

From [The Sunday Times](#)

December 13, 2009

Test Bench: iPod docks

An MP3 player indoors cries out for an amp and speakers. We sample five of the best docks



Bowers and Wilkins Zeppelin Mini £299

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BEST FOR ALL-ROUND APPEAL

Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin Mini, £299

The original Zeppelin brought strong sound quality and fine design to the humble iPod dock — along with a hefty price tag. This new, smaller model — available from Apple and John Lewis stores as well as online retailers — takes up less space and is slightly gentler on your credit card. The distinctive curved shape, with plenty of chrome, is easy on the eye and its docking arm can cleverly be rotated to give a landscape or a portrait position. The pebble-shaped remote has limited functions, but there are basic controls on the dock itself. This is the only model on test that can even vaguely be described as proper hi-fi, not least as it has a digital connector and converts the audio files into an analogue signal by itself, rather than the iPod doing so. As with all docks, there's minimal stereo effect as the speakers are too close together, yet music reproduction is excellent. It may have less low-end grunt than the Bose (or indeed its bigger sibling) but it is plenty for most rooms.

VERDICT Hi-fi credentials, and stylish too.



bowers-wilkins.co.uk