

A Bowers & Wilkins Formation to Rival Sonos

Written by Marco Attard
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Bowers & Wilkins (B&W) announces wireless audio rival to the likes of Sonos-- Formation, a range including a soundbar, two bookshelf speakers, a single speaker, standalone subwoofer and an accessory adding wireless capability to legacy devices.



All components work either separately or in tandem to provide multi-room audio, and promise "high-fidelity performance" with 24-bit/96kHz audio support. The speakers connect with each other using a mesh networking system co-developed by B&W parent company EVA Automation, and the company says it ensures speaker synchronisation clocks at 1 microsecond.

As for the products making the Formation lineup, the first is the soundbar dubbed the Formation Bar. It contains three 25mm tweeters and six 65mm woofers, and supports Bluetooth, Spotify Connect, Apple AirPlay 2 and Roon. Also included is Dolby Digital support and a Toslink optical-in, but alas no HDMI.

Meanwhile the Formation Duo is the pair of bookshelf speakers customers can also mount on a stand. Similar in look to classic B&W wired speakers such as the 705 S2, the Duo speakers feature an isolated carbon-domed tweeter on top and a larger bass and mid-range woofer with a Continuum cone driver in the centre.

The name of the Formation Wedge says it all. Essentially a successor to the 2007 Zeppelin speaker, the Wedge has a 120-degree elliptical shell housing two 25mm tweeters, two 90mm woofers and one 150mm subwoofer. For the lower end of the audio spectrum, Formation offers the Bass, a barrel-shaped device with opposing 6-inch drivers designed to pair with other product in the range.

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A final Formation product is the Audio-- a Sonos Connect-style device with analog in/out and digital in promising to add wireless streaming capability to any traditional passive audio system through "patented Formation wireless technology."

The Formation portfolio hits the market by end April 2019.

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