Subject: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Sun, 23 Feb 2020 17:36:43 GMT
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Anyone have experience with or could recommend a good powered soundbar? Mainly for dialogue and just regular old tv viewing. Not for home theater. I already have that equivalent. But I just want something to augment the obvious poor smart tv speakers. Which is universally acknowledged as being unintelligible for vocal understanding. At least the Samsung tv I have now. Do these soundbars have to be controlled by a separate remote for volume, (probably)? Any other issue to steer clear of?

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Joyce on Wed, 26 Feb 2020 15:27:28 GMT
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Many brands these days are building their ecosystem, especially Samsung and Apple. Have you checked Samsung's soundbars? At least you won't have to worry about compatibility. I have never owned a Samsung soundbar, so I can't vouch for the sound quality.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Wed, 26 Feb 2020 16:25:23 GMT
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Hey Joyce, can you comment on any soundbars you have had or have that you can vouch for? Not sure what is meant by ecosystem. But it's frustrating reading reviews about nearly anything online. The good, bad and the ugly seem to be a mystery as to what is real or part of the internet's consumerism fixation. One Samsung soundbar at least alluded to it's volume being linked to the tv remote. Which makes the simplicity factor appealing. And one less remote cluttering up a tabletop to reach for.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Leot55 on Fri, 28 Feb 2020 21:20:14 GMT
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Rusty wrote on Wed, 26 February 2020 10:25One Samsung soundbar at least alluded to it's volume being linked to the tv remote. Which makes the simplicity factor appealing. And one less remote cluttering up a tabletop to reach for.
That's actually a common feature among soundbars so don't let that be your main selling point!  I don't know why DVRs, Blu-Ray Players, and other gadgets weren't designed that way too.  If you happen to find a soundbar that doesn't work with your TV remote, just buy an all-in-one remote for a few bucks and program it so it controls everything.

I think mine is a Yamaha YAS-209.  The sound is great, but I don't think you'd like it because it works with Alexa and if I remember correctly you aren't a fan of smart speakers.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Sat, 29 Feb 2020 14:16:11 GMT
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Hi Leot55. Thats a big help. Thanks for the tip's. I only wondered if they used a remote because many I've viewed online seem to have a remote included. But if they can be tied in to your existing remote. I dig it. Also yes, Alexa is not welcome in my home. But I bought, finally, a smart tv, a Samsung and I merely did not turn on the smart features. I have a Roku device. Long short, no damn invasive ads cluttering up the tv screen. So, maybe there's a way to keep Alexa's meddling at bay. Finally, I trust recommendations from real people rather than the commercial wink, wink, nudge from surely 'totally neutral' ad supported reviews found on the net.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Joyce on Thu, 05 Mar 2020 06:30:45 GMT
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Rusty wrote on Wed, 26 February 2020 10:25Hey Joyce, can you comment on any soundbars you have had or have that you can vouch for? Not sure what is meant by ecosystem. But it's frustrating reading reviews about nearly anything online. The good, bad and the ugly seem to be a mystery as to what is real or part of the internet's consumerism fixation. One Samsung soundbar at least alluded to it's volume being linked to the tv remote. Which makes the simplicity factor appealing. And one less remote cluttering up a tabletop to reach for.
I'm sorry about the confusion. For example, if you own a MacBook, then it's natural to think about getting an iPhone. At least you don't need to worry about their compatibility and ease of use as they are members of Apple's ecosystem. Back to our discussion, sound quality is probably not that easy. I don't have a soundbar, but my brother has a Sonos Beam. It's lacking bass for my taste; otherwise, I'd say the sound is solid (assuming that you're going to use it for casual TV watching or music listening sessions).

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Thu, 05 Mar 2020 15:25:16 GMT
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Thanks Joyce. Like I originally wrote. Home theater isn't my goal for a soundbar choice. So, deep bass or 5 to 7 channels of audio simulation take a back seat to what I have a need for. Simple vocal recognition. The speakers in tv's today are anemic at best for discerning spoken word. I'll keep your notation for the Sonos soundbar in mind.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by sawyer25 on Sat, 07 Mar 2020 15:24:11 GMT
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Joyce wrote on Wed, 26 February 2020 09:27Many brands these days are building their ecosystem, especially Samsung and Apple. Have you checked Samsung's soundbars? At least

you won't have to worry about compatibility. I have never owned a Samsung soundbar, so I can't vouch for the sound quality.
It is appalling that smart TV speakers are not good enough. I have never bought a soundbar before, but I would go with Joyce's suggestion about checking out soundbars from the same manufacturer.

