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Hi-Fi Choice

PASSION FOR SOUND

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THE ONE & ONLY

Primare's matchless Allt-i-Ett all-in-one music system

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SOLID GROUND

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BOSS OF BASS



REL's stackable S/550 'CarbonAlloy' subwoofer

BARGAIN OF THE MONTH



Philips' Fidelio FA3 compact wireless speaker system





One box to rule them all

Mark Craven puts the new Swedish all-in-one through its paces and emerges mighty impressed

Confronted with Primare's Allt-i-Ett, the title of that old Monty Python anthology comes to mind. Because from the Swedish marque known for its range of hi-fi (and home cinema) electronics comes, well... something completely different.

Designed to sit on a tabletop, or below a TV, and handle all your audio needs, the Allt-i-Ett (translating as 'all in one' in Swedish and Norwegian) is: "designed for everyone in the household", meaning attention has been paid to ease of use and aesthetics as well as performance.

It isn't really a soundbar, either. Yes, it combines amplification and speakers, and packs an HDMI eARC connection for use with a TV, but the form factor is more in line with a Naim Mu-So 2nd Generation (HFC 488) or Ruark R410 than the long, slim soundbars you see lurking below a flatscreen in your local Curry's.

Moreover, this is a two-channel system, with not a hint of Dolby Atmos or surround sound processing (okay, there is BACCH processing, a

crosstalk-cancelling digital filter said to bring a 'spatial audio' presentation to a stereo source). Connectivity includes a stereo RCA analogue input that can be switched to MM phono, USB-A for external devices, sub out with level and crossover settings, 3.5mm headphone jack, dual LAN Ethernet ports for wired network or NAS connection, two optical and one coaxial digital inputs.

It's possible that many users won't plug anything into the Allt-i-Ett and instead stick to networked/wireless sources. Primare's supporting Prisma app, familiar to owners of its networked amps and preamps, handles hi-res playback from Tidal and Qobuz plus streaming from a NAS drive. The 'Connect' versions of Spotify, Qobuz and Tidal are also supported, as is Apple AirPlay (which facilitates playback from a Roon server). There's also Bluetooth integration (with support for BT headphones) plus internet radio and old-school wireless in the form of FM and DAB radio. Connection is via Wi-Fi or Ethernet. Remove the Allt-i-Ett's magnetically

▶ DETAILS

PRODUCT
Primare Allt-i-Ett

ORIGIN
Sweden

TYPE
All-in-one music system

WEIGHT
16kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
690 x 150 x 303mm

FEATURES

- Two-channel, three-way driver complement including six bass drivers
- Wireless and wired connections
- Room calibration; BACCH processing

DISTRIBUTOR
Karma AV

WEBSITE
primare.net
karma-av.co.uk

affixed cloth grille and you'll find six custom drivers, each channel getting 102mm polymer bass and midrange units and a 19mm silk dome tweeter mounted in a large, shallow waveguide. Four more bass drivers – two down-firing, two rear-firing – are hidden behind fixed grilles. Power is rated at a total of 300W, from a four-strong DSP amplifier stage.

The Allt-i-Ett is very pleasing on the eye, from its basic proportions to the 'Blackwood' finish of its cabinet. Then there are the dual displays, one a fixed touchscreen for accessing menu settings, switching sources, etc. the other reserved for volume status and album artwork that is motorised so it can rise through 90°.

Want more slick touches? The large rotary volume control in the Allt-i-

The bassline sounds authentically deep and shows no sign of bloat or muddiness

Ett's top surface is framed by LED illumination; there's also a white LED strip running along the underside of the cabinet. It's a shame there's not an option to change the colour.

The supplied remote can control virtually any smart TV (and Apple TV). Control of the motorised display is also possible through the app, which is where you'll find an 11-band EQ platform, plus an automatic Room EQ system. This works with the microphones built into iOS devices, while Android users will need an optional £115 Zen Wireless mic to run the calibration routine. Additional settings include Freestanding, Wall

and Corner placement, which attenuate the system's bass response to compensate for boundary gain, and the aforementioned BACCH mode, which can be set on or off. One niggle? This has three settings for different listening distances only accessed through the touchscreen, not the app – we're told this will be fixed on the next app upgrade.

