



Spendor S3e

£795

↑ FOR

Insightful and even-handed sound; lovely quality of build

↓ AGAINST

Lack a little warmth in the midrange, but not really anything else

→ VERDICT

The S3es from Spendor are terrifically capable, though understated, performers



IF YOU'RE FAMILIAR with the old S3s, this new version will be something of a shock. The S3e is cleaner, clearer and far more analytical than its predecessor. Dynamics have more bite and the bass is notably more forceful, with much improved depth.

The result is a speaker that can kick hard with the likes of Lemon Jelly, then deliver the latest *Harry Potter* soundtrack with all of the scale, subtlety and insight it deserves. True, there's a coolness, a touch of sterility, in the midrange that means they don't quite manage to inspire in the same way as the old model did. However, the S3s can't match the S3e's resolution, or overall authority.

Furthermore, these speakers aren't attention-grabbers, which sounds like criticism but is, in fact,

Try matching the S3es with Roksan's Kandy MkIII or M-series Caspian amps

high praise indeed. If speakers draw attention to themselves it means they're stamping too much of a signature over the recording – definitely not a good thing. Sure, all speakers have a certain amount of character, but some – such as these Spendors – are beautifully benign in their nature.

These standmounts are easy to drive, so system-matching comes down to quality, not muscle. The old model was happy with the Cyrus 6 amp, but this new one needs something with a bit more richness, such as Roksan's Kandy Mk III. Positioning them is easy: use solid stands, at least 20cm from a back wall, with a touch of toe-in.

Overall, these Spendors are very hard to fault – though they might appeal to the head more than the heart.

AT A GLANCE...

<p>STAND</p>	<p>BIWIRE YES</p>
<p>SPEAKER SIZE 34x17x26cm</p>	<p>POWER HANDLING WATTS 125</p>