

PLUG-N-PLAY SYSTEM OF THE YEAR

KEF LS50 Wireless
\$2199, \$2499 Nocturne edition

Built to celebrate KEF's 50th anniversary, the original LS50 monitor spun pure coincident-driver magic thanks to its blushing pink-gold Uni-Q coaxial midrange/tweeter mounted in bulls-eye fashion atop a uniquely arched baffle. Visually arresting and sonically satisfying, the LS50 delivered tonal neutrality at just the right pitch, with superb midrange sonics, full-bodied presence, and potent midbass punch. Comes now an "all-in-one" version of this same speaker, with built-in amplifier, DAC, streaming preamp (Tidal and Roon ready), and DSP room EQ that gives you the same sonics without any need for outboard electronics. Thanks to its beautifully crafted high-density enclosure—an ideal platform for the space-saving Uni-Q—there is little in the way of cabinet resonances or port colorations. Imaging is as clean and pinpoint-precise as you'd expect from KEF. The strikingly beautiful, black "Nocturne" version designed by Marcel Wanders adds circular glow-in-the-dark patterns to the enclosure, making for a speaker that looks as stunning as it sounds, even during night-time listening. (286)



2018
the absolute sound
PRODUCT
OF THE
YEAR
AWARD

DESKTOP LOUDSPEAKER OF THE YEAR

Wilson Audio Specialties TuneTot
\$9800/\$10,500, depending on color

Wilson's smallest loudspeaker (8.61" x 14.83" x 10.19") was designed with a specific use in mind—placement on a shelf or piece of furniture near a room boundary. Tempting as it may be to put TuneTots on stands out in a room like typical "mini-monitors," such an arrangement will not allow them to perform at their considerable best. When the "Tots are positioned as intended and powered by quality amplification, bass and drums on pop/rock material have satisfying punch; soundstaging and imaging on well-made orchestral recordings are first rate; vocal and instrumental sonorities are naturally represented. If the surface the "Tots rest upon is at all resonant (a typical bookshelf, for example), a pair of Wilson ISOBases (\$2100) will be beneficial. A variety of finish and grille-cloth color options are available. Deploying the TuneTots in a desktop system is a real possibility—just don't expect to get any work done. (287)

