Ifi Zen Air Blue HD Bluetooth dac

£99

The ifi Zen Air Blue HD is essentially a Bluetooth Speaker. You connect whatever device your music is on to it (via Bluetooth funnily enough), press play and away you go! Nothing overly new there though, these kind of things have been around for a while, so what does this offer that other Bluetooth speakers don't?

For starters, they've really gone to town to make this compatible with pretty much any Bluetooth capable device you may have. No matter what codec your device uses, this unit can receive it. There are differences depending on what you use with LDAC Adaptive or aptX HD bringing out the best, not that any of the codecs provide a poor performance, they're all good. With the upgrade ifi have applied to the Bluetooth system, there's also less drop in audio quality than you suffer with other Bluetooth speakers (they claim 40%) when compared to wired speakers. The unit itself is pretty easy to operate with a single button (1 press for on/off, hold the button to pair) and the display changes colour depending on the type of codec being used. There are RCA connectors at the back allowing you to plug in your speakers if you prefer to use these but the sound quality is good enough that you may not need to, although an amplifier would work well here.

This Bluetooth speaker would suit anyone making their first venture into audio devices. With a fair entry price of just under £100, it's affordable for most and the decent range should allow you to put it where you want it in your home, decreasing the need to clutter up any particular area with devices. The only possible down-side is the lack of an ability to pair with a different DAC but the in-built one is plenty fine.

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The new ifi Zen Air Blue HD