality one expects of Quad.

A streamer's dream

The Artera Solus Play's Wi-Fi networking is powered by DTS Play-Fi: an app-controlled platform enabling high-quality, whole-home wireless audio, capable of streaming hi-res music up to 24-bit/192kHz and supported by a greater range of established audio brands than any other wireless platform.

The free Play-Fi app (available for iOS, Android and Kindle Fire devices, Windows PCs and Apple and Android smartwatches) is an intuitive gateway to a wealth of music services, including Spotify, Tidal, Amazon Music, Deezer, Qobuz, HDtracks, TuneIn, iHeartRadio and SiriusXM. It is also your trusty music butler, able to serve up a streaming library stored on any DLNA-compatible NAS drive or media server on the same home network.

Favourite playlists and radio stations can be assigned as shortcut 'presets' within the app, while Works With Alexa support enables voice-controlled playback when the Artera Solus Play is paired with any Amazon Alexa-equipped device.

Play-Fi supports a wide variety of file formats, including MP3, MP4A, AAC, FLAC, WAV and AIFF. In standard mode, which is optimised for multi-room bandwidth, audio is streamed at up to 16-bit/48kHz – akin to CD-quality. By engaging Play-Fi's Critical Listening Mode, hi-res audio up to 24-bit/192kHz may be streamed to the Artera Solus Play over Wi-Fi or Ethernet cable, without transcoding or down-sampling.

There are other ways to stream music wirelessly to the Artera Solus Play, other than via the Play-Fi app. Users can hook up directly to the Spotify app thanks to Spotify Connect, and stream from smartphones and tablets without connecting to the local Wi-Fi network using aptX Bluetooth.



Digital diva

Despite its attractive simplicity, the Artera Solus Play sports cutting-edge sophistication beneath the skin. At its heart nestles the ES9018 Sabre32 Reference, the eminent 32-bit, eight-channel hybrid multi-bit Delta-Sigma DAC chip, expertly implemented by Quad's renowned electronics engineers. External sources benefit from this DAC's exceptional quality via a range of digital inputs, handling PCM data up to 32-bit/384kHz as well as DSD64/128/256. This ensures the Artera Solus Play is equipped to make the most of today's hi-res music formats, as well as future advances in ultra-high-definition digital sound.

For CD replay, a slot-loading mechanism buffers data from the disc before feeding it to the asynchronous DAC section. Four digital filter options enable users to tailor the sound from both CDs and external digital sources, to suit personal taste and the nature of the source material.



Glass act Available with a black or silver front panel, the Artera Solus Play's sleek exterior is embellished with an inlaid glass top

Amp it up

The Artera Solus Play's preamp and power amp stages incorporate balanced circuitry, short and direct signal paths and high-quality components to preserve sonic purity. Volume is adjusted in the analogue domain under microprocessor control, outputting directly to the dual-mono Class AB power amp stage which delivers 2x75W into eight ohms. To minimise distortion, the power supplies for the left and right channels are isolated from each other as well as from the rest of the system.

The discrete power amp circuits' output stage uses a CFB (Complementary Feedback) topology in combination with conventional emitter follower circuitry. The CFB stage offers superior linearity and ensures excellent thermal stability, as the idle current is kept independent of the temperature of the output transistors. Using an emitter follower in combination with the CFB stage is an efficient way of increasing the current ability of the amplifier without compromising the advantages of the CFB circuit.

Having the emitter follower deliver additional current only when needed allows for a simpler current-limiting arrangement, which can be voltage independent. Current limiting is under microprocessor control and programmed to allow the amplifier to supply high currents (+/- 15A) into complex loads, surpassing amplifiers that are bigger and more powerful on paper. A 300VA toroidal transformer supplies the two mono amplifiers using separate secondary windings, followed by 2x15000uF reservoir capacity per channel (60000uF in total).

Much effort has gone into the physical layout of the Artera Solus Play's circuitry, with independent low-noise power supplies feeding all critical stages to keep interference to a minimum. The result is a performance on par with much more expensive multi-component hi-fi systems – detailed, natural, expansive and dynamic – in line with Quad's continuing quest to deliver "the closest approach to the original sound".

Get connected

Cable connectivity options are plentiful. Six digital inputs – two coaxial, two optical, USB Type B and Ethernet – cater for external digital sources (there's also a USB Type A socket for software updates) while a pair of RCA inputs handle analogue sources. Analogue outputs are supplied in both single-ended RCA and balanced XLR varieties, with the four-channel volume control preserving the balanced signal path from the DAC to the XLR output. A pair of high-quality speaker binding posts, optical and coaxial digital outputs, a 12V trigger output and a front-mounted jack coupled to a dedicated headphone amp circuit complete a comprehensive connectivity array.



