

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION



The Dôme package makes perfect sonic sense out of complicated action moments, and hits you with some serious dynamics



Focal Dôme 5.1
£1500 ★★★★★

And so we move from one French fancy to another in the shape of Focal's nicely rounded Dôme 5.1.

This package might be the most expensive one here, but even before you hear them in action you get the feeling that very single penny is fully justified. The black lacquer finish combined with the die-cast aluminium surrounds gives the speakers a premium look and feel. Each satellite weighs just under 2kg and the level of build quality is second to none. Brave souls can opt for red or white finishes, and the intricate stand design lets you pivot the satellites through 90 degrees, so wall-mounting won't trip you up.

Clever-clogs tweeters

Twist and pop off the satellite grilles and you'll see the Dôme's two-way design. Focal uses a 10cm Polyglass cone for the midbass driver and a 25mm inverted dome tweeter. The company has gone for an inverted tweeter in the belief that

it improves dispersion and helps to create a more precise soundstage. And it seems to bear fruit, too.

The domed subwoofer has a bullet-esque appearance, which makes it stand out in this crowd. It's a downward-firing design, so it can hug on a wall or be placed in free space without affecting its sound. It uses a 100W digital/analogue hybrid BASH amplifier, (BASH technology is used on all of Focal's subwoofers).

Set-up is simple enough, although as is the case with the majority of systems here, you need to feed cable into the base of each speaker and secure using an Allen key and bolts.

You'll also need to remember to switch the subwoofer's crossover setting to 'Dôme' before you run through the system set up if you're using the speakers in a 2.1 configuration.

From the off, this package handles movie soundtracks with aplomb. The subwoofer is extremely generous when it comes to dishing out bass weight and

BEST FOR MUSIC BUFFS
If you like music Blu-rays, the Dôme 5.1 works particularly well. The 2.0 and 2.1 versions should more than suffice for desktop systems.

LIVING WITH IT
Extras for the Dôme package include stands (£199 per pair), cable (£18 for two 4m runs), and red yellow or blue grilles (£9.50 each).

power. Thankfully, though, it never sounds thick or tubby. The satellite speakers create a solid, well-organised soundstage. It isn't be the widest, but you can pinpoint all the surround effects. During the underground shootout in *The Town*, the action comes at you thick and fast, but the Dôme package makes perfect sonic sense out of it all and hits you with some serious dynamics.

A revelation with music

Our opinion of the system went up another notch when we switched to music. The Dôme 5.1 is a revelation, combining potent dynamics with rhythmic nous. Spin Foo Fighters' *Best of You* and you soon find your foot tapping away in agreement.

Yes, it's relatively pricey, but the Dôme 5.1 is so talented that a five-star rating is the only possible outcome.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Superb build quality; impressive musicality and insight; powerful, punchy bass

AGAINST On the expensive side; soundstage could be wider

VERDICT A surefire hit for movie and music buffs. The Dôme is a really talented package