

10 SPEAKERS THAT LOVE YOUR iTHING



# HOME ENTERTAINMENT BUYERS GUIDE

ESSENTIAL SHOPPING AND BEST BUYS

ISSUE 33 \$8.95

## *The* EXCLUSIVE ISSUE

- Classic kit
- World's most expensive gear
- Awarding-winning smart homes



## TOP TABLETS ON TEST



## 5 HEADPHONES REVIEWED AND RATED



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What to buy in 2011

# SMART TV



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The expert's verdict for LCD, LED and plasma



BBC London

MERIDIAN

# PREMIUM IPOD DOCKS

Now that Apple is sharing the technology love, iPod docks have become things of substance as well as beauty. **By Max Everingham**

**W**hen Apple released the ALE or 'Apple Lossless Encoder' codec, a lossless format for digital music destined for its iDevices, and allowed manufacturers of iPod and iPhone compatible equipment to bypass the players' internal DACs, the prognosis for iPod docks suddenly became a whole lot rosier. No longer hampered by crappy compression and able to benefit from the high-end tech that companies were putting in their other audio gear, the iPod dock was reborn as a serious audio component.

Some Apple music player owners are just going to want a simple dock that chucks the music out through some half-decent speakers and charges their player in the process. The good news for them is that not only is there

now a considerable lineup of products that do that, and only that, but that the quality of the music played back (provided you've ripped/encoded the digital music at a decent bit-rate in the first place) is now better than ever.

For the more discerning, there are iPod docks that go from adding a few more features than simple playback and charging - things such as a clock, snooze, alarm, or digital DAB+ radio - through to WiFi enabled streaming servers, designer-styled units that wouldn't look out of place in an art gallery and audiophile beasts that you'd swear were playing back uncompressed CDs on players costing many thousands of dollars. Actually, some docks do cost thousands of dollars, but not too many and, boy, are they worth it!

## B&W ZEPPELIN AIR

Price: \$799 Website: [www.ahifi.com.au](http://www.ahifi.com.au)

The blimp-shaped dock has garnered all sorts of acclaim for both its looks and performance, and the new 'Air' model comes with integrated streaming audio 'AirPlay' technology. So now you can easily set up a multi-room wireless music system using multiple Zeppelin Air units and then send music to it from your iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch

for playback. Upgraded DACs and a dedicated amp for each of the five speaker units make the Zeppelin Air ideal for style-conscious music lovers.

- Sleek, quirky appearance, AirPlay tech
- No display



## CONRAN AUDIO IPOD DOCK

Price: \$549 Website: [www.canohm.com.au](http://www.canohm.com.au)

The iPod dock for diehard fashionistas and designer label-loving folk, this dock is the work of Habitat-founder and legendary British design guru, Sir Terence Conran. Capable of wireless streaming via Bluetooth and the CD-quality 'apt-X' codec, the remote for this unit cleverly fits neatly into the side of the dock when not in use.

- Retro styling, rotating dock, apt-X compatibility
- Very plain vanilla functionality; no WiFi or radio

## MERIDIAN M80

Price: \$3995 Website: [www.ambertech.com.au](http://www.ambertech.com.au)

A lovely, clear OLED display graces this music system that comprises an AM/FM/DAB radio, slot-loading CD/DVD player and separate i80 iPod dock, for charging and playback. The superlative build quality and artisan-level attention to detail - like the hand-tooled leather finish - should appeal to anyone who appreciates proper craftsmanship, but this solid little unit also exhibits peerless sound reproduction.

- Clear display, build quality, hand-stitched leather, good functions
- iPod dock separate from main unit

