



Elementary

Aluminium is a metal made for sound. Like steel strings and brass sections, in the right hands it can send the spirits soaring. Its combination of lightness, strength and stiffness is a godsend to engineers, including our own who have used the metal to create some of our sweetest-sounding drive units.

But we're attached to aluminium for another reason. It looks – and feels – as good as it sounds. Few materials satisfy form and function with such liquid elegance. Whether it's shining in sheets on an Airstream trailer, flowing around the frame of a Charles Eames chair, clinging to the body of an Aston Martin DB9 or sleekly, snugly safeguarding our sounds on an iPod, aluminium is the metal for modern living.

Which brings us to the B&W XT Series: speakers for music or home theatre use that encase leading-edge acoustic engineering in slimline aluminium cabinets. Audiophile performance and cultured, contemporary design, equally at home in traditional living rooms or modern apartments. The XT2 is a compact, two-way system. The XT8 is a full, three-way speaker. And the aptly-named XTC is a two-way system designed primarily for centre speaker use. Look, listen and lose yourself in admiration for the XT Series.



Partnerships with leading studios haven't just benefited high-end ranges such as the latest 800 Series. The XT Series and the PV1 subwoofer that supplements it are direct beneficiaries of the technologies and design features developed from our reference 800 Series.



Leading by listening

From our earliest days, B&W speakers have been developed in partnership with the world's most demanding users. When studios such as Abbey Road, with whom we've worked since its heyday in the sixties, tell us what they think of our sound, we listen closely. The payback of these relationships – for them as well as us – is in the performance. When people such as Skywalker Sound, cinema's sonic innovator supreme, deploy your speakers in their studios, you know you're on the right track.



The magic of metal



B&W Head of Research Gary Geaves explains the special appeal of aluminium for speaker cabinet designers.

Could you give us some insight into how different it is working with aluminium speaker cabinets from wooden ones?

Take an instrument like a flute. You can have wooden ones and metal ones. They sound different to some degree, but there's no mistaking they are both flutes. Moreover, you don't try to make a metal instrument sound exactly like the wooden version and vice versa. What you do is to make the very best of both platforms.

But surely there's a difference between musical instruments as sound producers and speakers as sound reproducers? Shouldn't speakers be completely neutral?

Whatever the material, we always try to minimise any effect the cabinet might have on timbre by bracing and damping, and in the way we mount the drivers. Even so, there will inevitably be a small signature – but neither material is intrinsically better than the other.

What I always try to do is to optimise whatever platform I am working with. There are bigger factors contributing to the overall listening experience than the relatively small differences in timbre we are talking about here.

Such as?

I'm thinking of those characteristics that are difficult to describe by figures and graphs. The differences you don't find in any written specification. Imaging, a sense of space, dynamic impact – things like that.

Has working with aluminium helped with any of these?

Absolutely! One of the big contributors to good imaging is how the sound disperses from the speaker into the room. Cabinet geometry has a lot to do with that. You need the right balance between direct and reflected sound to get a smooth continuum of sound from left to right. If you don't, there's too much concentration around the speakers themselves and the centre point between them. The thin wall of the aluminium extrusions allows us to make the cabinet narrower for the same internal volume and this widens the dispersion. The imaging from these speakers is truly amazing.

Don't thinner cabinet walls make for weaker cabinets and more vibration?

