

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/review/1100/bose-321-gs-series-dvd>

BOSE 321 GS Series II DVD home entertainment system

by Charlie Brewer published on 21 July 2005

Like some remote theological concept, sometimes the more you search for an explanation for something, the harder it becomes to find. Understanding why American audio R and D guru's BOSE have chosen Ted Rogers' famous catch phrase, 3.2.1, for their latest home entertainment system being a case in point. The web and the instruction manuals are both curiously devoid of any reference to this curious choice of name although you do learn that the 3.2.1 relates to the speakers and not the entire system. Finally the chap in the BOSE warehouse cracked under questioning, well a question, and revealed that it stands for "3 wires, 2 speakers and 1 fantastic sound", or at least that's the way he heard it'. The series II is available in two configurations, the choice of twin-driver 3.2.1 speakers being the only difference. The more compact, and expensive, of the two systems uses the new GEMSTONE speakers, hence gets the GS in its title. These slimmer speakers offer the same basic audio-profile as their larger original 3.2.1 companions, but at only 10.5cm high x 14cm wide x 6.4cm deep and weighing .45Kg, as opposed to the older units which are 8.7cm high x 19.9cm wide x 13.6cm deep and weigh 1.2Kg each, they reduce the overall viewable size. The complete system is made up of 4 parts, well 5 if you count the remote. The media centre acts as the dashboard and the brains, the twin GS satellite speakers, that are to be positioned either side of your television at a distance of no less than three feet, are the mid-range and tweeter, while, the ominous sounding, 'Acoustimass' unit plays a triple role as bass-driver, power amp and energy management system. It's here that BOSE demonstrates that hard work in the lab pays off in the home. The 3.2.1 GS speakers have been designed in such a way as to replicate, in conjunction with their Acoustimass counterpart, a 'soundscape' that normally takes 3 times as many speakers to create. BOSE can sometime seem a



...cont.

little dictatorial with their set-up instructions but that's probably because after thousands of hours in anechoic chambers they really do know better than you about the way their audio equipment should be configured. That's not to say that between the laws of physics and the construction of complementary soundwave fields, there does not come some flexibility. The GS speakers can either be wall mounted, desk-stand mounted or floor stand mounted and the beefy Acoustimass (36.7cm high x 22.2cm wide x 48.5cm deep weighing 10.6Kg) can be tucked away down the side of the sofa, just so long as the air-port is unobstructed at the front. The GS units connect to the Acoustimass unit, via a single split cable (wire 1), the AC power connects to the Acoustimass (wire 2) and finally the Acoustimass connects to the media centre (wire 3). The media centre will play DVD-Video, DVD-R, DVD+R, Video CD's, Audio CD's, CD-R, CD-R/Ws and MP3 discs. Oh and it also has a RDS FM / AM radio, and that's just the stuff you have onboard. Flip the unit round the reverse side looks like the backend of mixing desk. There are a dazzling array of optical, digital and phone style inputs offering the most dedicated audiophiles options galore to connect the TV, satellite box and any other device that takes your fancy (all of which would go into the AUX channel). The function of the media centre can either be controlled by the button on top or but the remote. Set-up is simple enough to let the average person get a good way down the line before needing to consort with the bulky instruction manual although the accompanying set-up DVD is useful to understand the core functions. An interesting function is the 3.2.1's ability to exert remote control over the other media devices attached, through the BOSE's central remote control. The instruction manual is supplied with 11 pages of product codes, corresponding to manufactures and types of device, you simply select the code for your existing device and 'badda-bing, badda-boom' your TV/VCR/Digital receiver remote(s) need never be used again. BOSE do admit that set-up can be a little trial-and-error as some

At a glance

What is it?

Home entertainment system, including DVD player, CD, RDS radio

Good

Look, size, sound, acoustic technology

Bad

Price, display size, no recording capacity

Verdict

Another corking system from BOSE. The price is a little off putting, but the quality can't be questioned and this system will cover all your needs.

Price £1250

Our score

7/10

Your score

4/10

...cont.

product have a dozen codes next to them and only by entering the right one will you be able to exert full control, but it still a nice idea. Naturally being a recent addition to the BOSE range the 3.2.1 GS comes fitted with BOSE-Link, the propriety BOSE system to allow complete integration of this system with the BOSE Lifestyle range. Gripes, well I had to carry it up my stairs, and that Acoustimass unit is no cream puff. The display is still a little on the small side. If you are going to use the media centre to control all you media / audio everything then the display should be larger, clearer and display more. The price is also another issue, even though BOSE are renown for producing excellent audio equipment £1250 can get you a lot of someone else's products, especially if you consider is that the media centre only plays, it offers no recording or storage in any capacity. Potential purchasers might be lured away to more future-facing systems, that offer DVD or digital recording functions.

VERDICT

Overall, if you've got an overriding desire for quality, design, compact style and £1250 you are itching to be rid of the product bus stops at BOSE. The 3.2.1 Series II GS is another example of why the guys in the lab make the serious sound-lovers choice simple. The price may be high, as might the quality of the audio output, but cheaper, recordable options, can't be dismissed over quality.