

Sci-fi Wi-Fi hi-fi

Looking like something out of HG Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, Q Acoustics' first proper bash at wireless speakers appear alien for a reason...

£1499 + £349 stands (pair) / stuff.tv/Q200

A bit like Steve Buscemi or Uma Thurman, the Q Acoustics' Q Active 200 speakers have an odd sort of sexiness you can't help but admire.

The British brand has been on a hot streak of sonically excellent home cinema and passive speaker solutions, but these asymmetrical boomers mark its first serious foray into active sound systems that don't require a separate amp.

It's a very well connected hi-res package, with everything from Apple AirPlay 2 to Google Chromecast built-in, a choice of voice assistant and streaming service integrations, and HDMI ARC for plugging them into your tellybox.

The Q Active 200s have a special party trick too: it's called 'dynamic widescreen sound', and it should mean Cliff Richard can always find your sweet spot for an outstanding audio experience no matter where you're sitting or standing.

Wide side pride

The Q Active 200s look distinctly different due to off-centre BMR (balanced mode radiator) drivers and some striking Tensegrity stands – a £349 option (1). Q says the driver placement helps you fine-tune their 'dynamic widescreen sound' – more on that in the panel opposite.

Low throw pro

Inside each cabinet you'll find two 2.25in BMR drivers, a rear-firing 4.5in long-throw sub (3) and six discrete amps with a total output of 280W. Plump for the pricier Q Active 400 floorstanders and you'll bag two extra amps and 440W of power, but you'll kiss goodbye to those sexy stands.

Sheer clear cheer

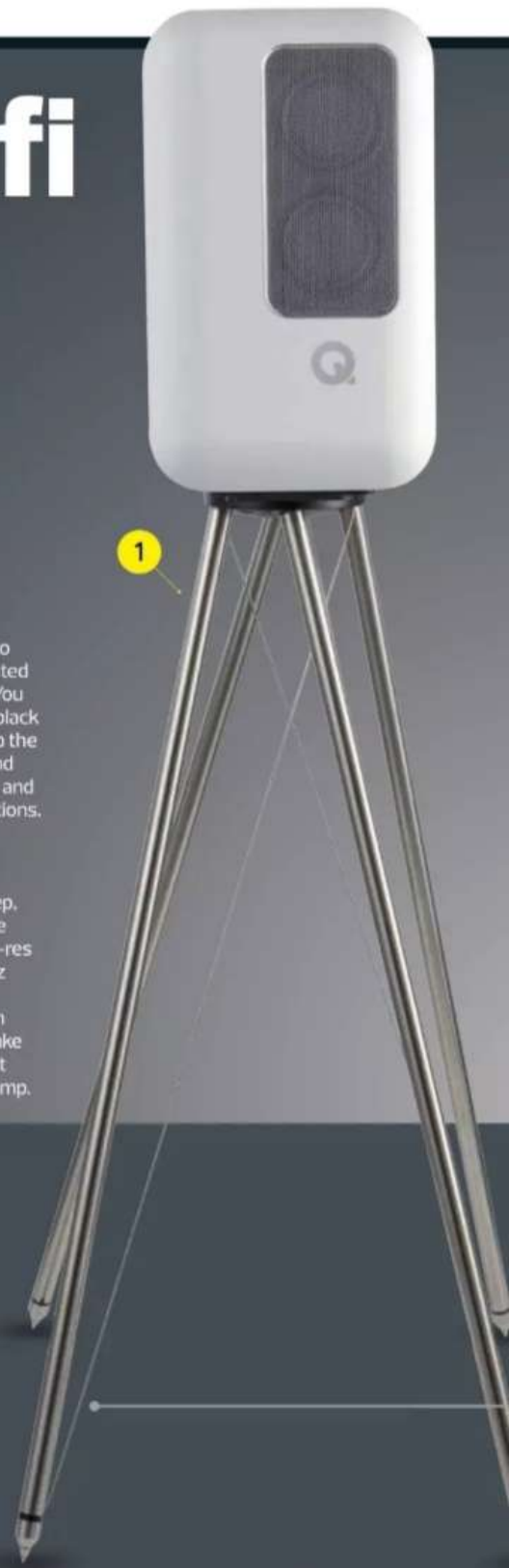
How do they sound? Stonking. It's immediately apparent how smart the Q Active 200s are at separating the highs and mids from those beautifully wobbly lows. Switching between AirPlay 2 and Bluetooth 4.2, frequencies feel consistently clearly defined with impressive levels of clarity.

Bright white sight

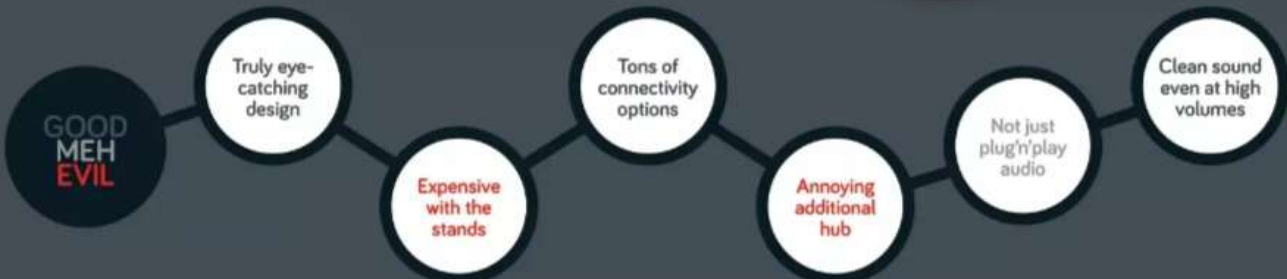
The 'industrial chic' design is carried on from front drivers to rear subwoofer via a corrugated control panel on the top (2). You can pick from stealthy matt black or white; and while setting up the stands is a bit of a faff, the end result is unquestionably cool and helps to minimise floor vibrations.

