

# WHAT HI★FI?

## SOUND AND VISION

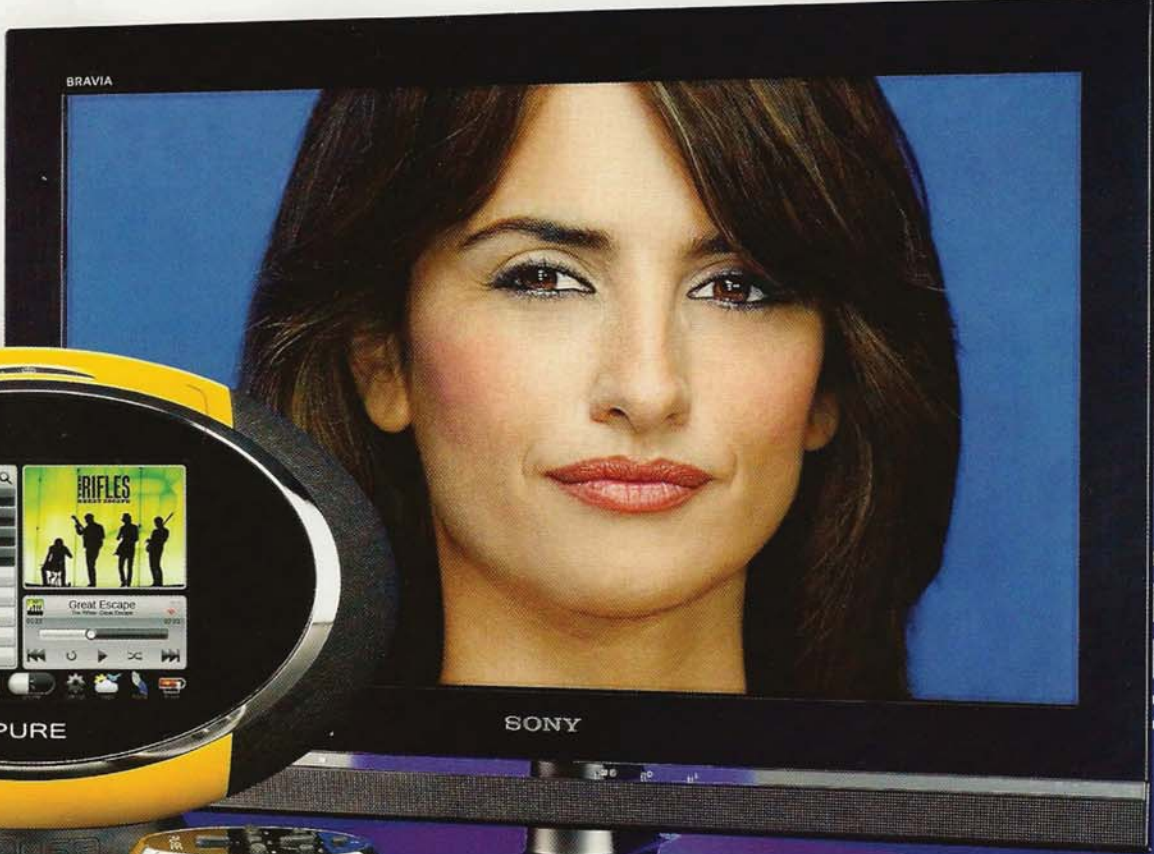
NOVEMBER 2009 £4.30 www.whatifi.com

The world's No.1 home entertainment magazine



# YOUR NEXT TV AND FUTURE RADIO

**EXCLUSIVE!** 32in TVs from £400, plus Pure's radio revolution



**Pure, reinvented... WHY THIS BOX CHANGES RADIO!**

### MISSION SPEAKERS

Mission reborn: Are these new hi-fi speakers its best ever?



### PRO-JECT DECK

Is this £400 turntable heaven for your vinyl?



### BLU-RAY SORTED

Three new systems with speakers reviewed



haymarket



**INSIDE: YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO HD TV TWEAKING!**

5.1 SPEAKER PACKAGE  
DALI FAZON★★★★★  
£ 1800

## ↑ FOR

Stylish, discreet design; rich, refined and hugely enjoyable sound; satellites integrate seamlessly with subwoofer; seamless surround field

## ↓ AGAINST

Subwoofer sounds a tad tubby

## → VERDICT

A stunning, style speaker system that sounds remarkably refined and capable – a real treat for your ears

The Fazons are available in gloss white as well as the black here

## Svelte Dali Fazons are set to stun

**STYLE SPEAKER SYSTEMS** are all about finding the right balance of aesthetics and sound quality. In the case of premium packages such as the Dali Fazon, the set-up has to work even harder to justify its existence.

