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Magnat

Perfectly networked!

"Multi-room music reproduction can be so simple and convenient – the best example of this are the two new CS10 and CS40 streaming speakers from Magnat.

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Magnat CS 40
Test result: very good

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Magnat CS 10
Test result: very good

CS40

CS10

Spotify

Qualcomm® AllPlay™

MAGNAT CS RANGE - MULTI-ROOM

CS10

Sound quality	very good
Workmanship	very good
Equipment	good - very good
Overall score	very good

CS40

Sound quality	very good
Workmanship	very good
Equipment	good - very good
Overall score	very good

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Perfekt eingenetzt

Magnat

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Magnat is now also planning to conquer the compact multi-room loudspeaker market with its CS10 and CS40 models. Space and net, wasn't there something like that before?

Yes, there was in the early 70's, when Günter Netzer, wearing the strip of the German national football team, set out from deep in his own defensive space in his incomparable manner to then net the ball in the opponent's penalty area. Well over four decades later, Magnat is also venturing to engage in the game with space and the net. Or, rather, with spaces and rooms. Because the audio specialist has designed its first compact loudspeakers that are also multi-room capable. Magnat already has a presence in the higher segment with this technology through the Magnasphere range.

Multi-room is the trend that has now been discovered by just about every well-known manufacturer. In the age of the tablet and smartphone, the goal is being able to enjoy music in the best possible way in every room of the home. The heavy floor-standing loudspeakers in the home cinema are now reserved for the exclusive concert evening so as to be able to devote oneself fully to one's favourite artist. In the remaining time, the aim is for space and time to merge together to the greatest possible extent. Multi-room, that is the completely new theory or relativity in which it is of no consequence whatever whether your are in the kitchen, the living room or the bathroom: Despite this, you can hear every song played absolutely seamlessly and without any mistiming. You don't miss a single note, it's as if you were walking around in your own four walls with headphones on. But the feeling of freedom and flexibility is much more pronounced.

Volume and song selection is controlled conveniently via the app and the musical portfolio is, thanks to the booming streaming portals, even more extensive that Günter Netzer's magnificent head of hair in his good old days. Magnat has christened its duo the CS10 and the CS40. Up to ten of these speakers can be in action parallel in a multi-room group. That's easily enough for spacious single-family homes. The CS40 with a power output of 50 watts is the larger of the new speaker range. The black, active two-way loudspeaker with its anthracite-coloured metal cover weights in at 4.85 kg and should therefore be assigned a permanent place, in contrast to the CS10. It's too heavy to be lugged around all the time. The roughly 40 cm wide and 23 cm high enclosure accommodates a passive radiator, two dome tweeters and two subwoofers. The black gloss top is adorned by three touch-sensitive buttons to adjust the volume. A front LED provides information about the selected input source and operating status (WLAN, Stand-by, Reset, Update) in different colours during installation. There's no display, though this isn't a drawback as it would be completely superfluous due to the functional app control.

The layout of the rear of the CS40 is very tidy: Provided here are a 3.5 mm stereo jack for external playback devices, a WPS button (we'll explain the function later), the socket for the mains connection as well as a LAN port for the Ethernet cable. As an option, however, the Magnat speaker is also WLAN capable.

At first sight, the CS 0 would also immediately appear to belong to the CS family. The compact loudspeaker is available with a power output of 15 watts and three non-visible buttons in a black finish with an anthracite-coloured metal cover or, optionally, in white with a silver-coloured cover as the small twin brother of the CS40. With its dimensions of 18x13,1x9 cm, the barely 1.5 kg light CS10 easily fits into a backpack or bag, allowing it to also be used almost everywhere on the go entirely separate from the home multi-room system. Because, as a special feature, the speaker can also be powered by a built-in battery as well as via the mains socket. Off-grid playing time is around two hours - which is quite manageable compared with other portable speakers, but is sufficient to make the trip to the park or swimming pool more enjoyable.