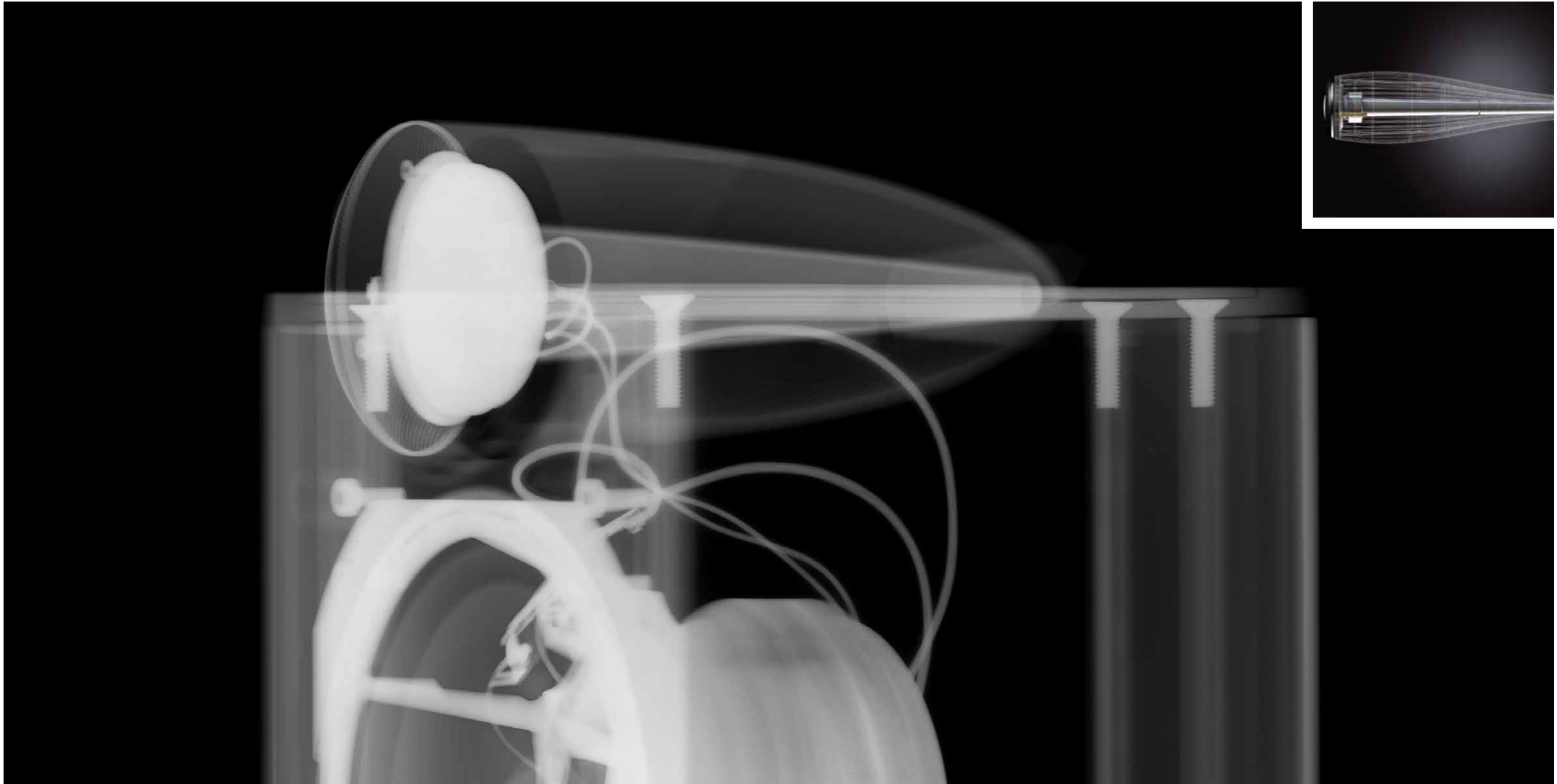
It might if we were dealing with simple flat panels, as we normally do with wooden cabinets. But aluminium is stiffer than wood, and this stiffness is further increased by the curved profile and internal bracing. We've also been able to mount the drivers in such a way that they induce no vibrations in the cabinet walls. Altogether it adds up to a very strong, stable cabinet.



Treble

On the XT2 and XT8, our aluminium-domed, Nautilus™ Tapering Tube tweeter has the perfect perch – on top of the speaker. But it was our stop-at-nothing approach on earlier models that led us to find it. We wanted to eliminate the time-smearing of the tweeter signal when it was mounted in its traditional position in the main cabinet, caused by high frequency sound waves being re-radiated at the cabinet edges. Releasing the tweeter from its captivity and placing it on top did the trick. And results in a remarkably life-like and three-dimensional sense of acoustic space.

Nautilus™ Tapering Tube technology works like a trumpet in reverse to banish the colouring sound output that comes from the rear of a drive unit. Like a black hole for stray sound.