Sound quality

Your first port of call should be to run the Room EQ implementation as it will almost certainly improve low-frequency performance. In my 3m x 5m listening room, after calibration using the microphone in an Apple iPad, bass output becomes more even-handed, tighter and punchier, without losing any of its inherent weight and extension.

As a rule, I'd suggest the BACCH filter should also be enabled, as this is very effective at widening the soundfield so it feels even more divorced from the compact cabinet. Without BACCH in play there's good width to the electro-pop of Anna Of The North's *Waiting For Love*, but switching it on adds more at the edges and gives instruments and effects more breathing space. It even introduces a grander feel to the otherwise quite narrow and focused hip-hop that is *2 Of Amerikaz Most Wanted* by 2Pac and Snoop Dogg! Definitely worth experimenting with.

The bassline on this track sounds authentically deep and shows no sign of bloat or muddiness. A sterner test comes in the shape of the stylised low-frequency throbs in the drum and bass of *Songbird* by Tokyo Prose, and it's here that the Allt-i-Ett puts in an eye-opening performance – voluminous, well-rounded lows that seem to pressurise the room and put the idea of complementing the system with an outboard subwoofer into overkill territory.

Better still, this superb low-end output is achievable at high volumes without any hint of strain – which is at it should be from a DSP-governed system. Indeed, this always-in-control nature applies across the frequency band, up to treble details that have



Also quirkily named and new to the market, Focal's Mu-so Hekla sees the French marque taking on sister brand Naim's Mu-so range of all-in-one units. Priced in the same ballpark as the Allt-i-Ett, at £3,000, this model has a more 'home entertainment' focus, including upwards-firing and side-firing drive units for Dolby Atmos movie, music and game playback. As such, the Hekla sports a longer (1m) chassis, albeit with a more 'slender' overall appearance. Connections are again a mix of wired and wireless, but with no option to add analogue sources.



decent bite but don't run the risk of listener fatigue. Just like Primare's more conventional hi-fi separates, the Allt-i-Ett is something of a smoothie in this regard.

La Romanesca by Sol Gabetta finds the cellist accompanied by violin, viola and double bass, resulting in a wash of string tones and textures. The Allt-i-Ett handles it brilliantly, pizzicato high notes sounding clear and sweet and the main instrument

Attention has been paid to ease of use, aesthetics and performance

sinewy and rich. Everything is well defined, the performance coherent.

Listen off-axis and the sound doesn't become unbalanced, which is a good trait for a model destined to be used in a variety of environments. You'll get the best of the Allt-i-Ett when sat directly opposite it – this is where the different BACCH distance settings come in – but it's not mission critical. The system is great at filling a room, not just in terms of potent volume but also regards scale and dispersion.

There could be more focus to its soundstaging and more precision to the way it positions instruments within its stereo spread, but that's to compare this do-it-all, sensibly sized one-box model with a separates system possibly costing a good chunk more. What really matters is the Allt-i-Ett's knack of communicating the character of the music, and doing so with plenty of detail, snap and weight. The Rolling Stones' *Doom And Gloom* flies out of Primare's system with infectious energy, all snarled vocals and pounding drums, while Dusty Springfield's *Son Of A Preacher Man* is an exercise in instrumental contrasts – velvet smooth guitar against crisp brass – and those gorgeous vocals.

Conclusion

Primare's Allt-i-Ett is a pleasure to listen to and easy to use. It's well-featured and the fit and finish is easily commensurate with the price tag. When my main gripe is that the detail lighting doesn't change colour, it's clear this is something special ●

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OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Superb all-round performance; excellent connectivity; handy EQ tools; fun to use

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** It might look a bit chunky next to a super-thin TV...

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★ **WE SAY:** Primare's debut one-box system is nothing short of a triumph

FEATURES ★★★★★

OVERALL

