



Samsung R3

Multi-room might not be new to the audio world, but it's one that's growing fast, especially thanks to its high-tech lifestyle appeal.

In broad terms, the concept allows control of multiple audio and AV components using network connectivity and an app. Of course this is dependent on building your AV church upon the rock of a specific range of compatible products from a specific brand. But it is a concept that rewards you more, the more you buy into it.

Samsung seems to have cracked the multi-room market, especially in this price range. It not only offers an impressive array of products within its multi-room range, but a string of compatible products from other ranges as well.

The Samsung R3 is one of three models in this specific line-up of wireless speakers. It's the middle child, with its smaller and bigger siblings following the same sound and design concept by offering 360 degree sound dispersion.

All of these models feature an upright cylindrical shape that flares slightly at the top. It is most certainly an eye-catching design, inspiring curiosity as well as a bit of fun.

The bulk of the unit is dressed in semi-gloss black cloth, endowing it with a minimalist look and feel, with a slight sparkle adding a touch of glamour. The top is also all black with touch-sensitive buttons and a discreet OLED centrepiece that confirms the source volume level selected.

A swipe function has also been incorporated into the design, turning the whole of the top of the unit into a control surface, which I found not only fun, but also a great way to maintain the minimalist concept while retaining all the functionality you're used to from the actual unit.

The base has a slightly brushed effect and there is a small gap between the base and the main body that is used as a reflex port to channel air from the downward-firing woofer. It's a nice bit of accentuation and one of the only clues that this thing is actually a speaker.

The cylindrical shape is not just an interesting, abstract design choice, but also forms the backbone of the omnidirectional sound concept. Both the tweeter and the woofer incorporate Samsung's Ring Radiator technology, which uses an acoustic lens to disperse sound in all directions.

In short, the technology works. I had my test unit set up in the middle of a table

in a rather large room and found that I was getting the same good results from everywhere – especially in the treble department, which is the tougher part of the sound spectrum to crack.

Overall, the sound performance was controlled and well detailed, with a good natural balance. The bass was generous and had a nice tight punch to it.



There was a surprising amount of low-end bass that augmented the general presentation, rather than muddying up the rest of the sound spectrum. Together with the superbly detailed midrange, it ensured a full, albeit controlled, performance.

The treble was crisp with a good level of sheen to ward off any hardening of the sound in the upper echelons of the volume range. It's hard to find anything to criticise in the sound department, especially given the R3's size and price.

At the end of the day, the whole experience revolves around the multi-room app, which is the best one I've used to date in terms of functionality, user-friendliness and design.

Stylish yet easy-to-read fonts, combined with pleasant icons and colour schemes, ensure a very enjoyable visual experience, while the layout and general flow of the app make navigation intuitive, entertaining and easy to learn.

But the real fun starts when you start stacking up your devices. You can select different music sources for each speaker, or group them all together for the same sound from each speaker.

That's the joy of the multi-room concept and I found the only thing lacking from my experience with the R3 was that I didn't have



any other compatible devices to really enjoy it.

For me, the Samsung R3 scores top marks in every category. It's gorgeous, with excellent functionality, and it sounds great. More importantly, the other devices within this specific range, and everything else from Samsung that sports the multi-room badge, look great as well.

That's a comforting thought, considering that if the R3 really floats your boat, you'll be pledging allegiance to Samsung and its burgeoning multiroom components for the foreseeable future.

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw



VITAL STATS

Design	Two-way, omnidirectional
Connectivity	Wireless LAN, Bluetooth, TV Sound Connect (Samsung TVs only)
Control device	Android 2.3.3 and above iOS 6.1 and above
Drive units	1x 25 mm tweeter, 1x 103 mm woofer
Dimensions (WxHxD)	166 x 313 x 166 mm
Weight	2,7 kg

Verdict

Conceptually brilliant, compact loudspeaker that sounds great, too. Specifically tailored to suit Samsung's proprietary multi-room systems.

Price R5 500

Supplied by Samsung
011-549-1500

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Website www.samsung.co.za

OUR RATING: 81/100