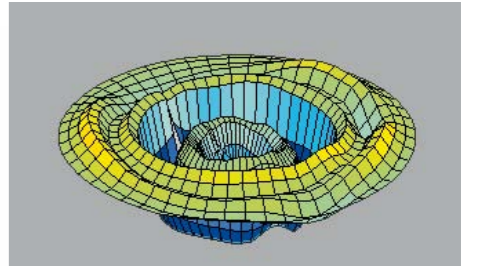
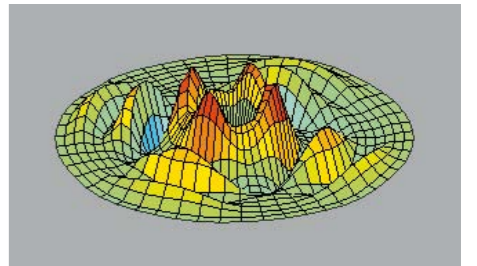


Midrange

The XT Series utilises every facet of B&W's expertise in drive unit engineering. All models incorporate our trademark midrange drivers woven from ochre-coloured Kevlar®. And for the midrange of the new XT8 speaker, we've been able to introduce FST™ – a definition-enhancing innovation normally seen only in our most advanced reference speakers.



A blend of high-strength woven fibre first used in bulletproof vests and a secret resin recipe, B&W's Kevlar® midrange cones are the envy of our rivals. The mixture of the square weave and strengthening resin creates a cone that stands firm in the face of concentric standing waves, absorbing them before they form and cause distortion.



Constant striving for improvement has long been a hallmark of the B&W approach. So it should come as no surprise that we've been able to add a very special refinement to the midrange of the new three-way XT8 floorstander. The fixed suspension transducer (FST™ for short) is a high-end piece of technology that absorbs bending waves traveling to the edge of the cone, further improving response times and the integrity of sound transmission.

Bass

Don't let the slim profile fool you. The XT Series is capable of delivering the kind of deep, rich bass that can fill rooms and send pulses racing, thanks to rock-solid construction and the magical properties of Kevlar®. In the three-way XT8, twin five-inch paper/Kevlar® bass cones deliver remarkably extended low frequency performance.



XT8 bass units feature ultra-stiff cones constructed from a finely tuned mix of paper pulp, Kevlar® fibres and resin. Combine that with long voice coils and large magnets, and you've got the ingredients you need for powerful, precise bass.

