

The Kii SEVEN Loudspeaker Review — by HiFi Pig

Kii SEVEN loudspeakers are a compact active model with DSP and a whole lot more onboard. Stuart Smith takes a listen for HiFi PiG. Kii SEVEN Loudspeakers review

We first heard the Kii SEVENS at the Dutch Audio Event in 2023 and immediately requested a set for review. We not only wanted to hear the speakers at home, but also wanted to have the full experience of having them properly set up by a Kii expert, and so we waited until we could have Wim from Kii visit, set the speakers up, and explain a little about their design and features. This setup process is crucial to getting the best from the speakers, and once it's done, it's done. The idea here is that the sound you hear in the showroom will be as near as damn-it to the sound you will experience at home.

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DESIGN AND BUILD OF THE Kii 7 LOUDSPEAKERS The Kii SEVEN is a compact active loudspeaker, and when I say compact, I mean it. At just 20 by 31 by 31 centimetres and weighing in at 14 kilos, it's not the sort of box that dominates the room. That's clearly deliberate. Kii has designed this to slot into real-world living spaces, workrooms, or studios without looking like a science project. The finishes are simple: Fine Touch White or Fine Touch Dark Grey (the ones we got to play with), both easy to blend into most interiors. Minimalist on the outside, then, but there's plenty going on inside the speakers.

Inside, the SEVEN is far more involved than its modest looks suggest. This is an active speaker, so you're not just getting a set of drivers in a box, you're getting amplification, digital processing (DSP), and a fair bit of cleverness in how it all works together. Kii's big trick is something they call Active Wave Focusing. In plain terms, it's their way of making sure the sound you hear is what's meant to reach you, not a smeared version full of reflections bouncing off your walls. The result is a cardioid radiation pattern, which means less sound going backwards into the room and more of it being directed forwards, where it belongs – less room interaction.

I'll let Wim explain a little more about the speakers:

The driver array is cool, too. Up top you've got a one-inch tweeter in its own custom waveguide. That waveguide controls how the high frequencies spread into the room, keeping them consistent and stable. Handling the middle frequencies is a five-inch midrange driver, responsible for the clarity and the bit of the spectrum where vocals and most instruments sit. And for bass duties, there are two six-and-a-half-inch woofers, each tied into the Active Wave Focusing system to give proper low-end punch without the box having to be enormous.

All of this is stitched together with what Kii calls their Wave Focusing crossover filter. That sounds technical, and it is, but the gist is that the drivers are all made to behave as one coherent source rather than four separate speakers bolted together. It's one of those details that helps the SEVEN sound bigger and more composed than its dimensions suggest.

Power is taken care of inside the cabinet – no external amps needed. Each SEVEN has 600 watts of (Class D) amplification built in, which is more than enough to give headroom and keep the drivers

under control. Because the amps are matched to the drivers, you don't have to worry about pairing the speakers with the "right" external amplifier, and the tuning is already done. There are also limiters in place to stop you from pushing the units beyond what they can comfortably handle, which is reassuring when you're dealing with compact drivers being asked to move serious amounts of air. This latter point is a good one, as I do like to push speakers!

On paper, the frequency response is impressive. Kii quote 40Hz at $\pm 3\text{dB}$, a ruler-flat $\pm 0.5\text{dB}$ from 100Hz to 10kHz, and $\pm 1\text{dB}$ from 10kHz up to 20kHz. In practice, that means you should expect very little tonal colouring from the box itself. You can also adjust bass and treble via onboard tone controls, handy if you want to fine-tune the balance to your taste or your room. Phase response can be switched between minimum phase or minimum latency, depending on what matters most to your setup.

Connectivity is another area where Kii has the boxes ticked. On the back you'll find XLR and TRS, AES/EBU, and their proprietary KiiLink/KiiCONTROL system. For those who prefer wireless convenience, the SEVEN also supports WiFi, Bluetooth, and Dante. That range of options makes it equally at home in a traditional HiFi setup, a modern streaming system, or even in a studio environment.

And it's worth saying again that the SEVEN has been designed to be unfussy about where it goes. Put it near a wall, in free space, or even in a bookshelf alcove, and the cardioid dispersion pattern does the heavy lifting to keep reflections under control. That adaptability is one of the things that sets it apart from many compact speakers, which often demand careful placement to avoid boominess or tonal imbalance.

Taken as a whole, the SEVEN feels like Kii has thought about how people actually use speakers in the real world. The size and styling mean they'll fit into places where bigger boxes simply wouldn't work. These are speakers built to deal with the awkwardness of rooms and placement, while still aiming to give the sort of detail, scale, and neutrality that usually demands more space and fuss.

