

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$1,399.00	iFi	Aurora Lifestyle System	\$1,399.00

Reviewer Comments

In keeping with the tradition of lifestyle systems dating back to the very first phonographs, the iFi Aurora is both beautiful and functional. The sound is quite amazing given its size and the fact that it is a one-box solution. It offers a neutral tonal balance with a large expansive soundstage which can present a very three-dimensional image making it ideal for private listening or background music at a party. That being said, it's not a boom-box and it's not a rip-your-head-off 15" woofer loudspeaker system, it is an audiophile lifestyle system that will play most music well, fit into most decors, and provide years of entertainment from all of your music sources, that can stand toe to toe with any system in its price range.

-Gary Alan Barker

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/04/20/ifi-aurora-lifestyle-system-review/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$3,198.00	Bluesound	POWERNODE 2i Wireless Multi-Room Music Streaming Amplifier	\$899.00
	DALI Speakers	OBERON 7 Floor-standing Loudspeakers	\$1,499.00
	Cardas	Iridium Speaker Cables fitted with Banana connectors - 3M	\$500.00
	Cardas	Iridium Power Cables - 2M	\$300.00

Reviewer Comments

The Bluesound POWERNODE 2i Wireless Multi-Room Music Streaming Amplifier more than exceeded my expectations, though as always a lot of the credit goes to the DALI OBERON 7 Loudspeakers, it never wanted for power, the dynamics were excellent, the sound was musical, there was no thinness to the upper mids which is a common issue with Class D amps, and it was really a one-stop-shop as far as source goes.

As to the DALI OBERON 7s, the word that comes to mind is tight. The bass was copious with excellent extension without ever sounding boomy. I was a bit surprised that with their tiny footprint, that they wanted to be so far apart, but that is probably an aspect of them being theater speakers, which you want to place much farther apart than a two-channel system. They definitely exhibit that Scandinavian sound, accurate, tight, and well-controlled.

-Gary Alan Barker

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/09/22/bluesound-dali-cardas-review/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$3,389.00	Schiit	Ragnarok 2 DAC/ Preamp/ Headphone Amplifier/Loudspeaker Amplifier	\$1,799.00
	Black Dragon	Black Dragon USB cable - 6'	\$140.00
	Black Dragon	V1 Speaker cables - 8'	\$500.00
	Black Dragon	V1 Power cable	\$300.00
	Magnepan	LRS Planar Magnetic Speakers (priced pair)	\$650.00

Reviewer Comments

Note: This system is priced with the fully loaded version of the Schiit Ragnarok 2 which includes a DAC, which though not on a level with the Bifrost 2 is less than half the price making this system an incredible value offering world class audiophile sound at a budget price. Ironically, I had originally intended to run this system with Blue Dragon cables which would have reduced the cost of the system further, though I do think the system benefits from the warmth of the Black Dragon, to quote the review, "To say that the sound was surprisingly good is a bit of a misnomer, it would be more correct to say that it was "as expected" amazingly good."

-Gary Alan Barker

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/03/02/magnepan-schiit-black-dragon/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$4,280.00	Naim	Uniti Star All-In-One Audio Player	\$3,290.00
	Focal	Chora 806 Bookshelf Speakers (priced pair)	\$990.00

Naim and Focal didn't just marry superior amps with superior speakers. This is a lifestyle play, a technology decision, and the Uniti line was likely at the core of it. In front of me are the love children of two diverse brands willing to share their proprietary secrets for the greater good of audio technology not just for next year but for decades to come. This is about promising authentic hi-fi audio in the context of IoT. It's about offering generations of wi-fi listeners hi-fi sound within their context in their space. The Naim Uniti Star is the ideal bridge between wi-fi and hi-fi. The Focal Chora 806 is a compact bookshelf speaker that can light up your home with BIG and BEAUTIFUL hi-fi sound. Naim and Focal have unified reference level sound with lifestyle. As a musician and engineer who dreams of a larger audience hearing my songs the way I hear them in the studio. That's everything to me.