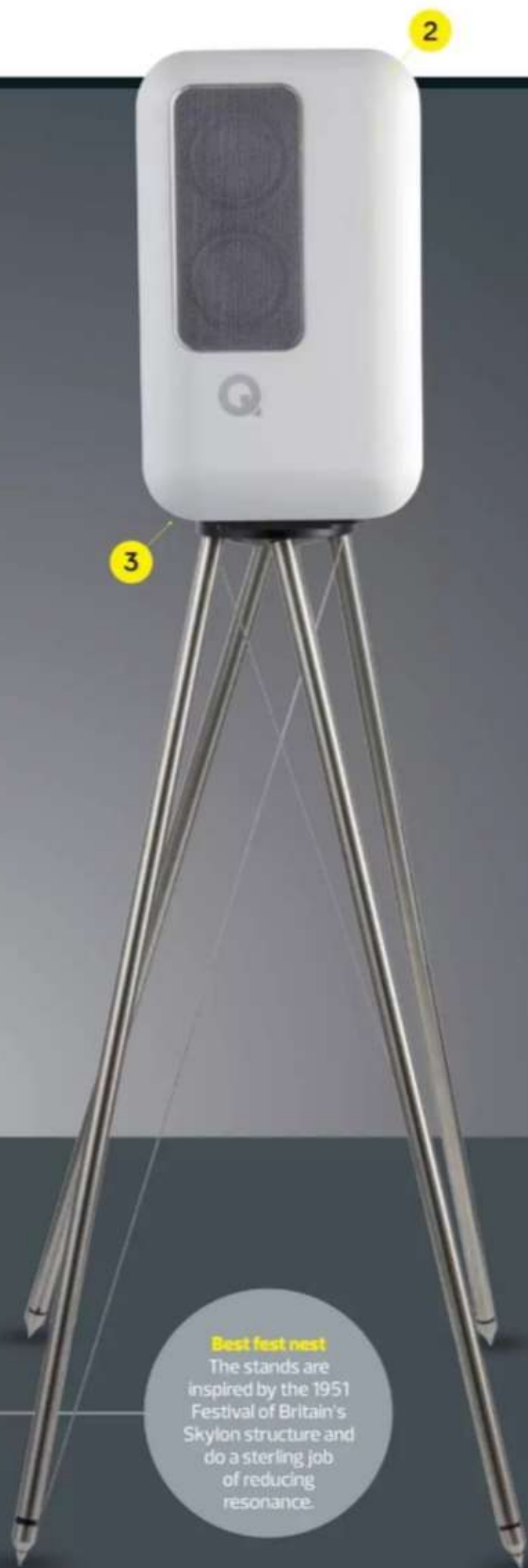
Hub club nub

Connectivity options run deep, but it all comes via a separate wireless hub that'll handle hi-res audio at up to 32-bit/192kHz over 5.8Ghz wireless. It's an annoying extra thing to plug in when the speakers already take up a mains socket each, but it takes up less space than an amp.



[Words: James Day]





Best fest nest
The stands are inspired by the 1951 Festival of Britain's Skylon structure and do a sterling job of reducing resonance.

Tech specs

Drivers 2x 2.25in full-range, 1x 4.5in sub (each)
Power 280W (each) **Connectivity** Wi-Fi, Bluetooth 4, AirPlay 2, Chromecast. Works with Alexa, NAS, Roon, UPnP, HDMI ARC, optical, Ethernet **Dimensions** 290x284x170mm, 922x338x286mm with stands. 7.5kg (each)

Audiophile be there for you

Playing around with Q's 'dynamic widescreen sound' will make you grow a strokable jazz-beard in minutes



■ Spread the love

Q says using BMRs rather than normal drivers gives a wider spread instead of focusing on a central sweet spot. Plus they can go down to 150Hz before passing things over to the sub, so there's no crossover distortion.



■ I'm outer, love

Round the back of each cab you'll find a switch for designating left/right, so you can have the drivers on the inside or outside. The size and shape of your room will determine which configuration maximises your listening pleasure.



■ Love is wall around

Next to that you'll find a boundary setting switch with three options for speakers close to a wall, in corners, or wombling free out in the open. Pick the one that matches your setup for the best low-end response.



■ Love me splendour

There's definitely a degree of audiophile twattery at play here, but honestly? It's good clean fun, not least because perfecting your preferences does seem to hammer home the lack of crossover between the frequencies.



At this price the Q Active 200s should sound exquisite, and they do – the R&D budget has been put to good use and the alluring design isn't just for aesthetics. The hub is irritating, the stands are expensive, and we kept re-pairing the remote; but in terms of connectivity and sound, this is a worthy centrepiece to a tasty multiroom setup. @james_a_day

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★
They cost a pretty penny, but the Q Active 200s marry serious audiophile qualities with oodles of connectivity options