



Cornered Audio C5

There's a plethora of loudspeakers designed to be mounted unobtrusively against walls or suspended from ceilings. They're typically used in multiroom audio systems, which are often focussed more on the convenient delivery of sound to multiple rooms than on outright fidelity.

In that context, one could be forgiven for being tempted to dismiss the Cornered Audio speaker range. Yes, these Danish designs are sleek and elegant, but at face value, they are easily mistaken for yet another multiroom product.

However, these are speakers that deserve closer scrutiny in both aesthetic and sonic terms.

Let's take the Cornered Audio C5 under discussion here. Its sleek shape is triangular, in that the sides meet at a 90 degree angle. This allows the C5s to fit perfectly into the corners of a room, with the sides flush to the walls behind, leaving the front baffle firing at a 45-degree angle into the room.

Cleverly, there are no brackets or rails. The speaker cable can be run unobtrusively in the corner, and then via a rear groove into a narrow channel that feeds the cable to the front baffle, where the binding posts are located. That's right: the binding posts are on the front baffle, again in the interests of mounting the C5s flush in the corners.

And that, of course, is exactly where they are meant to be fixed, as it allows them to harness the low-frequency emphasis associated with corners to extend their frequency range well beyond what you'd expect from a two-way speaker standing only 436 mm tall.

Fit and finish is exemplary in the best, stylish Danish tradition. Magnetically mounted, curved grilles conceal the three drivers (and the binding posts), while adding further visual appeal.

The rigid enclosures are extruded aluminium, with thick MDF baffles and substantial internal damping to prevent ringing and vibration. Of course, the triangular shape also combats standing waves.

The driver array features a 25 mm silk-dome tweeter with a wide surround

in the interests of dispersion. It's partnered by a 133 mm long-throw mid/bass driver featuring efficient heat dissipation to ensure high power handling capability and control. A second mid/bass driver acts as a passive radiator to further boost low-frequency response.

The C5s were located in the front corners of our listening room, but as I didn't want to drill holes in the walls, I positioned them on tall 1,2m stands placed in the corners. I also tried the C5s in a free-standing position to find out to what extent that would handicap the bass response.

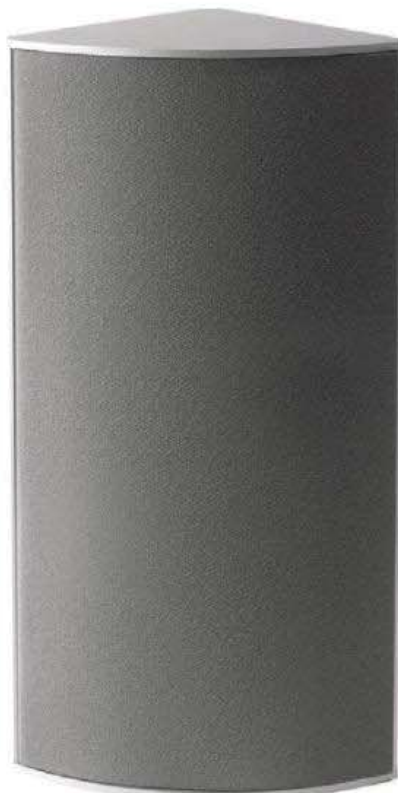
Powered by our Electrocompaniet PI-2D integrated amplifier, with our Oppo BDP95-EU providing the digital source signal from FLAC and WAV files stored on a USB drive, the C5s sounded punchy and exciting, with plenty of pace and energy.

Particularly impressive was their ability to create a seamless, transparently delivered sound image that always sounded larger and more voluminous

than their limited physical size intimated. They were able to project a soundstage with real height, depth and width – quite at odds with their corner-mounted location, and certainly unbridled by that position.

The transparency of the C5s allowed them to remain unacknowledged as point sources, which added significantly to the believability of their performance, and had the effect of drawing the listener into the core of the music. And because of their unobtrusive positioning, listening to the C5s became an almost eerily magical experience.

The other big surprise of the Cornered Audio speakers was their tonal range. Clever tuning of the crossover and the presence of that passive bass radiator allows the C5s to reach down much lower than anything of that size should – and I'm not talking about the inaccurate rumble of a flabby, wall-induced bass, either.





albeit at the cost of bass response and authority.

They really do need the additional assistance of the corner location they've been designed for, but showed their class in the way they still created an open, detailed and inviting sonic picture.

The Cornered Audio C5s are a class act. Compact, minimalist and elegantly executed, they suit most decors, and remain visually unobtrusive, while producing a level of performance that will please and enchant across all genres. As such, they deserve to be partnered with equally talented amplification and source components to deliver their best.

Deon Schoeman

VITAL STATS

Enclosure typeInfinite baffle
Drive units1x 25 mm silk dome tweeter 1x 133 mm mid/bass driver 1x 133 mm passive radiator
Bi-wiring No
Impedance8 ohm nominal
Sensitivity 88 dB
Frequency response 59 Hz – 25 kHz
Power handling	.. 100 watts continuous, 400 watts peak
Dimensions (HxWxD) 436 x 213 x 136 mm
Weight4,1 kg each

Price R10 550

Verdict

Don't underestimate the presence, punch and transparency of these cleverly engineered, aesthetically elegant and sonically exciting speakers.

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The C5s projected low frequencies with pace and power, always retaining a sense of accuracy and composure. The transition to a lean but smooth and accessible mid-range was slick and linear, while the wide-open trebles always allowed loads of insight, thanks to a pernickety attention to musical and ambient detail.

The latter meant that the C5s were able to place the music under close scrutiny, allowing them to reveal elements that even more 'serious' speakers would tend to overlook. While this benefited good recordings, it also tended to reveal flaws with an unerring honesty.

However, with good material, the Cornered Audios were a joy to listen to.

Ralf Illenberger's 'Soleil', off Accoustic Arts' *Uncompressed World Vol 1* compilation CD, sounded bright, sunny and thoroughly engaging.

The acoustic guitar had just the right sheen and attack, while the piano displayed a brilliance and incisive pace that was riveting without any need to resort to aggression. The sound was taut and controlled, but never to the detriment of the music's flow or rhythm, while tonal integration was spot on, with a solid, incisive bass providing the perfect foundation.

Moving the C5 into a more conventional, free-standing position highlighted their ability to deliver their musical wares with transparency and dimensional integrity,

