

Old-style charm from Cambridge

Cambridge Audio has put a lot of focus on portable wireless speakers with its Minx Air range. We've been impressed, but couldn't help thinking how long it's been since we heard a pair of the firm's hi-fi speakers.

Enter the Cambridge Audio SX-60s. They're standmounters in the entry-level SX range, sitting between the smaller SX-50 speakers and the SX-120 subwoofer.

Cambridge Audio has emphasised 'sound first' design principles - meaning these speakers don't look fancy. They're straight-edged MDF cabinets wrapped in dark walnut or black vinyl. There's a 25mm dome tweeter, a 16.5cm mid/bass driver and a reflex port on the front and a single set of speaker terminals round the back. And that's your lot.

They're solidly built and the finish is fine, if a bit basic. It isn't quite up to the standard set by Monitor Audio's gorgeous Bronze BX2s, for instance. Is that cost



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cutting or smart prioritising? Only Cambridge Audio can say. Either way, we're pleased to say these speakers are rather good performers.

Balanced and direct

Straight out of the box, the SX-60s catch our attention. These speakers are confident and full of energy; if you're after an upbeat sound, you're in for a treat. Put on a bit of House of Pain and there's enough bounce to make you really want to jump around.

And they're well balanced. The top end is prominent without being too bright, and the midrange is direct. Bass is rich, but it's tight and never less than agile. There's also a good level of integration. Elsewhere, there's a good grip on rhythm, decent detail and a good sense of scale.

We'd be careful about where you put them, though. Despite having front-firing reflex ports, the SX-60s really don't like walls. Leave at least 30cm of space, or that bass will become overpowering.

Listening to these speakers in isolation, we're impressed. But compared with some rivals at this price, it soon becomes clear that they're up against exceedingly high standards. They don't sound quite as

Living with it



No biwiring here: the SX-60s keep things simple with a single pair of terminals.



The grilles look nice, but these speakers sound better with the covers off.

clear, dynamic or as subtly detailed as the best at this price. The melancholy piano on the *Moon* soundtrack, for instance, sounds less textured and spacious than we'd like. The SX-60s just don't have the kind of sparkling refinement we look for in a five-star product. As much as we like these speakers, they're more solid than special.

The Cambridge Audio SX-60s are impressive on their own, though. If you're just after a bold, upbeat sound, you can't go wrong with these. If you're after something truly special, however, you might want to look further afield.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Bold, confident sound; good integration

AGAINST Could do with more refinement

VERDICT Fine speakers, but they lack the polish of the very best