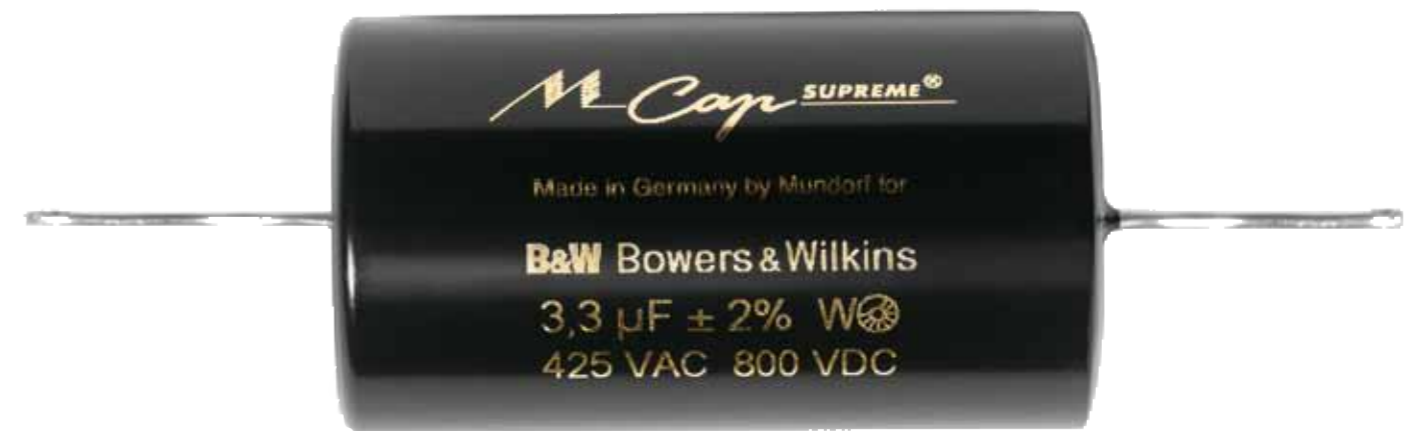
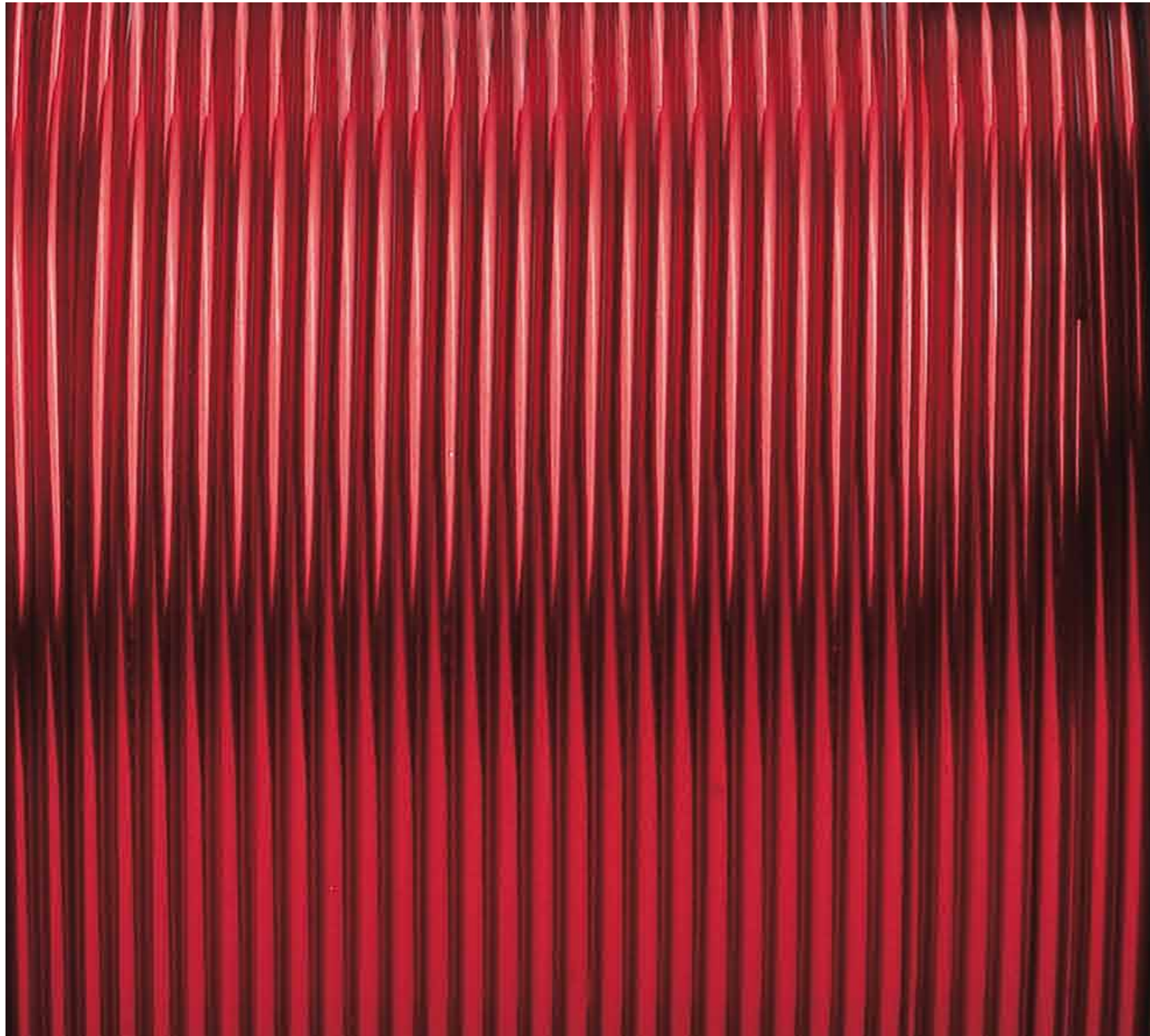


Flowports are the lungs of XT Series speakers, giving bass the air it needs to breathe. And thanks to the dimples that help smooth airflow, you'll never hear the "chuffing" noises that can marr the sound of conventional speakers.



