

Key Features

Compact satellites

- ✘ 70W power handling
- ✘ 80Hz-40kHz frequency response
- ✘ 80hms nominal impedance
- ✘ 3.75" soft dome tweeter with neodymium magnet
- ✘ 4.5" Klippel mid/bass driver with glass fibre cone

Compact centre LCR

- ✘ 100W power handling
- ✘ 80Hz-40kHz frequency response
- ✘ 60hms nominal impedance
- ✘ 3.75" soft dome tweeter with neodymium magnet
- ✘ 2 x 4.5" Klippel mid/bass driver with glass fibre cone

Compact Cube subwoofer

- ✘ Active subwoofer with 150W amplifier
- ✘ 33-200Hz adjustable frequency response
- ✘ 10" woofer with air-dried paper cone
- ✘ Variable gain
- ✘ Phase switching

Connections

- ✘ Binding post speaker terminals
- ✘ Line-level input
- ✘ Speaker level input

Dimensions

- ✘ Satellites: 200 x 140 x 160mm
- ✘ Centre: 140 x 320 x 160mm
- ✘ Sub: 350 x 350 x 360mm



£1,000

Castle Compact CC3

Not the biggest Castle in town but Ian Collen is looking for a tower of strength

WE'VE BEEN USING THE SIZEABLE FIGURE OF the Castle CAV2 speakers in our test room for some time, so the dwarf-like stature of the Compact CC3 system took a little getting used to. Not in terms of quality, but because we kept losing them down the back of the sofa.

A self-confessed stab at the small-room market, this sub/sat package brings together a fresh development from the Castle team with the same adaptability and style we're accustomed to.

Despite the lightweight enclosures these speakers have a sturdy feel and the choice of 11 real wood finishes provides all you'll need for a cool and cuddly bundle of bookshelf speakers suited to any environment. Even if you prefer something a little different, Castle will custom build a design to ensure that the rest of the family won't have too many complaints about your speakers' aesthetics.

The Compact CC3 package comprises four satellite speakers, an LCR centre channel and a 150W Compact Cube subwoofer. The LCR centre channel is so called because it is designed to operate across all three standard front locations and provide part of a potential future upgrade to your home cinema system. Simply buy another pair of LCR speakers and slide the original front satellites further into the room to set up a balanced 7.1 system with increased power handling.

Each speaker uses the same 4.5" drivers tightened by a glass fibre cone and a soft dome tweeter with a neodymium magnet geared to orchestrate a cleaner performance. The smooth slide through the frequency range shows that not a great deal of colouration is being allowed into the CC3 speakers and crowded

clips from the likes of *Gangs Of New York* are very clear, with a crisp attention to detail heard through the streets. When a more focused precision is needed the speakers did lose some of the finer moments from the man versus machine scenes in *T2*, but there isn't any frustrating distortion to detract from what is on offer.

One surprising feature of the Compact system is the power drawn into the room from a small package with a comparatively average 70W handling. The fight scenes fall a few floor-shaking moments short of the mark but there are few problems found by rolling up the volume. The initial support from the subwoofer is a little thin but Castle does provide several tips with the package and some tweaking of the crossover frequencies will deliver a smooth sound that balances out the system quite comfortably.

The Compact CC3s benefit from the small-room experience that Castle has approached and by placing these speakers close to a wall or picking up some of the optional mounting brackets, the surround performance is an enriched, encircling experience that doesn't overreach on unwanted power.

It's not exactly off-the-shelf material but £1,000 is still quite a lot to pay for what appears to be a standard sub/sat package. However, a couple of recent models such as the ProAc Response Hexa System are demanding twice that amount, so if you don't want to burden your living room with large tower speakers but still want a high-quality package, you shouldn't be afraid to pay for it, and the Castle Compact CC3 adds up to a very good deal.

What we like about these speakers

- Surprising strength
- Clear surround display
- Solid and stylish build
- Aural and visual adaptability

What we don't like about these speakers

- Occasional loss of detail
- Light sub

Essential HomeCinema Verdict	
Castle Compact CC3	
Sales 01756 795333	
Web www.castle.uk.com	
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
LOOKS	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
SOUND	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★★
VERDICT A tall price for a sub/sat package but these Castles provide a quality performance of clarity and strength that offers a superior small-room sound.	
Overall ★★★★★	
BEST RIVALS	
ProAc Response Hexa System ★★★★★	
Elac Cinema Three ★★★★★	
Focal.JMLab Sib & Cub ★★★★★	