-David Kellogg

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/07/07/naim-uniti-star-all-in-one-player-w-focal-chora-806-speakers-review/>

Reviewer Comments

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$4,388.00	Schiit	Ragnarok 2 DAC/ Preamp/ Headphone Amplifier/ Loudspeaker Amplifier	\$1,499.00
to	Schiit	Bifrost 2 , Multibit DAC	\$699.00
\$5,687.00	Schiit	Vidar Intelligent Stereo/Mono Loudspeaker Amplifier	\$699.00
to	Black Dragon	Black Dragon USB cable - 6'	\$140.00
\$6,686.00	Black Dragon	Black Dragon Interconnects (pair Single-ended – RCA) - 3'	\$300.00
depending on number of Vidar	Black Dragon	Black Dragon Interconnects (pair Balanced – XLR) - 3'	\$300.00
amps used	Black Dragon	V1 Speaker cables - 8'	\$500.00
(0 to 2)	Black Dragon	V1 Power cable	\$300.00
	Magnepan	LRS Planar Magnetic Speakers (priced pair)	\$650.00

Reviewer Comments

As previously noted, this system is priced with the "bare bones" version of the Schiit Ragnarok 2 as it includes the Bifrost 2 Multibit DAC, which in my experience is the most musical DAC Mike Moffat has ever produced. The system represents a logical progression that can be achieved starting with a very reasonable initial investment that still provides epic sound quality and later ramped up as budget and space allow to the logical end-point of System 5 (2 Vidars in mono) with its additional 6dB of dynamic range represented by the 400W into 8Ω per channel of the extra Vidar, which should be sufficient for the most discriminating of hard rockers.

Needless to say, this system or I should say these systems completely fulfilled my expectations and stand as highly recommended on my part.

-Gary Alan Barker

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/03/02/magnepan-schiit-black-dragon/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$4,832.00	Schiit	Saga+ Tube Hybrid Preamplifier	\$399.00
	Schiit	Bifrost 2 Multibit DAC	\$699.00
	Schiit	Vidar Intelligent Stereo/Mono Loudspeaker Amplifier	\$699.00
	Black Dragon	Black Dragon USB cable - 6'	\$140.00
	Black Dragon	Black Dragon Interconnects (pair Single-ended – RCA) - 3'	\$300.00
	Black Dragon	V1 Speaker cables - 8'	\$500.00
	Black Dragon	V1 Power cable	\$300.00
	Magnepan	LRS Planar Magnetic Speakers (priced pair)	\$650.00

Reviewer Comments

The Magnepan LRS Planar Magnetic Speakers with the Schiit Bifrost 2 Multibit DAC, Schiit Saga+ Tube Hybrid Preamplifier, Schiit Vidar Intelligent Stereo/Mono Loudspeaker Amplifier, and Black Dragon cables represent an end-point solution that would easily satisfy a budget-constrained audiophile. Musical, with amazing imaging and soundstage, as well as, pitch-perfect timbre and tonality it is well worth the investment.

-Gary Alan Barker

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/03/02/magnepan-schiit-black-dragon/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$5,497.18	Focal	Chora 826	\$2,000.00
	Bluesound	NODE 2i	\$549.00
	Kimber Kable	Base Series Timbre Interconnect - 1.5M	\$192.00
	Kimber Kable	Base Series 4VS Speaker Cable - 3.5M	\$211.20
	Outlaw	RR2160 Retro Receiver	\$849.00
	SVS Subwoofers	SB-2000 Pro	\$799.00
	SVS Subwoofers	SoundPath RCA Audio Interconnect Cable	\$39.99

Reviewer Comments

If you're looking to build your first dedicated audio system, this system as composed will give you transparency, soundstage, and bass that is exceptional and allow for you to upgrade as your needs change. It is also for listeners looking to downsize or get off the merry-go-round, who want to listen to rewarding transparent music that can create a magical listening experience. This system is a fantastic journey into the world of HiFi and makes listening to music a rewarding experience. Big thumbs up and recommended for anyone who wants an affordable system that offers exceptional musicality. Under \$5550 and a fantastic system. The total package is a worthy system that achieves all I look for in any HiFi system regardless of price.

-Frank Iacone

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/02/18/focal-chora-826-outlaw-2160-bluesound-node-2i-music-server-with-svs-speakers-and-kimber-kables-the-complete-system-review-total-system-5475/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$5,548.00	LSA (Living Sounds Audio)	LSA 20 Signature Tower Speakers	\$3,995.00
Package price of	Core Power Technologies	Deep=Core 1800 Power Conditioner	\$1,295.00
system from	Core Power Cables	Defiant Diamond speaker cables	\$999.00
Underwood	Core Power Cables	Valiant Power Cords	\$999.00
HiFi plus	Bluesound	NODE 2i	\$549.00
NODE 2i	Outlaw	RR2160 Retro Receiver	\$849.00

Reviewer Comments

Impressively, large scale recordings were enjoyable with the exceptional three-dimensional imaging and layered soundstage. Impressive indeed at this price or even much more so. The LSA 20 Signature System from Underwood is an exceptional high-end value and will provide you most of what you want in a high-end system without compromise.