Timeless design

In terms of connections, the active two-way loudspeaker does not differ from its big brother apart from the battery on-off switch mounted at the rear. The switch makes it possible to switch off the speaker when operating without the mains plug so as to conserve the battery. The sound is provided by a 25 mm dome tweeter and a 120 mm broadband loudspeaker. Both models are seated on soft rubber feet to avoid scratching on wood furniture. Whereas the power cable is fixed on the floor-standing model, it can be removed on the portable speaker. With their perforated metal grille and the associated timeless look, the speakers harmonise with any interior and fit into practically any surroundings.

The Magnat range does not support Bluetooth. So before music playback can start, a little bit of manual work is called for. In the following, we therefore concentrate in detail on the scenario audio lovers without any network experience are probably a little bit afraid of: the set-up. Integrating one or more loudspeakers into the home network and setting up an app to do this in order to control the devices from the smartphone or tablet, that doesn't really sound promising for sure-fire success.

The first speaker we set up is the CS40. This can also be done via the network cable, of course.

However, we opt for the WLAN variation so as to enjoy even more freedom when positioning the speaker. Ideally, your router will be WPS capable. WPS stands for Wi-Fi Protected Setup and makes it so much easier to add devices to an existing network. Press the WPS button on the CS40, then on the router, and the speaker immediately becomes part of your network. There's no need to enter a password. The set-up process without WPS support is a bit more complicated but certainly not rocket science. In this case, you have to use the Web interface set up by Magnat. Sounds complicated, but it's not! All you have to do is search for the open WLAN network »Magnat_40 XX-XX-XX« via the network settings of the smartphone or tablet. This is listed automatically.

After selecting the new wireless network, you open the Magnat settings page by entering the IP address 172.19.42.1 in the browser address bar. This is extremely clear and self-explanatory. The first step is to give the CS40 a meaningful, descriptive name. Ideally, use the name of the room where the loudspeaker will be working. Because If you are operating several speakers later, it will then be very easy to find the device you want to control remotely.

Magnat now needs to know which wireless network it is to communicate with. The application immediately lists the WLAN networks in range and all that needs to be done is to enter the associated password via the virtual keyboard. To avoid entry errors, you can also opt to display the password.

The connection between the loudspeakers and the home network is then established automatically as the final step. The first stage of the installation has then been completed successfully. Now you need a program to control the speakers via a mobile device. Magnat has dispensed with an in-house development in this regard, preferring to opt for the »Qualcomm AllPlay Jukebox« app freely available for iOS and Android - which quickly turns out to be a good decision due, among other things, to the functional operation. In addition, the universal app has the advantage of also being able to communicate with devices from other manufacturers. This means that Magnat speakers and loudspeakers from other producers can be used in mixed operation with one app. This is quite rare because proprietary app solutions - i.e. those tailor-made by the manufacturer - normally only accept their own components and refuse to interact with third-party providers.

Once the app has been installed, it provides a surprisingly extensive range of integrated streaming portals. These include AllPlay Radio, Aupeo!, Napster, Spotify and Rhapsody, to mention just a few. While the online music portals require a paid account in order to be able to select freely from tens of millions of songs, radio fans have plenty of choice straightaway with the Internet radio platforms.

No need for registration and additional charges here. Simply browse through the lists with the help of filters like country selection or genre, tap on a station logo and off you go. Via »AllPlay Jukebox«, you also have, of course, access to your own music stored on your smartphone or tablet, as well as on a network storage device, DLNA server or Fritz!Box, for example. And that brings us to the second positive surprise! The Magnat speaker is already stored in the app; in our example it is listed right at the top under the name "Living room".

