



This second-gen offering has a new sound processor and an HDMI input

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Cambridge Audio TV5 v2 | Soundbase | €399

A degree of class from Cambridge

FOR Tight bass; full midrange; good insight; HDMI input

AGAINST Lack of display; remote could be nicer



When the first TV5 soundbase came out, there was a lot we liked about it. It had punchy bass, powerful sound, was sensibly sized and pretty well priced – an all-around quality product.

With the release of the TV5 v2, the company is looking to build on its success. This soundbase has a new digital sound processor (DSP) for converting digital signals into audio, and it's been given an HDMI input, for playing hi-res audio, alongside its conventional ports.

The TV5 v2 has the same understated design as its predecessor – nice and sturdy – and should fit in to most environments (and under most televisions) discreetly.

Facing you are two 6cm drivers, while underneath are a couple of 16cm subwoofers for the low frequencies. And there's a lot you can connect up to this soundbase to make those drivers work. The TV5 v2 has a 3.5mm input jack, an RCA connection, optical input and aptX Bluetooth connectivity, as well as HDMI for 24-bit/192kHz audio.

Familiar features

If you want to tweak that sound, the v2's EQ settings are nominally similar to the original TV5: 'Music' is a flat EQ (and the one we use); 'TV' enhances vocals and the upper bass; 'Film' enhances vocals and lower bass frequencies for effects such as explosions; 'Voice' restricts the bass and treble to reinforce speech.

And, like the first TV5, the v2 lacks a display – instead opting for an LED that changes colour to signify audio input. Aesthetically, this feels a little too much like Hal 9000 is staring at you from beneath

your television, but ergonomically means you have no numerical way of telling your overall volume, subwoofer volume, or which EQ setting the soundbase is on.

One thing that Cambridge has redesigned is the remote, but that's a mixed bag overall. The input buttons can get caught under the remote's top plate, feeling inferior to the indented, central mute button or the ridged EQ buttons. If, however, you find it's not to your liking, the TV5 v2 does support IR learning – so you can use other remotes.

Quality where it matters

Get past some of its questionable design elements and the v2 has superb sound quality. Putting it through its paces with a Blu-ray of *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, and connected via the optical input, we're treated to an impressive performance.

We skip to the scene in which the heroes escape the prison base, and the v2 has enough dynamism to fill our medium-sized testing room. Between the earthy clunk of Rocket Raccoon loading a space-age gun, the subsequent high-octane shootout, or Gamora's softly spoken insults, the soundbase handles each element with ease.

And it keeps those elements nicely organised. While the gang is working out its plan, the TV5 v2 ensures you are aware of everything that's happening – little aspects such as the sound of wires being pulled or Rocket's humming as he hotwires the battery aren't lost beneath the soundtrack.

The bass is tight, too. The quick thuds as the alien Drax knocks out the security guards are responsive and punchy, and the explosions as Starlord destroys the prison's robots are satisfyingly forceful.

KEY FEATURES



Dimensions (hwd):
10 x 73 x 34cm



Bluetooth



HDMI

Changing to something more down-to-earth, we plug the HDMI cable into the TV5 v2 and play *The Imitation Game* on Blu-ray. There's a great amount of insight in this soundbase: Hugh Alexander's angry hurl of a glass at the Enigma machine delivers a shatter of precise crispness – the TV5 v2 digging up detail you might not otherwise hear from your television.

This quality extends to the midrange as well. When John Cairncross asks Alan Turing whether he wants lunch, the croak in Turing's baffled voice is palpable and believable. While the TV5 v2 might be marginally behind in terms of midrange detail compared with the similarly priced Canton DM 55, it does have a greater sense of scale and a more potent bass than the DM 55 to make up for it.

On display

Much like the first TV5, this soundbase's lack of display means that it's not quite as easy to use as other, similarly priced options. If a TV5 v3 emerges, we'd like to see one added.

But sonically, the TV5 v2 is a great soundbase. The bass is tight, the midrange is solid and full, and it provides a good amount of dynamism across any input. Cambridge Audio certainly knows how to make these devices sound great, and ultimately that's what gets the TV5 v2 rated so highly.

WHAT HI-FI? says

Rating ★★★★★

SOUND	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★

VERDICT A sonically superb soundbase from the bass to the treble – with sturdiness and style to boot



A couple of 16cm subs underneath deal with the bass – and admirably