Flexible friend Around the back, three aerials – two for Wi-Fi, one for Bluetooth – and a plethora of inputs and outputs highlight the Artera Solus Play's versatility

Design icon

Despite its versatility, the Artera Solus Play shares the same compact 32x32cm footprint as every Quad Artera Series component, sporting a crisp, clean aesthetic that both evokes Quad's past and looks forward to the future. The housing provides a rigid structure that exudes quality and resists interference from external vibrations, with a textured aluminium front panel, inlaid glass top and CNC-routed heat sinks on either side. The sleek appeal of Artera Series components is further enhanced by intuitive touch-sensitive controls built into their circular OLED displays; a fully featured remote control is also provided.

The original Artera Solus launched in late 2018 and was a great test of ingenuity for Quad's design team, as lead electronics engineer Jan Ertner recalled. "I've been involved with the design of Quad electronics for more than 25 years and was determined that our first all-in-one system should not be a compromise. It was a real challenge to make the individual parts – CD transport, DAC, analogue preamp

and power amp – perform to the level of a full separates system in keeping with Quad’s high standards, all packed into a single Artera Series chassis.”

Ertner continued: “We have revisited this challenge to create the Artera Solus Play, adding full network streaming to an already comprehensive list of premium-quality ingredients. Placement of circuit components has been especially critical, together with careful routing of the four-layer printed circuit board, use of balanced circuitry to minimise interference and extensive power supply isolation.”

This painstaking design process has resulted in the perfect all-in-one system component for modern times, maintaining Quad’s distinguished tradition of hi-fi sound quality that stretches back almost 85 years. Extensive streaming options; legacy CD playback; high-performance DAC/preamp circuitry for external sources; powerful and precise power amplification. Just add a high-quality pair of speakers – Quad’s excellent S Series and Z Series models are ideal – and the result is a superbly capable and versatile audio system in an elegantly compact form, with a sound that is both powerfully expressive and exquisitely refined.

The new Artera Solus Play is available from July, with a choice of black or silver front panels and an RRP of £1,699. The original Artera Solus, without Wi-Fi/Ethernet network streaming, continues at £1,499.



Hi-fi sound for contemporary lifestyles Quad Artera Solus Play pictured with a pair of Quad S-1 speakers in white

SPECIFICATIONS – QUAD ARTERA SOLUS PLAY	
Digital Section	
DAC Chip	ESS Technology ES9018 Sabre32 Reference
CD player	Slot-loading transport with read-ahead digital buffer
Wireless Streaming	Wi-Fi (Play-Fi, Spotify Connect) and Bluetooth
Digital Inputs	1x USB Type B / 2x optical / 2x coaxial / 1x Ethernet
Max Sampling Frequency – USB input	PCM 384kHz / DSD256
Max Sampling Frequency – Wi-Fi, S/PDIF	PCM 192kHz
Preamplifier Section	
Analogue Inputs	2x line-level RCA
Analogue Outputs	2x RCA; 2x balanced XLR; 6.3mm headphone jack
Analogue Output Level	RCA 0-2.3 Vrms / XLR 0-4.6 Vrms
Frequency Response	20Hz-20kHz (+/- 0.2dB)
Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)	< 0.002% (@1kHz, BW=20Hz-20kHz)
Signal-to-Noise	> 110dB (A-weighted, ref. 1V)
Power Amplifier Section	
Power Output	2x 75W RMS (8Ω)
Frequency Response	20Hz-20kHz (+/- 0.5dB)
Total Harmonic Distortion (THD)	< 0.003% (@1kHz, 50W/8Ω, BW=20Hz-20kHz)
Signal-to-Noise	> 108dB (A-weighted, ref. 75W)
Size and Weight	
Dimensions	320x320x105mm
Net weight	11.5kg

QUAD

Of all the British high-end hi-fi brands, Quad boasts the longest and most distinguished history. The company has been at the cutting edge of audio since 1936, continually pushing back the boundaries of performance with technologies both new and established. In 1953, the Quad II valve amplifier was launched, setting new standards for audio amplification, and three years later Quad invented the first full-range electrostatic speaker – later known as the legendary ESL 57.

Throughout the ensuing years, Quad products have continued to win worldwide acclaim, building a reputation for excellence that bears comparison with the most distinguished brands in any field. Quad has been part of the International Audio Group (IAG) since 1998, following its acquisition from the Verity Group (alongside Wharfedale). The company's design and technical support teams and much-admired servicing department continue to be based in Cambridgeshire, England, supported by key personnel who have worked with Quad for decades.

IAG's exceptional resources and unrivalled audio manufacturing facilities ensure that Quad's current range boasts many award-winning products, including the latest generation of ESL electrostatic speakers, class-leading valve amplifiers, dynamic 'box' speakers, planar magnetic headphones and a range of solid-state audio electronics that fuse high-end performance with elegant, versatile design. Almost 85 years after its formation, Quad continues to be driven by the philosophy of its founder, Peter Walker, to produce "the closest approach to the original sound".

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