So now there's nothing standing in the way of the first sound test. The CS40 produces a tremendously mature sound. We are dealing here with an imposing speaker and a very appealing bass foundation. Speech intelligibility? Top! Udo Lindenberg can mumble all he likes, but this does not diminish the listening pleasure of »I don't love you any more« one bit. This is also due to the excellent richness of detail. The speaker exudes enthusiasm and dynamism with »Does Your Mother Know« by ABBA. The performance of the Swedish quartet sounds totally authentic, light, alive and in no way outdated - unimaginable that the song celebrated its debut in 1979. The CS40 also brings Avicii's »Wake Me Up« to life in a clean and refreshing way with good stereo, whirling through the living room like Günter Netzer once did through the midfield - and it remains calm, confident and composed, even in the somewhat more hectic phases. The bass ranges are dry and crisp, but not brutally hard.

And could do with even more.

While the CS40 rocks, the CS10 is eagerly waiting to be deployed. But the little one doesn't dare come in as a substitute like Netzer did in the 1973 cup final between Gladbach and Cologne. It's hoping for a sign from its owner. But how is the youngster supposed to provide additional drive and impetus in the home sound arena? That works out easier than you'd have thought. Fresh power can be mobilised at any time via the »+« symbol in the app, i.e. adding additional speakers.

First, the WLAN password has to be re-entered. The only thing left to do then is select a suitable room to accommodate the CS10 in future. Adjustments can be made here later, of course.

And then we're just about done. Now we can finally talk of a multi-room system with the CS40 and CS10 operating in the same network.

Both speakers can act as individual players or play together in the team. In specific terms, this means: Internet radio on the CS10, a Spotify song in parallel on the CS40 – no problem. Each loudspeaker can be controlled individually, with regard to both volume and song selection. Scenario number 2: The two devices are grouped together via the app, forming a common listening zone. The speakers now play as a group. The music played back on the CS10 is exactly the same as what you hear via the CS40, in absolutely synch. While the latter mode is especially suitable for parties and you don't have to adjust to the sound when strolling from the kitchen to the hobby room in the basement, the first version is probably preferred on a normal day-to-day basis. After all, youngsters have different acoustic preferences to their parents or grandparents. Among other things, the app makes it possible to play back music titles from several mobile devices taken from a common or different playlists via one or more speakers. In addition, playback is also possible in so-called direct mode. The smartphone or tablet connects via the Magnat WLAN. This makes you independent of a possibly weak or faltering wireless network. However, you can then no longer surf the Internet in parallel via the mobile device.

Magnat's tonal expertise pays off.

Logically enough, the CS10 cannot match the more voluminous CS40 in terms of sound. The two speakers are in different leagues due to their design. However, the sound midget offers a lot more than simple kitchen radio sound. Costing almost €250, the small speaker is perfectly suitable for background music, the news or an audio-book now and then. Although it can blare a bit at higher levels, the small speaker plays reliably at room volume without dissecting the music and vocals or individual instruments in a razor-sharp manner. There is nothing to complain about as regards speech intelligibility. It was noticeable in the test that, when streaming via the online portals, the differences in quality are sometimes substantial despite identical resolution. The source material therefore plays a crucial role for playback quality. The CS10 copes with rock, pop and hits without any difficulty, though hard-hitting classical music with strings and piano accompaniment does stretch the baby speaker to its limits and it then no longer sounds particularly well balanced. An exception to this criticism is the bass, which is absolutely convincing regardless of the genre selected.

Multi-room music reproduction can be so simple and convenient – the best example of this are the two new CS10 and CS40 streaming speakers from Magnat Setting them up is child's play, the music portfolio is huge and the sound produced by the larger of the two speakers at least is exhilarating throughout, while the cheaper model is universally suitable for light background music at home and on the road. Magnat has done itself and its customers a real favour by placing its trust in the well-developed »AllPlay Jukebox« app open to all manufacturers. This is also compatible with multi-room components from other companies, enabling maximum flexibility when setting up a multi-room group. Magnat's attack from the depths of space has been successful and really is a direct hit. Simply perfect networking!