Designed to provide the listener with a musical journey and create a magical listening experience Rarely do you find a system in this price range that does what the LSA 20 Signature System does, it makes beautiful music and is a terrific value. A great how-to from the folks at Underwood Hifi and it gets our highest recommendation without hesitation. Magical and exciting!!!!

-Frank Iacone

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/05/18/lsa-20-signature-speaker-system-review/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$8,119.00	Grado	Opus3 Maple Bodied Phono Cartridge	\$275.00
	VPI	Player Turntable	\$1,600.00
	LSA (Living Sounds Audio)	LSA-10 Signature Monitors (priced pair)	\$2,495.00
	Cardas	Iridium Single-Ended (RCA) Interconnects - 2M	\$250.00
	Cardas	Iridium Speaker Cables fitted with Banana connectors - 3M	\$500.00
	Cardas	Iridium Power Cables - 2M	\$300.00
	Cardas	Clear Serial Bus Rev 1 USB Cable - 2M	\$200.00
	Peachtree Audio	Nova 300 Amplifier	\$2,199.00

Reviewer Comments

This was an amazing system for the price (\$8,119 in total, \$5,994 for digital only, though Underwood HiFi offers a special package deal of the LSA LSA-10 Signature Monitors, the Peachtree Nova 300, a Bluesound Node2i streamer, a pair of the \$450 Core Power Defiant Gold speaker cables, a \$400 Core Power Valiant Gold series power cord and a \$250 Core Power Conduit Gold coaxial digital cable for \$3,999 delivered) that shows you can achieve true audiophile sound quality on a budget. While the addition of a subwoofer would add a little impact and rumble for theater applications, bass was never lacking and lovers of live music, classical, or acoustic music will appreciate the sparkle and dynamics as well as the large soundstage. I will point out that the system falls out on the brighter midrange heavy side like most audiophile systems, though never offensively so. Cymbals shimmered rather than sizzled and analog was spectacular.

-Gary Alan Barker

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/08/03/lsa-peachtree-vpi-grado-and-cardas-review/>

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$13,321	NAIM	Uniti Atom	\$3290.00
	Focal	Chora 826	\$2,000.00
	Cardas	Clear Single-Ended (RCA) Interconnects	\$1,450.00
	Cardas	Clear Speaker Cables	\$4,085.00
	Cardas	Clear Power Cables	\$820.00
	SVS Subwoofers	SB-2000 Pro	\$799.00
	SVS Subwoofers	SoundPath RCA Audio Interconnect Cable	\$39.00

Reviewer Comments

The system consisting of the Focal Chora 826 Loudspeaker, NAIM Uniti Atom All-In-One Wireless Music Player, Cardas Clear Cables, and dual SVS Subwoofers SB-2000 Pro Subwoofers was by far the best system I heard this year, with an expansive airy soundstage, great dynamics, and amazing transparency, it was like having the musicians in my listening room.

-Frank Iacone

Review Pending

System Price	System Manufacturers	Components	Component Price
\$20,298.00	ampsandsound	Zion Monos (priced each)	\$6,500.00
	Fritz Speakers	Carrera (priced pair)	\$3,500.00
	VPI	Player Turntable	\$1,600.00
	Cardas	Iridium Single-Ended (RCA) Interconnects - 2M	\$250.00
	Cardas	Iridium Speaker Cables fitted with Banana connectors - 3M	\$500.00
	Cardas	Iridium Power Cables - 2M	\$300.00
	EarMen	TR-Amp	\$249.00
	Schiit	SYS	\$49.00

Reviewer Comments

At \$20,298 this is not exactly a budget system, but that being said, it is a little piece of audio nirvana and could easily duke it out with systems costing twice as much. Setup was a little fussier than say the Manepans, but once keyed in it delivered in spades, with a large three-dimensional soundstage, true to life timbre and impressive dynamics. This may seem odd to say about a bookshelf size speaker, but it probably would have preferred a larger listening room, for one, in a room with about 40' of depth the speakers could have been placed on-axis without waveform cancellation in the bass and as noted above, they seem to prefer on-axis listening. So did I get \$21k worth of sound? Truth is, I got \$40k worth of sound, I would have no problems recommending this system to anyone who has the budget.

-Gary Alan Barker

<https://hifiaudio.guru/2020/06/08/ampsandsound-fritz-vpi-cardas-earmen-schiit-review/>