Signal box

Drive units are a loudspeaker's muscles, doing the work. The crossover is the brain. Or, as we like to think of it, the soul – a place for simplicity, sensitivity and generosity. The drive units used in the XT Series are so good, we need only the simplest crossovers with the fewest components to preserve the signal's purity. The tweeter filter is first order: just a single, high-calibre capacitor that can maintain the fragility and subtlety of the high-frequency signal.



Those components we do use in our crossovers are, needless to say, handpicked. Minimising their number means we can fine-tune each one by ear, putting every alternative brand and model through exhaustive listening tests, until we have a suite of components that delivers a sound we're completely satisfied with.

The calming curve

It doesn't just look good. The aluminium enclosures of the XT Series curve in that graceful, unbroken arc for a very good practical reason – the same reason why seashells are round and wheels don't have corners. Continuous curves are simply much better at bearing high pressures and forces than surfaces with edges, or discontinuities. They spread stresses evenly across their plane, rather than directing them to potential weak points. It's a principle we've applied to speaker cabinets. A naturally strong, shell-like enclosure, formed from a single aluminium extrusion, absorbs vibrations and shocks, preventing them from disturbing the stillness of the speaker's sensitive drive unit assemblies. You'll notice the difference. It's enough to send traditional straight-sided cabinets round the bend.



The speakers in the XT Series are available in two finishes designed to blend, chameleon-like, into any interior, modern or traditional. Choose between natural brushed aluminium, and a dramatic, minimalist gloss black.



Aluminium



Gloss black

Silver screen



We've devised the XT Series to satisfy the demands of any high quality home theatre set-up. Use either the XT2 or XT8 in the main or rear positions, depending on the room size, and an XTC in the centre spot. And, for a truly dramatic, cinematic bass undercurrent to your viewing, a natural addition to an XT system is B&W's extraordinary PV1 subwoofer. The spherical, metallic PV1 takes our belief in curved cabinets to its logical conclusion. From the smallest space possible, it delivers the biggest possible kick.



Seamless stereo



The XT Series performs brilliantly as a two-channel system. The XT2 will sit equally happily on a wall using the included wave-shaped bracket, or on a tabletop or shelf. A floor stand is also available.





XT8

Technical features	Free-mounted Nautilus™ tube-loaded aluminium dome tweeter Kevlar® brand fibre cone FST™ midrange Flowport™
Description	3-way vented-box system
Drive units	1x ø25mm (1 in) aluminium dome high-frequency 1x ø130mm (5 in) woven Kevlar® cone FST™ midrange 2x ø130mm (5 in) Paper/Kevlar® cone bass
Frequency range	-6dB at 34Hz and 50kHz
Frequency response	40Hz - 22kHz ±3dB on reference axis
Dispersion	Within 2dB of reference response Horizontal: over 60° arc Vertical: over 10° arc
Sensitivity	86dB spl (2.83V, 1m)
Harmonic distortion	2nd and 3rd harmonics (90dB, 1m) <1% 120Hz - 20kHz <0.5% 200Hz - 20kHz
Nominal impedance	8Ω (minimum 3.1Ω)
Crossover frequency	360Hz, 3.5kHz
Recommended amplifier power	50W - 150W into 8Ω on unclipped programme
Max. recommended cable impedance	0.1Ω
Dimensions	Height: 1155mm (45.5 in) (not including feet) Width: 154mm (6.1 in) over cabinet 322mm (12.7 in) over base Depth: 200mm (7.9 in) over cabinet 322mm (12.7 in) over base
Net weight	24.5kg (54 lb)
Finishes	Cabinet: Brushed natural aluminium Gloss black Grille: Black cloth



