

Cambridge Audio TV5 | Soundbase | £280

## An affordable 'base hits the big time

It's not much to look at, granted, but start listening and this twin-subbed 'base is revealed as a gem



Soundbases may not come in different shapes, but sizes they do. Cambridge Audio is now the second manufacturer (after Canton) to produce a giant version of its debut soundbase specifically for 'larger' TVs. It's a sensible move: bigger soundbases can take the weight of bigger tellies and accommodate their bigger stands.

If you haven't already guessed, the TV5 is a larger version of the Award-winning TV2, 18cm wider than its forerunner (bringing its width to 73cm) and housing a second 16.5cm subwoofer underneath the unit for a bigger, bassier sound.

### Worth the extra

It might cost £80 more than the TV2, but it wasn't long into our viewing of time-loop thriller *Edge Of Tomorrow* we decided this was a reasonable extra spend, for the TV5 not only embraces the TV2's rich, full-bodied and balanced character, but builds on its level of clarity, subtlety and dynamic ability too.

Sure enough, it has a bigger sound. Though matching the TV2's level of amplification (100W), the TV5's bigger enclosure and extra woofer help it achieve greater scale and an increased sense of power. Skip to Cruise's combat-training scene and, as the machinery swings across the screen from all angles, there's no doubting the soundfield is as immersive as you're going to get at this price. It certainly had no trouble spanning the 55in screen we tested it with.

There's no questioning the upshot of the extra woofer elsewhere, too. Bass is laid on thick as Cruise is given his first taste of battle: compared with the TV2, there's much more rumble from the aircraft, and a harder thud as it falls to the ground. Explosions (the film's time-loop style

ensures there are plenty) have punch and definition, too. The bold, rich bass presence gives the entire presentation a solid backing, meaning that everything from gunfire to dialogue sounds solid, but never over-egged. It's this grasp of balance and weight that makes the TV5 comfortable at high volumes.

This soundbase's muscular delivery isn't without control and subtlety, either. It might not be natural to listen out for the finer details behind the high-energy action, but that subtle information adds to the whole experience.

The TV5's flair for dynamics is the highlight: it laps up the soundtrack's crescendo when our heroes prepare for war, and it ably communicates the drama and intensity of the battlefield.

It's a case of *déjà vu* viewing the unembellished black chassis and cloth grille front (hiding the same dual 57mm drivers as the TV2). The minimalist design isn't in the least eye-catching, but it's functional at least. Build is reassuringly sturdy so you won't be afraid to mount a hefty TV on top of it. Our only gripe: while a single, colour-changing LED indicates sources well enough, we'd prefer everything spelled out with a text display.

### Digital and analogue

The TV5 (like the TV2) is analogue-friendly, with both 3.5mm and RCA sockets, and an optical input too. It supports Bluetooth aptX and, while there's no sign of NFC, it has its own neat trick for making Bluetooth pairing quick and convenient by remembering up to eight paired devices and connecting to them automatically when in range.

Also handy (and in this case, environmentally friendly) is the Cambridge

### Remote synchronisation

Gently peel away the clothed front panel and you'll see that between the two BMR drivers is a control panel. This allows you to set up the TV5 so that it can 'learn' your TV or Sky remote's functions and so obey their volume-level commands. Note that you'll still need the TV5's own remote handy for changing source input and sound modes.



Audio's ability to automatically power down when sound isn't detected after what the company quotes as "several seconds" and switch back on when it does. Those who covet convenience might also prefer to set up the base so a TV or Sky remote can control its volume.

A "step up in size and sound", promises Cambridge Audio. Tick, tick. The TV5 does exactly what it sets out to do, and is a sensible addition to the company's range at a time when good budget soundbases are few and far between.

Should you buy the TV5 over the TV2? If you have the space and extra cash, then sure. It's a great budget option for anyone looking to take their first step to improve their TV's thin, tinny sound - and not just for those of us with large tellies. And what's £80 between friends?

### Rating ★★★★★

**FOR** Big, powerful sound; punchy bass; dynamic and detailed; digital and analogue inputs; reasonable price

**AGAINST** Nothing of note

**VERDICT** A sensible move for Cambridge Audio - the TV5 is yet another success

### Also consider

**Cambridge Audio TV2**  
**£200 ★★★★★**

Got less space or a tighter budget? The award-winning TV2 is exceptional value.



### System builder total build £1260

#### Television

**Sony KDL-50W829B**  
**£900 ★★★★★**

Not the crispest with detail, but bright and punchy with good smarts and an attractive price.



#### Blu-ray player

**Sony BDP-S5200 £80 ★★★★★**

The basics done well. This strikingly styled player delivers an impressive picture both with Blu-rays and DVDs.