The curved aluminium cabinets of the satellites look resplendent in their gloss black lacquer. They also feel weighty and solidly built. The figure-hugging magnetic speaker grille peels away to reveal a two-way loudspeaker. The satellites use a 4.5in wood-fibre cone, mid-bass driver and 1.1in soft-dome

**“There’s a natural warmth and solidity to the sonic character”**

tweeter. They’re extremely discreet and, should you want to add an extra Fazon sat or two, each extra speaker costs £259.

Even the supplied wall bracket and stand have been engineered with plenty of thought. With your speaker cable running to the terminals at the base, you can rotate the speaker through 360 degrees and twist or tilt so they fire out sound at the optimum angle.

Completing the package is the Fazon Sub 2 (£549). This

compact bass-box uses two, 6.5in woofers and packs 120Watts of amplification. It comes with a credit-card sized remote control that allows you to alter settings such as volume and phase.

**Immense insight and talent**

Style packages can have a tendency to sound lean or bright, but not the Fazon. There’s a natural warmth and solidity to the sonic character that’s charming and engaging. During the almighty plane crash in *Knowing*, the package showcases its immense insight and dynamic talent. Low frequencies could sound

marginally tighter, but the sub still has more than enough weight and power to rock the castors off your sofa. You’re encouraged to listen for prolonged periods, which is never a bad thing. Dialogue sounds clear, rich and full of body. There’s no trace of that ‘boxy,’ closed-in sound that comes from poor satellite speakers. The speakers and sub woofer integrate seamlessly and you’re completely immersed in the on-screen action.

If you don’t have the space to accommodate a traditional speaker package then the Fazon system is a great alternative that oozes with style and substance.



## ALSO CONSIDER ?

B&W  
MT-30

★★★★★

£1575

This system has bags of ability and it’s a ridiculously exciting listen. Includes the wonderful, spherical B&W PV1 subwoofer

M&amp;K

M-7 SYSTEM

★★★★★

£1750

Not the curviest style system on the planet, but all the components integrate superbly and it produces a seriously energetic sound

SPEAKER CABLE  
ATLAS ELEMENT★★★★★  
£ 3/m

## ↑ FOR

Focused, spacious sound with good detail levels; discreet and manageable

## ↓ AGAINST

Not as forthright in the bass as is ideal

## → VERDICT

A fine budget upgrade, but you don’t have to spend too much more to do quite a bit better

## Atlas on the midi-system map

**IF YOU PERUSE** the relevant section of the *Buyer’s Guide* at the back of this magazine, it’s apparent that less than a fiver per metre spent on speaker cable doesn’t give the very best results. Atlas’s fiercely priced Element cable, a slim, unassuming design, is aiming to offer a bit of authentic quality to the owners of micro-systems, cinema-in-a-box set-ups and the like.

**Great as a micro system boost**

It gets most of the way there, too. John Robinson’s *I Am Not For Sale* sounds well-organised and potent via the Atlas, with a briskly attacking, nicely textured top end. The midrange in general, and voices especially, sounds intimate – there’s plenty of detail

on display and a pretty agile way with dynamics. It times well, too, the first hit, pluck or breath of notes packed with information.

Switching to Gang Starr’s *Full Clip* exposes the Element’s slightly tentative low-frequency reproduction. There’s no shortage of detail or tonal variation to bass sounds, but the outright weight and punch the music demands is only partially present. There’s a soft centre to kick drums and so on that leaves us hankering after a bit more substance.

Still, the Atlas Element is in an entirely different league to the speaker cable your micro-system came with, and an upgrade from that to this reaps real rewards.



## ALSO CONSIDER ?

ECOSSE REFER-  
ENCE CS-2.3

★★★★★

£3/m

Provides a solid detailed sound with good timing

CHORD CO.  
CARNIVAL  
SILVERSCREEN

★★★★★

£5/m

More expensive, but, if your budget will stretch, it’s worth the outlay

It’s well worth £30 on cable to upgrade your micro system