

Bose Lifestyle 48 home cinema system

So can Bose's Lifestyle 48 speaker system coming in at a £4000 really be that good? We put it to the test

by Stuart Miles published on 27 April 2006

Bose are always at the top of end of the market, offering solutions to those who can afford it. Of course with that expense comes a system that is easy to use and at the same time something that produces that all important draw dropping awe. So can Bose's Lifestyle 48 speaker system coming in at a £4000 really be that good? We put it to the test. After struggling to get the box in the office - it's the size of one of those school trunks Harry Potter uses in the films, we got to unpacking the system. To our surprise the weight here is all to be found in the systems subwoofer. Bigger than your regular Tower PC the white box is big, bulky and unadventurous in its design. If you do buy this unit the first question should be "where can I hide it" as you'll need to. In comparison the rest of the unit is very small. The main console the size of a regular DVD player (not one of those slimline ones though) and the speakers are even smaller. You get five speakers in the box; three for the front and two for the back, and each is the size of a can of coke. Its surprising therefore that these little thinks can blast the wax out of your ears and turned up loud are very impressive. Whether it's loud or quiet the whole system as expected performs amazingly and Bose even bundle a special calibration CD in the box to help you get the most of the setup before you start. Everything is controlled via the central console which although the size of a DVD player isn't flat. This small styling difference means that you can't stack anything else on the device, so if you are putting this into a rack, it will have to go at the top. The front is fairly non-descript with a two line display so you can see what is going on. Underneath the control unit's glossy exterior the Bose hides a DVD player and more importantly a hard drive capable of storing over 340 hours worth of music. It's here that the LifeStyle 48 shows its true colours over being just another CD player that costs a fortune. Titled



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uMusic the system allows you to store hundreds of CDs from your collection on the Media Center's hard drive although the bad news is, is that you'll have to load all your CDs into the system rather than merely connecting the device up to a computer. Once stored, just like iTunes or Windows Media Player you can rate songs according to what you think of it. You can do so at any time by simply pressing a button on the remote and the results allow the LifeStyle 48 to "learn" your tastes in music and can select songs to play back accordingly.

VERDICT

At £4000 you have to expect that the player is going to be good, but it's not all perfect. Purists will be disappointed by the lack of cable customisation for the speakers and movie fans hoping to get the most out of the DVD's playback capabilities will be disappointed that there is no HDMI support. Finally, and this is a big finally, you've got to consider that this system, although amazing, is £4000. If the bank balance can stretch that far then this is a good system to opt for because everything that we played on it, whether it was music from a CD, music stored on the unit's hard drive or the latest blockbuster DVD it just blew us away, trouble is, it's likely to blow the bank manager away too.

At a glance

What is it?

Pricey music system with built-in hard drive

Good

Sound, sound, sound

Bad

Pricey, not HDMI support for the purists, have to use Bose cables, subwoofer is bigger than a tower PC

Verdict

At £4000 you have to expect that the player is going to be good, but it's not all perfect

Price £4000

Our score

7/10

Your score

4/10