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Above Wharfedale Elysian 3 in piano-lacquered black, walnut and white

Elysian 3 transforms home into sonic heaven

Wharfedale adds a more compact floorstanding speaker to its flagship Elysian line, representing the ultimate expression of pure musical enjoyment embedded at the heart of this famous British brand

Cambridgeshire, England -- In 2020, Wharfedale launched two new loudspeakers designed to sit at the pinnacle of its range. The floorstanding Elysian 4 and standmounting Elysian 2 were instantly acclaimed as worthy of wielding flagship status for their illustrious maker, pushing Wharfedale's acoustic engineering to new heights whilst remaining refreshingly affordable compared to other high-end speakers of comparable accomplishment.

Both the Elysian 4 and Elysian 2 are substantial speakers – three-way designs with wide baffles and deep cabinets. They are beauties to behold, immaculately crafted and adorned in luxuriously piano-lacquered wood, but they require a suitably proportioned listening space to accommodate their physical and sonic prowess. To extend the appeal of the Elysian Series, Wharfedale has since added speakers with more compact dimensions to the range (as well as a centre speaker for home cinema

configurations). First, in 2021, came the Elysian 1, which at 49cm high is a more typically sized standmount speaker than the 70cm Elysian 2 and is also the only Elysian model sporting a two-way driver configuration rather than three-way.

In summer 2023, a fourth pair of Elysian speakers joins the range – the Elysian 3, a new floostander that takes the three-way, four-driver design of the mighty Elysian 4 and delivers it in a form that is more easily accommodated in a variety of room sizes.

With dimensions of 105x26x29cm (HxWxD), the Elysian 3 is only about 11 per cent shorter than its big brother but a third less wide and a third less deep, which gives it a much more compact footprint. And yet, it delivers the same combination of driver, crossover and cabinet engineering that makes the Elysian Series such a uniquely enticing high-end proposition. A 27x90mm AMT treble driver combines with a 150mm midrange unit and two 180mm bass drivers to effortlessly convey the drama, detail and emotion of music in a way that always excites but never fatigues the listener.

Elysian AMT treble unit

Tweeters with domed diaphragms have dominated the hi-fi scene for decades but are not necessarily the ideal way of reproducing the exact harmonics of the musical waveform. To reduce moving mass, the dome must be small and use ultra-thin materials, both of which counteract efficiency and accuracy.

AMT (Air Motion Transformer) drivers are a radically different way of moving air to produce high-frequency sound, using a large, pleated, lightweight diaphragm driven across its surface by rows of metallic strips immersed in a magnetic field. The pleats in the diaphragm contract and expand under the influence of the musical drive, squeezing the air between them to form the desired waveform.



Left The Elysian AMT treble driver delivers fast, detailed and sweetly extended high frequencies

This is an efficient way of moving air and is also highly accurate, as the diaphragm is always under close control of the motor system. The result is a wide bandwidth transducer that achieves extremely low distortion and wonderful musical detail, with scintillating speed and dynamic ability.

The development of the large, high-spec AMT unit used throughout the series was a key part of the Elysian project, incorporating an ultra-lightweight PET diaphragm and an acoustically damped rear chamber to deliver spellbindingly clear and sweetly extended high frequencies.

Elysian midrange driver

To match the sensitivity and accuracy of the AMT treble unit, Wharfedale has developed bass and midrange diaphragms formed from a woven glass fibre matrix. These cones provide low mass and high strength, with the addition of a high-plasticity coating to control acoustic behaviour.



Left Crucial midrange frequencies are handled by a 150mm driver with a woven glass fibre cone

The Elysian 3's 150mm midrange driver is identical to that found in the Elysian 4 and Elysian 2. With such a low-mass cone, only a low-damping, foamed, rubber-like material would match for the surround, coated for durability. A phase plug in the centre of the cone is specially shaped to linearise the output across a wide bandwidth, even off-axis, enhancing a natural response to the music that can be heard anywhere the listener wishes to sit.

This midrange driver enables the Elysian 3 to deliver voices and instruments with astonishing realism. Vocalists seem to be present in the room with the listener – simply close your eyes and listen to the palpable presence of singers in the acoustic space.

