

WATERFALL HURRICANE

The smallest of the Waterfall range, these Hurricane speakers still put the wind up Ian Collen as he drowns in sound

SPECIFICATIONS

■ Name:	Hurricane
■ Price:	£1,999
■ Sales:	0208 8639117
■ Web:	www.bbg.eu.com
■ Dimensions:	Speakers: 190 x 280 x 70mm Subwoofer: 240 x 420 x 460mm
■ Features:	5.1 speaker system; 300W peak power handling; 6 Ohms impedance; Heatstream/SmartHorn/Low Diffraction Surrounding technologies; 80W active subwoofer, bass reflex
■ Connections:	Binding post terminals; subwoofer with stereo phono line in/out, spring clip amplifier inputs and speaker outputs

Since we first laid eyes on the Waterfall range of speakers a month or so back, the EHC team has waited with the excitement of a kid on Christmas Eve for some to make it to our doorstep. And they certainly didn't disappoint. The French-based manufacturer has only recently made the short journey across to the UK, but its innovative glass-enclosed speakers have brought an elegant touch of 'Art de vivre' and many admirers with it.

The Hurricane system is the smallest of the lot and subsequently the most discreet. The floor standing Victoria speakers tower above them at nearly a metre tall, but these slimline speakers are little over a quarter of that size and much better suited to being tucked away in a smaller room. The glass cabinet isn't as dominant as Waterfall's other systems, with a single flat panel acting more as a surround for the speaker drivers and front grille. However, this only takes away the dramatic impact of its superiors; against the standard

SOUND BITE



WE WERE SOLDIERS

■ War – what is it good for? Absolutely nothing... Except taking these speakers out for some testing manoeuvres. The extensive battle scenes in *We Were Soldiers* lay down a huge range of explosive effects, booming dialogue and continuous off-screen action challenges that the Hurricanes rise to and deliver with military power and precision. The sharp surround performance even delivered gunfights that wouldn't exist on many lesser systems.

wooden or aluminium enclosures of most other systems these still look damned cool.

Waterfall has also introduced fresh technologies to ensure that the speakers are as smooth on the ear as on the eye. Heatstream is a system it's devised to couple the magnet structure to the aluminium casing of the driver. This helps to eliminate excess heat from the driver to boost the power handling capacity. SmartHorn is another innovation that uses the grille of the satellites as a short-wave guide to improve efficiency and control directivity for cleaner, uncoloured sound reproduction. Last on Waterfall's list of proudly patented technologies is Low Diffraction Surrounding (LDS). This applies to the design of the mid-bass drivers combining the rubber surround to the paper cone, providing a better flow of sound and reducing distortion.

Initially, we have to take Waterfall's word for the true efficiency of these various technologies, but whether they make a significant difference or not, the audio performance is still of the highest quality, so they're certainly doing something right.

From as early as the menu screen for the Mel Gibson war epic *We Were Soldiers* we knew we'd be in for an impressive display. The emotive dialogue as General Mel addresses his youthful troops is crisp and clear with the PA system echoing the words no more than the director intended. When the main

“With a whirlwind performance, we can't wait to see what the rest of the Waterfall range is capable of”

menu options eventually arrive on the screen, they're accompanied by a fleet of rampaging helicopters that enter the room from every direction amidst a swirling surround performance that lights up the front and rear speakers in perfectly-balanced unison.

The 300W combined speaker output carries the weight of the film when the action hots up; the downpour of gunfire and explosions given even greater depth thanks to some solid support from the subwoofer. The surround performance around the battlefields is nearly always, and occasionally literally, breath-taking. We had smooth dialogue rolling clearly from the centre channel, interrupted only by bursts of gunfire from around the

room that weren't visible on-screen but still put us in the middle of the action.

It isn't just the individual qualities of the Hurricane components that make this system great, but also the balance and blend that they bring together. The rear speakers never seem to rest as the sound is passed around the room,

FINAL VERDICT

■ Ease of use:	★★★★★
■ Looks:	★★★★★
■ Features:	★★★★★
■ Sound:	★★★★★
■ Value:	★★★★

OVERALL: ★★★★★

■ Class in glass, the Hurricanes deliver a performance that's as cool as they look.



ESSENTIAL HOME CINEMA
Best Buy ★★★★★