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Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Sat, 07 Mar 2020 19:05:29 GMT
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In trying to get a handle on what to know about soundbars. Any brand is built to be compatible with any brand tv. Some tips I've gotten is a center channel is helpful with vocal comprehension. I didn't know but that most broadcast today are in surround mode, so, a 2 channel soundbar will just mix surround and center together. Maybe compromising the vocal aspect. HD tv's use to come with a pedestal stand. Now the smart tv's have these cheap plastic feet that only gives a couple inches at best in height, and depending on screen size, a factor in length between cheap feet to put the soundbar. There always a tradeoff. I'll eventually just say what the hell like I did with the smart tv. And just get something. You can look and ponder till your eyes cross.

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Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by sawyer25 on Sat, 14 Mar 2020 05:22:46 GMT
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I agree that most broadcast nowadays is in a surround mode, and it can be inconveniencing to go for a 2-channel soundbar. How convenient is a soundbar when compared to a home theater?

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Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Sat, 14 Mar 2020 15:24:22 GMT
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My home theater Sawyer is kind of cobbled together from years ago. The mains, center and sub I'd had already built or built for. I used amps I had to power all. So using my Franken system requires turning everything on manually, and run through the 5.1 dvd player. I'd gotten to the point of not buying any dvd's or even using it much anymore. A soundbar is merely an easy means to

get better sound through these new smart tv's. They're so skinny that the speakers within can't begin to create worthwhile sound. I'm becoming an old fart and just want something simple and most of all, useful.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Madison on Fri, 20 Mar 2020 03:02:27 GMT
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Sometimes it's an either/or game. Many modern televisions (and soundbars too) come with options such as "enhance spoken dialogue," and "increase audio depth." Tinker around with those options first to see if it helps.

Soundbars are usually pretty cheap, so there's not much risk in rolling the dice. I've never heard anyone complain about the one they bought or I'd tell you which ones to avoid. My grandfather is heard of hearing, so I bought him a ZVOX AccuVoice AV200 Soundbar which wasn't a brand I recognized, but it was talked up by AARP so he wanted it. It was a little less than $200 and it looks pretty cheap, but it's still going strong after three years or so, which is amazing because the cats and dogs aren't shy about rubbing on it. Most soundbars are pretty simple to set up, however this one doesn't have an HDMI port. That meant taking a few extra steps for me, but it wasn't a big deal.

I have to say that the dialogue really is easier to understand, especially when they're whispering or talking low. I don't have golden ears, but as someone who can already hear normally, I find the enhancement annoying after a while. My grandfather loves it though because he can finally hear the dialogue over the sound effects and background music, which is something that caused him frustration before. He also likes using the Output Leveling feature which prevents commercials from being louder than the show. Overall, he's very happy with it!

It's an either/or soundbar - music sounds below average. Not a big deal while watching a show, but not the best for just listening to your music collection.

I have a soundbar at home with Dolby Atmos that's supposed to mimic surround sound which you've already said you aren't looking for. To be honest, it's a fancy device that isn't any better than the $200-$400 models. But then again, I don't have golden ears.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Fri, 20 Mar 2020 14:39:51 GMT
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Muy mucho grande Madison. Thanks for the information. I'll look into those ZVOX units. I'm with grandpa. I don't need a cinematic experience. Just comprehension.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by lilbill on Sat, 21 Mar 2020 17:36:47 GMT
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Madison wrote on Thu, 19 March 2020 22:02Sometimes it's an either/or game. Many modern televisions (and soundbars too) come with options such as "enhance spoken dialogue," and "increase audio depth." Tinker around with those options first to see if it helps.

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I agree that most soundbars are cheap, though there are pricey ones as well. The output leveling feature is one that I would love to explore. Does a soundbar wattage matter? How do you settle for the best quality?

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Joyce on Wed, 25 Mar 2020 03:49:09 GMT
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As far as I know, wattage has nothing to do with sound quality. It's probably better to look at the sensitivity, frequency covered, or even the channels, but those can still be misleading. I also think it's important to remember that soundbars aren't really made for impressive sound quality.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars

Posted by Madison on Thu, 21 May 2020 01:48:21 GMT
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@Rusty, did you ever pull the trigger on a soundbar?  I'd love to hear which model you went with and how it all worked out if you did.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by Rusty on Thu, 21 May 2020 12:43:55 GMT
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Hi Madison. Since the covid commotion has occurred I've shelved the search for a soundbar. Not saying I've blown off the idea totally. Just with the restricted retail opportunities I gone on a holding pattern. Now that the spigots are opening up, I'll get back on hunt. I'll post when I get a bead on something.

Subject: Re: Powered soundbars
Posted by noodle on Thu, 17 Jun 2021 03:42:47 GMT
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I've had the Polk Signa S1 for the past couple of years. It's synched up with my TV remote so I don't have to power it separately. Good sound, super simple remote, and reasonably priced.