



# McIntosh RS100

**T**he Hi-Fi to Wi-Fi evolution has been interesting to say the least and has been responsible for several exciting and rather groundbreaking ideas.

Armed with wireless technology and the knowledge that a clear majority of the civilized world has a smart device on or around their person at all times, audio manufacturers have given birth to

some unforgettable devices and, in turn, software developers have connected them to a world of possibilities.

McIntosh, long renowned for the superior sound and build quality of its components, has now also entered the wireless ring with its answer to this growing phenomenon – the RS100.

At first glance, it's everything I could hope for from a McIntosh unit: a simple

shape, high-gloss black finish, oversized retro knobs, backlit VU meter and, of course, that trademark green glow from the gothic McIntosh logo.

The simple, squat, parallelogram shape leans slightly back on its heels, which – for me – gives it a confident and almost regal overall aesthetic. Add to that an aluminium plinth and Perspex trim, and you have a definitely noble and definitely McIntosh-





looking speaker.

Build quality can be felt in the depression and oscillation of the knobs, the feel of the cabinet, and the weight. The RS100 is heavy!

Setting up the McIntosh is simple, and even though I received a pair for this review, you only need one to get up and running. Plug in the power, download the app to a compatible wireless device, sync it to your network – and hey, presto, you’re up and running.

Unlike most of the multi-room systems I’ve tested over the past year or so, McIntosh has not employed a proprietary app that only works for McIntosh devices.

Instead, the company turned to DTS (yes, *that* DTS) who’s Play-Fi App is quickly becoming the staple ‘Brain’ for a lot of respectable audio brands who have a multi-room line-up.

That’s a smart move, in my opinion: hand the software side of things over to a software company. That way, you can concentrate on what you do best: the sound!

From the get-go, the RS100 makes its presence felt. The warm but boisterous bass signature confidently fills a small space with toe-tapping enthusiasm. The midrange is ‘there’ without being too

dominant, leaving voices accurate but rolled off ever so gently. As a result, there is an undeniably sweet quality to even the top ranges of Rose or Carey’s vocals.

The treble also has a decisive presence. Again, there is a sweet roll-off from all the audio information a reference speaker might give out, but I can still feel clicks, claps and snare hits in the top of my chest. An appropriately glazed enjoyment, without the overly critical precision of my usual studio-based environment.

Overall, I find that the RS100 has an understatedly authoritative charisma at lower volumes as well as a self-assured all-round punch when turned up. It’s the kind of ‘whole’ balance you really want from a small wireless speaker without the muddying of a system trying to do too much.

At the user core is the Play-Fi App and, as far as user experiences go, it’s definitely up there in terms of ease-of-use and functionality. It boasts an impressive array of leading online streaming services as well as a Critical Listening mode with a native playback of up to 24-bit/192 kHz with no down-sampling.

Setting up and synchronizing the second RS100 confirmed the user-friendliness of the multi-room system, as well as the

design impact it brings to any room it’s in. It certainly is an eye-catching device.

In case you’re an old-school audiophile in the process of making the wireless switch, there is also a single phono input at the back for wired signals as well as a subwoofer output for that extra low end.

All-in-all, it’s a cracker of a product from McIntosh in this arena. I’d like to see a bit more connectivity in the future (like Bluetooth and Airplay) but, for what it is and at this price, there perhaps has never been a more exciting and affordable time to own a slice of that good ol’ McIntosh pie. If you’re new to the Wi-Fi audio game, the RS100 is an undeniably good first step.

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw

VITAL STATS

Type ....2-Way wireless bookshelf speaker  
 Drivers... 1x 102 mm Woofer/Midrange,  
 1 x 19 mm dome tweeter  
 Amplification..... 60 watts  
 Frequency response... 55 – 20 000 kHz  
 Crossover Frequency..... 2 000 Hz  
 Sensitivity ..... 85 dB  
 Connectivity ..... Wi-Fi 802.11a/b/g/n  
 Wi-Fi (Dual Band).  
 WPS, Subwoofer Out, Phono In  
 Dimensions (WxHxD)  
 ..... 20.8 x 33.1 x 25.4 cm  
 Weight ..... 6.6 kg

Verdict  
 Brilliant design and new world architecture come together to produce the most exciting and affordable piece of the McIntosh pie ever... probably.

Price ..... R17 990

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OUR RATING: 90/100