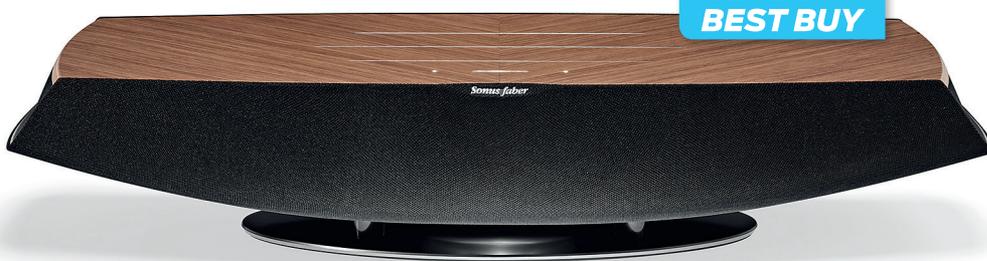


Sonus faber Omnia

This stylish 'wireless speaker with ambition' catches the eye of **Ed Selley**. But what about his ears?



AV INFO

PRODUCT: Premium wireless speaker with HDMI ARC

POSITION: First such model from the Italian audio brand

PEERS: Naim Mu-So 2nd Gen; JBL L75ms

WHEN IT COMES to making beautiful audio products, Italian manufacturer Sonus faber has an impeccable track record. Therefore, its move into the wireless speaker category comes with some aesthetic expectations.

In other words, there was no way the Omnia was going to be a bland, black box. Okay, you can get it in black (Graphite, as Sonus faber puts it) or walnut finish. Both are very classy, with the cabinet mixing curves and angles and fabric and wood elements.

Generous spec

With its size and price, the Omnia seems to be gunning for the likes of Naim's £1,450 Mu-so 2nd Generation one-box. So too does a generous specification that includes 24-bit/192kHz PCM and DSD support, Apple AirPlay 2, Chromecast, aptX HD Bluetooth and Tidal/Spotify Connect. There's also an HDMI ARC input for your TV (and this is your only

option, as there's no optical input), plus an analogue connection that can be used for either line in or MM phono, depending on what you need – although both require use of a slightly ungainly adapter.

Beneath the look-at-me exterior, the Omnia features drivers that are recognisably derived from Sonus faber's more conventional loudspeakers. Two 19mm soft dome tweeters handle treble, and crossover to a pair of 3in paper/cellulose mid-range units. Completing what would be a three-way approach is a single 6.5in aluminium woofer, mounted to fire downward through a hole in the base of the cabinet, yet there's then two 1.75in full-range drivers at either end of the Omnia, aiming to deliver the feeling of soundstage width that single-chassis speakers can struggle with. Claimed power for this 'four-way', from Class D amplifiers, is 490W.

The £1,599 asking price screams premium, but you'll feel you're getting your money's worth. One part of the Omnia's appeal is the touchpanel system built into the wooden top panel and denoted by LED strips. Done badly it could look terrible, but here it's gorgeous. This interface complements a decent remote control and, while I think the Omnia would benefit from a unifying control app, it would be a stretch to call it hard to use.

Crescendo, here we go!

The idea here is a speaker that can handle all you throw at it, both content from your TV as well as your music library. And if this is what you're after, the Omnia needs to go right to the top of your list.

SPECIFICATIONS

DRIVERS: 2 x 19mm soft dome tweeters; 2 x 3in paper/cellulose mid-range; 1 x 6.5in aluminium bass driver; 2 x 1.75in cellulose 'width' drivers **ONBOARD POWER (CLAIMED):** 490W **CONNECTIONS:** HDMI ARC; Ethernet; analogue input (line/MM phono via supplied adapter) **DOLBY ATMOS/DTS:X:** No **SEPARATE SUB:** No **REMOTE CONTROL:** Yes **DIMENSIONS:** 650(w) x 130(h) x 280(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 7.6kg

FEATURES: Wi-Fi; Ethernet; aptX HD Bluetooth; Apple AirPlay2; Chromecast; Tidal and Spotify Connect; Roon Ready; 'Crescendo' DSP engine; 'Senso' control panel; 30Hz-25kHz claimed freq. response

The Omnia hides seven drivers, including 6.5in bass

Those two drivers on the ends of the cabinet really seal the deal. Sonus faber calls this system, and the DSP used to manage it, 'Crescendo', and, so long as the Omnia is in relatively free space, it works a charm. There's a width and scale to the presentation that's uncanny, making the chase sequence through the forest in *The Adam Project* (Netflix) remarkably immersive. It's not quite 'side Atmos', but it effectively pushes the soundstage outward without detracting from the precise delivery of dialogue in the centre.

This latter element is consistently good too. The quiet and intense chatter of *Slow Horses* (Apple TV+) is easy to latch on to, yet relayed in a way that feels in balance with the rest of the soundmix. There is an unforced clarity to the way the Omnia sounds that reflects clever internal DSP work being carefully applied.

It's no less impressive when listening to music. Sonus faber's single-chassis diva offers a clean stereo sound with rich tonality, plenty of low-end extension and an impressive amount of dynamic attack. The glorious blues-tinged *Dropout Boogie* by The Black Keys is lush and lively. The speaker is perhaps a little less forgiving of compressed material than others, but it still sounds good with Spotify and similar sources.

In fact, the Omnia sounds good full stop. What Sonus faber has done here is find a way to bring the width and space of its traditional stereo speaker arrays to a one-box design, while continuing the company's longstanding tradition of mid-range warmth and energy, not to mention attractive aesthetics ■

HCC VERDICT



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→ £1,599 → www.sonusfaber.com

WE SAY: It's attractive, well made and easy to use, but most importantly Sonus faber's premium wireless speaker sounds fantastic.

LED-lit controls grace the wooden top panel

