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Gear4 HouseParty Blu speakers

Are these the speakers for your mobile phone?

by Stephen Patrick published on 6 February 2008

The HouseParty Blu has a stylish but rather conservative styling. The glossy black finish is tempered by a silver grill across the front and won't look out of place in the living room, or bizarrely, the typical meeting room.

Measuring 280 x 140 x 100mm, it's a compact set of speakers and the touch-sensitive buttons allow you to control volume, skip tracks and there is also a Mode button for switching between Bluetooth, the iPod cradle and the 3.5mm line-in port.

Shipping with a remote control unit, you'll find it mirrors the controls on the unit itself and has a fairly logical layout. You'll need to use your audio player's navigation menu for choosing songs, as the speakers merely act as an amplifier and in general, we found the sound quality more than acceptable.

With 30 watts of power, these are loud speakers and we only experienced noise distortion at high volume. Bass and treble proved satisfactory at mid-level and while they won't replace dedicated Hi-Fi speakers, if space is limited they offer a decent alternative.

It is not all good news, as the Bluetooth is a little limited and will only work with those that support Bluetooth 1.2, and are equipped with A2DP (Advanced Audio Distribution Profile). It needs this latter support in order to stream audio wirelessly and is not supported in all devices.

Pairing is easy and takes no time at all and as long as your streamed files aren't too compressed, you'll find they sound reasonable. We preferred the sound from the wired solution but for occasional use it is fine.



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VERDICT

The Gear4 HouseParty Blu may not have the power or capabilities to replace your Hi-Fi but it is one of the better MP3 player systems we've seen and heard.

At a glance

What is it?

MP3 players speakers

Good

Retro design, Bluetooth support

Bad

Limited Bluetooth support, poor audio streaming

Verdict

This is a loud and versatile speaker set but its audio streaming is minimal at best. Best used with wired connections

Price £80

Our score

7/10

Your score

?/10