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## Evesham SoundStage X2

Can you really turn your TV stand into a decent speaker?

by Paul Lester published on 19 October 2007

Earlier this year Evesham revealed a rather enigmatic experiment with home cinema audio in the form of the SoundStage X1, a chunky TV stand that housed a range of built-in speakers.

After being rather abruptly discontinued, the technology is back in the form of the X2, whose upgrades include a revised LCD, improved sound processing technology and two 30W subwoofers in the feet.

The unit uses digital sound projection, most famously delivered with the Yamaha YSP range, to create a virtual surround sound effect by bouncing audio around the walls of a room.

It does this with the help of a 20W center speaker and four 15W surround speakers mounted around the front and sides of the unit.

All of this comes pre-wired, and the table itself comes in three separate pieces - the main shelf and two legs - which slot together with a simple slide a lock system.

It's very easy to get the thing up and running then, but when you get around to wiring up an audio source you'll bump into an oversight of grand proportion.

Although you have a choice of stereo or surround connections here, you'll only find composite input, which in the case of 5.1 audio will cause problems for most people without an external amplifier.

Quite why there isn't an HDMI or at least optical connection we're not sure, it's a glaring omission that seriously undermines the usability of the product.

Elsewhere you'll find a 3.5mm jack input below



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the front LCD panel that offers easy access for audio players, but this is your lot.

Speaking of the LCD, we're not sure how necessary this actually is. It offers a graphics equalizer display along with the current volume and audio setup, but is cursed with a bright white and blue colour scheme that can be distracting when the lights are out, particularly since you can't turn it off.

Based on the lack of genuinely useful information present here we'd have liked something a little more subtle, perhaps a "Knight Rider" style line of LEDs just to handle the volume?

Moving on to the performance of the speakers themselves, we weren't initially bowled away with the effect here, although like all sound projection technology you're quite heavily reliant on the layout of the room to effectively bounce the audio.

You'll find you can adjust the center speaker volume, sub-woofer level and surround effect with the supplied remote, but unlike the YSP and other products in this range we didn't notice nearly enough of a difference to the audio environment when tweaking these settings.

The surround effect never really got going, we found mid-range tones tended to get lost in space and the bass impact from the sub sounded very disjointed, with any noticeable thumps kicking in almost as an afterthought.

It's often difficult to get these sorts of speakers set up correctly, but when you do the results can be impressive which is why you usually get such a wide range of configuration options.

However despite these admittedly significant issues, the new SoundStage does have a few things going for it. As a TV stand it does look very stylish, the sleek piano black finish and chunky nature should fit in with most home AV setups

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## At a glance

### What is it?

A TV table with built in sound projection speakers

### Good

Very reasonably priced, pretty stylish design

### Bad

Poor connectivity, sub-par audio performance, LCD display almost redundant

### Verdict

A reasonably priced table/audio combo for those less choosy about performance

**Price** £299

**Our score**

**6/10**

**Your score**

**?/10**

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and coordinates nicely with the current flatpanel colour of choice.

It's also very reasonably priced; you wouldn't get much change from £300 for a decent TV table of this size anyway.

These considerable advantages mean that there should be a market for the X2, provided you like the design and aren't too choosy over audio performance.

## **VERDICT**

The SoundStage X2 saves itself somewhat by being competitively priced, despite rather disappointing audio performance and some awful decisions on the connectivity front.

If you're looking primarily for a TV stand and would welcome a bit of an audio boost you may well be very pleased, but it's no substitute for a dedicated setup, or for that matter a dedicated sound projector like Yamaha's YSP.