Elysian bass driver

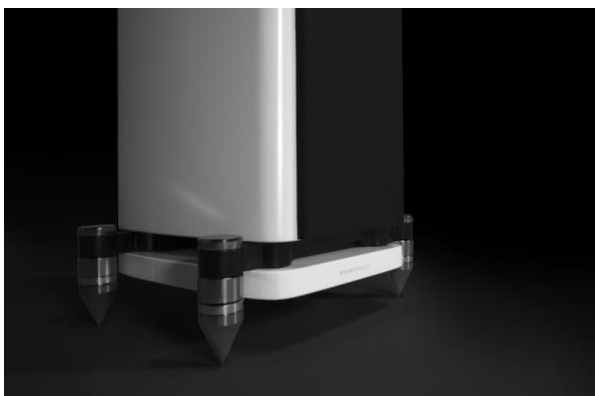
The Elysian Series is renowned for the depth and quality of its low-frequency response and the new Elysian 3 is no exception. A pair of 180mm bass drivers incorporate glass fibre matrix cones to match the midrange unit, terminated with a highly flexible rubber surround and driven by a specially developed low-distortion motor system.



Left Two 180mm bass drivers deliver deep, taut and impactful low frequencies

The bass drivers are loaded by an advanced version of Wharfedale's SLPP (Slot-Loaded Profiled Port), which ensures that the rear output of the bass units is not wasted. Instead, the lowest frequency energy is vented to a slot at the base of the speaker, specially profiled to equalise the high internal pressure to the low pressure in the room. This reduces the distortion that is typical of bass reflex systems and increases the port's efficiency. Also, because the air is dispersed uniformly in the room, the speakers are less fussy about siting.

In combination, the bass units and SLPP system provide the foundation upon which the rest of the musical performance sits, revealing the full body and impact of every recorded sound, from percussive, stringed and wind instruments to deep electronic basslines.



Left The Slot-Loaded Profiled Port vents between the base of the main cabinet and the integral plinth

Elysian crossover network

The drivers' output is combined via a sophisticated crossover network, fine-tuned over hundreds of hours of listening tests to ensure a seamless blend between the drive units.

Of particular note is the phase consistency across the driver output, permitting a wide range of seating positions and encouraging the power response to be highly linear throughout the listening room. Only the highest grade, acoustically transparent components are used throughout the crossover network, ensuring all the musical detail is heard with nothing held back.

Elysian cabinet

Producing a more compact version of a large floorstander such as the Elysian 4 is not simply a matter of shrinking cabinet size and incorporating bass drivers of smaller diameter. The cabinet and drivers must work together in perfect harmony and every detail of the Elysian 3's design is precisely calculated to achieve this. The goal was to create a floorstander with a reduced footprint to suit less expansive listening spaces, delivering a perfectly balanced performance whilst retaining as much of the larger speaker's sonic scale as possible; this is what Wharfedale's design team has emphatically achieved.

The Elysian 3's cabinet is painstakingly designed to enhance the acoustic output of the drivers and provide a piece of furniture of which the owner can be justly proud. Handcrafted veneers are enhanced by true piano finish lacquers, hand-polished to six levels of depth to give a truly beautiful finish.

Beneath the veneer is a sandwich of woods of differing density, designed to reduce panel resonance to below audibility. Named PROS (Panel Resonance Optimisation System), this multi-layer construction also inhibits the leakage of unwanted sound energy from inside the cabinet, which would otherwise interfere with the forward output of the drive units.



Left With its gently curved sides and lustrous piano-lacquered finish, the Elysian 3 is a beautiful addition to any home

Heaven sent

In Greek mythology, the Elysian Fields are a heavenly place where the heroic and the virtuous are rewarded in the afterlife. Elysian, as an adjective, means blissful – a fitting name for Wharfedale’s flagship range of which Elysian 3 is the latest member, conceived to deliver blissful sonic reward to music lovers seeking heavenly respite from the rigours of daily life.

Speaking about the development of the Elysian 3, Wharfedale’s Director of Acoustic Design, Peter Comeau, said: “The Elysian Series was conceived as a flagship loudspeaker range worthy of the illustrious Wharfedale name, encapsulating the innovation and ingenuity with which it has been associated for close to 100 years. Wharfedale speakers are not only highly accomplished; they also deliver excellent value for money, and the Elysian Series is no exception – whilst far from cheap, Elysian speakers deliver qualities that match and exceed much more expensive high-end designs.

