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Formation products for selection as the first one in the system, allowing the naming of the 'Space' in which the product is to be used, and then connecting the first product to the home wi-fi network to allow the control app to access it.

To add more products and start them doing their mesh thing, you simply choose 'Add Formation product' on the app, and once all the set-up is completed, each speaker plays a sound to confirm all is in order.

It's simple and logical, and – while I think the software needs some more tweaking to make the usage experience as enjoyable as the set-up, of which more later – the Formation concept was very much validated during my time with the components. I'm getting a bit ahead of myself, however, so let's first take a look at the constituent parts of the system.

### Formation Wedge

The Formation Wedge is in many ways the most intriguing product in the line-up: other brands may have one-point stereo speakers in their ranges, but none of them look quite like this! As the name suggests the speaker – just over 28cm wide and 25.4cm tall – is wedge-shaped, with its drive units spread over a 120-degree arc to deliver room-filling stereo sound.

A total of five drivers are used: two 25mm double dome tweeters, each driven by its own 40W amp; two 9cm midrange units, using Bowers & Wilkins FST technology for smoother movement, and again driven by 40W amps; and a 15cm subwoofer with its own 80W amplifier, which the company says gives the speaker bass extension down to 35Hz.

Given its shape, it's likely the Wedge is going to be used relatively close to walls, and indeed a £50 accessory wall-bracket is offered to mount it. If you find that makes the bass response a bit too big and bloomy – the Wedge is hardly bass-shy – then you can adjust the bass level from within the Home app. Conversely, if you're craving more bass, which frankly seems unlikely, then you could always partner a Wedge with the barrel-shaped Formation Bass subwoofer (also £900), which uses the company's Opposed Dual Driver technology and a 250W internal amp to extend the bass down to a claimed 20Hz. Again, the Bass connects wirelessly, via the Home app.

Connections on the Wedge are much the same as on the other Formation products: in other words, not much. There's a 'figure of eight' mains input, an Ethernet port should you choose to use a wired connection – although this kind of defeats one of the main plus-points of Formation – and a USB socket for software updates only. A reset button does just what it says, allowing the Wedge to be

re-acquired as a new speaker within a system, and controls on the speaker are relatively minimal: play/pause, volume up/down and a 'form' button to cycle through the streams available to the speaker.

### Formation Audio

The Formation Audio, as already mentioned, has both analogue stereo and coaxial digital audio out, to feed a conventional hi-fi amp or receiver from Formation streams, and can also accept audio from a line-out on an amp or source, as well as optical digital input, and inject that into the Formation eco-system. It's in the former function it's perhaps more useful, as of course you have no app control of what the source being added to your network is playing, but for many the ability to add wireless audio to an existing system may be attractive.

### Formation Duo

So we come to the Formation Duo, and Bowers & Wilkins fans can breathe a sigh of relief: these are by far the most conventional-looking – well, conventional by the company's standard – speakers in the Formation Suite. The style is that of a rather exaggerated version of designs such as the 805 D3, as if those speakers had been optimised in a wind-tunnel. Clearly identifiable elements include the 'tweeter-on-top' pod found across the company's ranges, isolating the 25mm Carbon Dome tweeter, derived from the 700 Series, from the vibrations of the 16.5cm Continuum cone mid/bass driver, as debuted in the 800 Series Diamond range.

These drive units are powered by a pair of 125W amps within each speaker, with the whole speaker housed in an inert cabinet designed made from a polypropylene/wood fibre composite. Bowers & Wilkins calls this material Formi, and the enclosure is made from two mouldings – the main cabinet and the back panel – joined together with a damping material, the whole assembly being chosen for its sonic benefits while maintaining the radio transparency required by the Formation wireless system.

The connection panel, on which most will only use the mains input for each speaker, is mounted in the base of the speaker, with a slot to the rear to allow cables to be dressed out when the speakers are on stands, while the 'hands on' controls are to the front, slotted in between the main enclosure moulding and the base assembly.

Available in white or black, the 39.5cm tall speakers have metal grilles over the two drive units, and can be used on shelves, on brackets, or on the dedicated Formation FS Duo stands. These cost a somewhat jaw-dropping £699/pr in black or silver, bolt to the speakers, and have a cable management



*Formation Duo may pack all the clever wireless stuff, but it's the most recognisably Bowers & Wilkins design in the range, thanks to its 'tweeter-on-top' pod and Continuum cone mid/bass driver*