XT2

Technical features	Free-mounted Nautilus™ tube-loaded aluminium dome tweeter Kevlar® brand fibre cone bass/midrange Flowport™, wall bracket included
Description	2-way vented-box system
Drive units	1x ø25mm (1 in) aluminium dome high-frequency 1x ø130mm (5 in) woven Kevlar® cone bass/midrange
Frequency range	-6dB at 46Hz and 50kHz
Frequency response	55Hz - 22kHz ±3dB on reference axis
Dispersion	Within 2dB of reference response Horizontal: over 60° arc Vertical: over 10° arc
Sensitivity	85dB spl (2.83V, 1m)
Harmonic distortion	2nd and 3rd harmonics (90dB, 1m) <1% 130Hz - 20kHz <0.5% 200Hz - 20kHz
Nominal impedance	8Ω (minimum 5.2Ω)
Crossover frequency	4kHz
Recommended amplifier power	30W - 100W into 8Ω on unclipped programme
Max. recommended cable impedance	0.1Ω
Dimensions	Height: 315mm (12.4 in) (not including feet) Width: 154mm (6.1 in) Depth: 200mm (7.9 in) (without bracket) 213mm (8.4 in) (mounted on wall)
Net weight	5kg (11 lb)
Finishes	Cabinet: Brushed natural aluminium Black gloss Grille: Black cloth

FS-XT/II Speaker Stand

Height:	700mm (27.6 in) (not including feet) 1013mm (40 in) with XT2 on stand
Width:	290mm (11.4 in)
Depth:	290mm (11.4 in)

	Aluminium	Gloss black
Top	Silver paint	Gloss black
Pillar	Brushed aluminium	Brushed aluminium
Base	Spun Aluminium	Gloss Black



XTC

Technical features	Nautilus™ tube-loaded aluminium dome tweeter Kevlar® brand fibre cone bass/midrange Flowport™, wall bracket and table support included
Description	2-way vented-box system
Drive units	1x ø25mm (1 in) aluminium dome high-frequency 2x ø130mm (5 in) woven Kevlar® cone bass/midrange
Frequency range	-6dB at 40Hz and 50kHz
Frequency response	55Hz - 22kHz ±3dB on reference axis
Dispersion	Within 2dB of reference response Horizontal: over 20° arc Vertical: over 60° arc
Sensitivity	87dB spl (2.83V, 1m)
Harmonic distortion	2nd and 3rd harmonics (90dB, 1m) <1% 130Hz - 20kHz <0.5% 200Hz - 20kHz
Nominal impedance	8Ω (minimum 4.0Ω)
Crossover frequency	4kHz
Recommended amplifier power	30W - 150W into 8Ω on unclipped programme
Max. recommended cable impedance	0.1Ω
Dimensions	Height: 154mm (6.1 in) (cabinet only) 161mm (6.3 in) (on table support) Width: 512mm (20.2 in) Depth: 200mm (7.9 in) (without bracket) 212mm (8.4 in) (mounted on wall)
Net weight	8kg (17.6 lb)
Finishes	Cabinet: Brushed natural aluminium Gloss black Grille: Black cloth



PV1

Technical Features	Pressure vessel enclosure 500W ICEPower® amplifier Switch mode power supply
Description	Active closed-box subwoofer system
Drive unit	2x ø200mm (8 in) mica / aluminium diaphragm long-throw
Frequency range	-6dB at 18Hz and 40/140Hz adjustable (EQ at i)
Frequency response	±3dB 21Hz – 31/110Hz adjustable (EQ at i)
Amplifier	Power output: 500W Rated power consumption: 110W (105W – 100V version) Input impedance: 100kΩ Signal / noise: >90dB Functions: Volume level Low-pass filter frequency Bass roll-off alignment Auto sense on/standby Phase switch
Inputs:	Line In (RCA Phono) Speaker Level In (FCC68 4/4)
Outputs:	Link Out (RCA Phono)
Low-pass filter	Active 2nd -order, variable cut-off frequency (applies only to speaker level input)
Dimensions	Height: 335.5mm (13.2 in) Width: 289mm (11.4 in) Depth: 347mm (13.7 in)
Net weight	20.5kg (45 lb)
Finishes	Silver with grey trim Black with anthracite trim White with chrome trim



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