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KEF LS60 Wireless

KEF's stunning LS60 Wireless system could be the only hi-fi set-up you ever need

For its 60th anniversary celebrations, KEF could have kept things simple, and done the hi-fi equivalent of getting a few friends over for drinks, nibbles and maybe a couple of glasses of fizz. It could have built a new passive speaker to mark the occasion and nobody would have objected.

What KEF has actually done is go into full-on party mode, hiring a venue, getting the private caterers in and paying for a live band. Or, in hi-fi terms, it has decided to launch one of its most challenging products to date: the LS60 Wireless is a floorstanding sibling to its fantastic LS50 Wireless II all-in-one hi-fi system, and one of the most impressive-looking pairs of speakers we have seen this year.

The cabinets are extraordinarily slim, just 13cm across (excluding plinths). A slim cabinet calls for a slimmer-than-usual Uni-Q driver and KEF's engineers have delivered a brand-new version of its trademark drive unit, specifically to cope with that shrinkage in width.

It is in fact the smallest Uni-Q driver the company has ever designed and combines a 10cm aluminium cone for the midrange with a 19mm vented aluminium dome tweeter. For this latest iteration of Uni-Q, KEF has added a tweeter gap damper and a new Z-Flex surround to aid dispersion and reduce distortion. The tweeter also uses KEF's Metamaterial Absorption Technology

KEY FEATURES



HDMI eARC



Uni-Core bass drivers



Wireless hi-res audio streaming

LS60 Wireless has a 19mm vented aluminium dome tweeter

(MAT), which we saw debut on the KEF LS50 Meta. MAT helps absorb soundwaves that radiate from the back of the tweeter dome so they don't interfere with the unit's forward output. It takes the form of a round piece of plastic with a maze-like structure placed behind the tweeter. Each 'path' in the structure is a certain size and length and 'tuned' to absorb a specific range of frequencies. KEF claims the paths help create an 'acoustic black hole', absorbing 99 per cent of the unwanted sound.

For the bass in this three-way speaker system, the company has called on the clever Uni-Core driver arrays that made their debut on the company's tiny KC62 subwoofer back in January 2021. They are designed to deliver maximum bass from small enclosures, combining force cancellation (the drivers are mounted back to back), a shared magnet and two completely different, concentrically arranged voice coils (one for each driver).

Single Apparent Source

Two pairs of 14cm Uni-Core drivers in each tower are positioned equidistantly around the Uni-Q driver array. KEF calls this its Single Apparent Source technology. The positioning of the drivers in this way means lows, mids and highs all appear to radiate from a single point toward the listener. The benefit is you can deliver precise imaging and accurate sound over a wide area.

The right (primary) speaker boasts the lion's share of connections. On the rear you will find buttons for pairing left and right speakers together, connecting Bluetooth devices and resetting the entire system should you need to. You've also got HDMI eARC, optical and coaxial digital inputs plus a pair of analogue RCA inputs. KEF sees users not only feeding their speakers a diet of CD-quality and hi-res music streams

but also integrating it into a modern, multi-functional AV system. We connect an LG G2 OLED TV via HDMI and don't experience any latency problems, nor are there any issues with the robustness of the wireless connection between towers while they are handling the audio from the TV.

An ethernet port allows you to up the native playback of the system to 24-bit/192kHz, though the system is still capable of handling up to 24-bit/96-kHz natively through KEF's own low-latency wireless connection (it will downsample anything above and up to 24-bit/384kHz). There is also support for DSD256 and MQA decoding, while, should you want to connect an external subwoofer or two, each speaker sports a subwoofer output.

The LS60 Wireless is driven by the same W2 wireless platform that was introduced with the LS50 Wireless II. So there's access to a plethora of connectivity options including wi-fi, Apple AirPlay 2, Google Chromecast and Bluetooth, plus Amazon Music, Deezer, Qobuz, Spotify and Tidal streaming services to choose from.

The KEF Connect app places all the playback controls, streaming services and internet radio at your fingertips, and gives owners the opportunity to set up the LS60 Wireless for their particular room layout, and tweak the EQ settings. KEF has tried to make the whole process as simple or as involved as you want, and we feel it has got the balance just right.

The LS60 Wireless also packs in all the amplification. Each speaker uses three separate amplifiers to drive low (LF), mid (MF) and high frequency (HF) sections independently. The LF section is powered by a 500W Class D amplifier; the midrange uses a 100W amp of the same variety. The HF section, meanwhile, is driven by a 100W Class AB amp. They are located in the lower



"The bass is dispatched with intent and force – edges are sharply drawn, and there is so much texture to the notes you are almost fooled into thinking you can reach out and feel them"

WHAT HI-FI?

★★★★★

section of the speaker, which is sealed off from the top section to remove any potential interference with the drive units. The system is kept cool by the use of heat sinks and an opening between the base of the speaker and the plinth that allows air to travel up into the main electronics module and out of the speaker via a vent.

Beautifully layered soundstage

This system serves up arguably the finest audio we have heard from such a product so far. It all starts with the excellent integration of all those drive units. The LS60 Wireless presents an immersive and focused stereo image that rival products could only dream of. There's width and height, but it never sounds stretched, and you never lose the sense of precision and control that the KEFs show over the music.

We kick things off with a Tidal Master of David Bowie's *Modern Love*, and the LS60 is quick to set out its fantastically well-organised stall. Each element is introduced and layered beautifully in the soundstage. Firstly the guitar, then the drums and piano, and finally the vocal arrives to complete the picture.

The system sounds lively and enthusiastic. Precision and solidity is a theme that runs through the LS60 and every individual piano key strike, guitar string pluck and drum beat is dispatched with gusto and control. The speakers keep a solid grip on the track but don't squeeze the life out of it. In fact you feel right in the middle of the action with the LS60 Wireless, as if you are trapped in a bubble of sound that you hope won't burst.

We are keen to hear just how the LS60's Uni-Core drivers handle low frequencies, with the Jauz Remix of Shaed's *Trampoline*. Before the dubstep element has a chance to muscle in, we are drawn to the detail in the midrange. There is an impressive level of detail in and space around the lead vocal. It is surrounded by an echo that floats effortlessly in the ether. The vocal rises and tees up a brief but perfectly executed moment of silence before the KEFs plummet to follow the track's deep, dirty bassline. It is dispatched with intent and



The cabinets are extraordinarily slim at 13cm wide (minus plinth)

force - edges are sharply drawn, and there is so much texture to the notes you are almost fooled into thinking you can reach out and feel them. There is so much weight and power on display, you wouldn't believe a cabinet this slim could produce such an impactful sound.

KEF has managed to combine impressive engineering and a comprehensive feature set with an attractive user experience, and to top it all off with fantastic audio quality. It's a fine example of modern hi-fi and currently has no real rival if you are in the market for a convenient yet premium solution.

WHAT HI-FI?

RATING ★★★★★

SOUND



FEATURES



BUILD



FOR

- Focused, hugely entertaining sound
- Superb driver integration
- Built in streaming and amplification

AGAINST

- Wired connection needed for native 24-bit/192kHz playback

VERDICT

The LS60 combine eye-catching looks, a suite of useful features and outstanding sound quality