“The Elysian 3 takes the highly acclaimed Elysian 4 – the pinnacle of Wharfedale’s range – and reduces its footprint to a size that some will find easier to accommodate, whilst maintaining the exceptional engineering that is inherent in every Elysian design. The holistic and uncompromising approach to every element of the loudspeaker system – the drivers, the crossover, the cabinet – allows the Elysian 3 to convey the full-bodied character of instruments like cello and bass guitar, without constraining the dynamics of the musical recital. Whether you’re listening to solo piano, a full orchestra, a jazz trio or a rock band, these speakers bring the thrill and excitement of the performance to your listening room.”

The Wharfedale Elysian 3 is available from July in a choice of black, white or walnut, hand-finished in high-gloss piano lacquer, at an RRP of £5,999 per pair. A presentation box containing stainless steel spikes, spike seats for hard floors, high-quality speaker jumper cables and a pair of white handling gloves completes the package.

The comparison table below contains specifications for all four Elysian stereo models, including the new Elysian 3. (A centre speaker – the Elysian C – is also available for home cinema systems.)

SPECIFICATIONS	ELYSIAN 1	ELYSIAN 2
Configuration	2-way standmount	3-way standmount
Enclosure type	Bass reflex (slot-loaded)	Bass reflex (slot-loaded)
High-frequency driver	27x90mm Air Motion Transformer	27x90mm Air Motion Transformer
Midrange Driver	N/A	150mm woven glass fibre matrix cone
Bass driver	180mm woven glass fibre matrix cone	220mm woven glass fibre matrix cone
Sensitivity (2.83v @ 1m)	89dB	89dB
Recommended amp power	25-175W	25-250W
Nominal impedance	4Ω (compatible 8Ω)	4Ω (compatible 8Ω)
Frequency response (+/-3dB)	49Hz-22kHz	35Hz-22kHz
Bass extension (-6dB)	44Hz	28Hz
Crossover frequency	2.6kHz	360kHz; 2.9kHz
Cabinet volume	21.6L	17.5L; 43.6L
Dimensions (HxWxD)	490x263x285mm (stand 476x340x287mm)	700x334x432mm (stand 428x402x435mm)
RRP	£3,499 per pair (stands £399 per pair)	£4,999 per pair (stands £549 per pair)
SPECIFICATIONS	ELYSIAN 3	ELYSIAN 4
Configuration	3-way floorstander	3-way floorstander
Enclosure type	Bass reflex (slot-loaded)	Bass reflex (slot-loaded)
High-frequency driver	27x90mm Air Motion Transformer	27x90mm Air Motion Transformer
Midrange Driver	150mm woven glass fibre matrix cone	150mm woven glass fibre matrix cone
Bass driver	180mm woven glass fibre matrix cone (x2)	220mm woven glass fibre matrix cone (x2)
Sensitivity (2.83v @ 1m)	89dB	92dB
Recommended amp power	30-200W	15-250W
Nominal impedance	4Ω (compatible 8Ω)	4Ω (compatible 8Ω)
Frequency response (+/-3dB)	44Hz-22kHz	30Hz-22kHz
Bass extension (-6dB)	35Hz	24Hz
Crossover frequency	375Hz; 2.9kHz	340Hz; 3.1kHz
Cabinet volume	9.4L; 35L	38L; 79.4L
Dimensions (HxWxD)	1050x263x285mm (inc. plinth)	1188x402x432mm (inc. plinth)
RRP	£5,999 per pair	£6,999 per pair



*Wharfedale Elysian Series (left to right)
Elysian 2, Elysian 4, Elysian 3, Elysian 1 and
Elysian C, all in piano-lacquered white*

W H A R F E D A L E

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). Now in its 92nd year, Wharfedale continues its quest to deliver excellent sound quality and value-for-money with a wide range of class-leading speakers, from the latest iteration of the famous Diamond line – the classic entry point to high-fidelity sound – to the upmarket EVO4 range and flagship Elysian Series.

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