

GROUPTEST ACTIVE LOUDSPEAKERS £700-£6,500



Klipsch The Sevens £1,250

With retro looks and a sound that's anything but, will Klipsch rue the decision to eschew wi-fi?

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Klipsch The Sevens

ORIGIN
USA

TYPE
Active 2-way standmount speaker

WEIGHT
Primary: 10.1kg
Secondary: 9.3kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
206 x 416 x 276mm

FEATURES
• 25mm titanium dome tweeter with Tractrix horn
• 165mm long-throw fibre-composite mid/bass driver
• Claimed power: 100W (each)

DISTRIBUTOR
Henley Audio Ltd.

Leaning heavily on its distinctive heritage aesthetic – the cavernous Tractrix horn and Tractrix-shaped reflex port, rich walnut veneer, gleaming retro-style metal thumbwheel controls on top of the primary speaker – this strapping standmount plugs into the nostalgia trend (dig its cream-coloured fabric grille) as powerfully as the KEF evokes the shock of the new.

All sham, of course – functionally, there's little difference between the two, though future-fi Klipsch style does diverge in methodology from the group norm. Yes, The Sevens are true active wireless speakers – the crossover, handled in DSP, precedes the amplification – but all four of its Class D amp modules are housed in the primary speaker rather than split between the pair. Which is why two lengths (2m and 4m) of 4-pole cable to invite the secondary speaker to the party are included in the box. The efficient Tractrix horn-mounted 25mm titanium tweeters are treated to 20W a side, the 165mm, long-throw mid/bass drivers 80W. The

main advantage of such an arrangement? One mains plug.

Another point of difference is that The Sevens offer no wi-fi streaming, only Bluetooth via aptX HD. This may or may not be a deal breaker, though hooking up an affordable streamer such as the WiiM Mini via the primary speaker's optical input is easy enough. This isn't to deride the basic versatility of The Sevens. Connection options include HDMI-Arc for TV, the already mentioned Bluetooth and optical, plus analogue RCA and USB (up to 24-bit/192kHz) inputs and a sub out. To round things off, there's even a built-in moving-magnet phono stage, so you can plug in a turntable without going through an external preamp.

The Klipsch Connect app is used to set up the speakers and tweak the EQ to suit the room. It includes something called Dynamic Bass, a DSP enhancement which pretty much does precisely what it says on the tin – but isn't recommended for lower listening levels (there's a night-listening mode for that). The app can also be used to download firmware updates as they become available.

Sound quality

If you think The Sevens' streaming chops are hobbled by having to use Bluetooth aptX HD instead of wi-fi, think again. I am shocked how good a 24-bit/96kHz Tidal Master sounds. Sure, plugging in a Primare NP5 Prisma MK2 (HFC 494) streamer does better, but it says something about The Sevens' style of music-making that the differences aren't critical.

First impression is of a floorstanding largesse, richness and warmth with bags of presence and some weight that's immediately appealing, absolute clarity less of an up-front priority. Not that it's lacking resolution, just that detail isn't showcased, remaining an intrinsic part of the music without being spotlighted. It's a style that serves all the test tracks well, presenting Shawn Mendes with a rich, almost tangible feel, generous space and confidently locked-down timing, Lizzy McAlpine with a kind of mellifluous wrap-around glow that nonetheless stays the right side of euphonic colouration and, again, is well enough resolved to let the call-and-response sections



I am shocked how good a 24-bit/96kHz Tidal Master sounds via Bluetooth

with multiple, self-harmonising Jacob Colliers weave their magic.

Although it can't muster the dynamic clout of the floorstanders, it's certainly the hardest hitting of the standmounts and sounds remarkably weighty and controlled working its way through a piece like *Combat Continuum* with epic affectations. Something of an iron fist in a velvet glove that trades a little subtlety for scale and impact, then. Mildly manipulative it may be, but there's admirable energy and feel-good sonics throughout ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Heritage style; build and finish; rich, wholesome sound

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** No wi-fi

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★ **WESAY:** Does what a Klipsch does, in a good way

FEATURES
★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★