

SPEAKER SYSTEM

FOCAL SIB&CO PACK CINEMA PRO

£1,150 | ★★★★★

This new French collection is simply magnifique

These days, home cinema is as much about style as it is about sound quality; there's no point producing the best-sounding speakers in the world if they look like something your dog threw up. The French fashionistas at Focal-JMLab have obviously figured this out, and while you can debate long and hard about personal taste and good looks, there's no denying this latest Sib&Co offering is distinctive.

Comprising five Sib XL satellites (there are other packs involving the smaller Sib or the larger floor-standing Sib XXL satellites) and the Cub2 subwoofer, the package is designed to complement a plasma screen-based system, and as such, the versatile speakers can be either wall-mounted or placed on the attractive Hop stands (£115 each).

Getting them all set up is a doddle, and the XLs prove themselves very room-friendly, while subtle tweaks to the sub produce a good, solid all-round sound, whether your taste lies in the latest action flicks or surround-sound classical music on SACD. The sound stage across the front three speakers is enveloping and forceful, while the rear

speakers and subwoofer do a great job of dragging you into the action when called upon.

The improvement over the previous incarnation of Focal's Sib and Cub sub-sat system is twofold: first off, the XL speakers are considerably more capable than the basic Sibs, especially with music; and secondly, the rejuvenated Cub2 makes for an enhanced lower-end performance. This system now bangs and crashes on demand!

So, with its distinctive design and punchy, detailed performance, the Pack Cinéma Pro represents an excellent investment for movie-lovers demanding top-notch surround sound in a visually striking, reasonably priced package. Well worth a look. **SM**

Details	
FOCAL SIB&CO PACK CINEMA PRO	
PRICE	£1,150
WEBSITE	www.focal-fr.com
PROS	Stylish design. Solid, full-bodied sound. Top-notch bass performance. Room-friendly.
CONS	Design may not appeal.
PERFORMANCE VALUE	★★★★★
T3 TOTAL	★★★★★



DVD PLAYER

DENON DVD-3910

£900 | ★★★★★

Is this worth denting your wallet for?

Some things simply ooze class and quality – and when they're home cinema products, that usually means they also weigh more than a big-boned hippo with a thyroid problem. This hefty slab of technological wizardry certainly stretched our arms when we picked it up, so is it as good as the bulk suggests?

Actually, yes. Firstly, there are the connections – nothing's been missed out on this model, from HDMI to component video, and from coaxial/optical digital audio to good old-fashioned analogue stereo. There's also a Denon Link socket for a digital-only audio connection with the company's awesome AVR-3805 receiver (T3 103, 5/5).

Being a universal player, the 3910 will happily spin DVD-Video, DVD-Audio and SACD discs, in addition to most flavours of CD. Performance from all these formats is pretty astonishing, with incredibly vivid video and sonics that are practically indistinguishable from the output of most high-end CD players. Make no mistake – this is a fantastic piece of kit, and as future-proofed as you'll probably get until HD-DVD and Blu-ray discs start to vie for your affections.

If only this design brilliance had been applied to the aesthetics – the unit is more than a little industrial-looking, and the remote could have come from a £40 supermarket special, rather than an ultra-high-end machine costing almost a grand. And let's face it – that price is a huge stumbling block for the average person.

If you want a DVD player that makes no compromises with performance, formats or connections, there aren't many better – just be prepared to pay mightily for the privilege. **SO**

Details	
DENON DVD-3910	
PRICE	£900
WEBSITE	www.denon.co.uk
PROS	Incredible audio and video quality. Has every connection you could need. Built like a tank. Plays DVD-Audio and SACD.
CONS	The price – ouch! Big and heavy. Nasty remote.
RATINGS	PERFORMANCE VALUE ★★★★★
	VALUE ★★★★★
	T3 TOTAL ★★★★★