In short, the Kii SEVEN is an active loudspeaker that combines lifestyle-friendly design with serious technical gubbins. It's compact, adaptable, and bursting with engineering ideas intended to let you hear the music, not the room.

On the features front, the SEVEN is well equipped for modern listening habits. It supports Spotify Connect, TIDAL Connect, and Qobuz Connect, covering the three big streaming platforms and including high-resolution playback for those who want more than compressed formats. Hi-Res Audio is fully catered for, and Bluetooth is also onboard for quick and easy connections. Kii Control with the speakers is Roon Tested, which means integration with Roon's software is seamless. Control comes via the Kii HOME app, which allows you to manage a single pair or build a multi-room setup of up to twelve zones, all tied together with the same cardioid and DSP that helps them work in real rooms.

SET UP First of all we (when I say "we" I mean Wim) put the speakers in the room as close to the back wall as we could. Wim suggested that 10cm away from the back wall, but that wasn't achievable and we had them about 50cm out into the room, toed in so they were pointing at each ear (right speaker to right ear and left speaker to left ear), and the sitting position in an equilateral triangle of around 230cm a side.

The speakers are active and so require plugging into the mains, and then into Kii Control and our network. Wim installed the Kii SEVENS in the best possible way and changed a few settings in the Kii Control (a small control unit that comes with the system). Twenty minutes later, we were good to go. I'm sure most readers will be able to do this themselves, but I reckon most brick-and-mortar Kii dealers should be happy to do this for Home users. Once it's locked in, it's locked in, and you needn't fanny about any further. However, onboard you get the opportunity to have six presets and Wim told us the story of how he had a client who enjoyed Rush (see video above), but thought their 70s albums a bit bass light and so had one preset labelled Rush that had a bit of a bass boost. I think this is a cool feature, and whilst the aim of the set-up is to achieve as flat a frequency response as possible, the system does allow for personal taste to be catered for – I actually went for a small boost in the bass myself.

The stands are pretty cool, too. The speakers bolt on to them, and there's a built-in cable management system, so you don't really see the cables being used. Well thought out!

I put a lot of questions to Wim about the connectivity of these speakers and my main question was about whether I could connect an analogue source, specifically a turntable through a preamp...and the answer is (of course) yes. The speakers have a pair of XLR inputs on the back, and you can select your source in the app.

SOUND QUALITY The first listening tests we did were done with the speakers being wired. This means that you have the master wired to the slave by an Ethernet cable, and the master is connected to the Kii Control. The Kii Control has three digital inputs, to which you can connect your streamer for example. The advantages here, from a convenience point of view, are that you can access Roon and your tunes stored on your NAS drive. Later we will look at the sound in wireless mode, but don't worry, you can still access Roon, by selecting "Kii Link" in the app – the results were a bit of a surprise to say the least.

So, in wired mode, I sat down in the hot seat and listened to a good few tunes I know well. The first thing that grabs your attention with the SEVENS is that they punch in the bass. That punch is tight and accurate-sounding, with no trail off or lingering smear to the sound. It's fast and it's in your face, particularly if you turn up the volume. The mids are clear and precise, and the tops are extended and focused. This latter point does mean that the SEVENS are quite directional, and there's no doubt that the best sound on the sofa was in the position where we set up the toe-in to be directed at. Sit outside the sweet-spot and you do notice a change in the image, but it's far from catastrophic, and I'd be very happy to sit and listen with friends. The sound, as you would suspect, is very much like listening to mid/field monitors, and I guess that's what this speaker really is all about – it's a pro studio tool that has been domesticated and can be tuned to a user's liking. There's very little not to like, to be honest. There's clarity, focus, and bass slam, though to get the full effect of that slam, you do need to crank the volume up a bit. For a small speaker, the SEVENS certainly pack a punch.

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Kii SEVEN Loudspeakers Soundstaging is very good, with it being easy to pick out stuff in the mix and other spatial effects that are natural or added by effects units. The caveat here is that (as mentioned) the very best staging is heard when you are in the hot seat.

The big question here that I'm sure loads of folk are going to be asking is "Do they sound digital?". I get this discussion, and I know there are a load of folk that read HiFi PiG that are staunchly in the analogue camp and think that digital brings with it a compromise in sound. I do get that in many ways, but the truth is that I reckon the vast majority of folk would be hard pushed to tell the difference in real-world demonstrations. I certainly didn't feel that I could sense any glaring sonic attribute that suggested I was listening to digital.

Now came an interesting experiment. The wired connection to the home network was taken away, and the two speakers' Ethernet umbilical was removed. A minute's worth of setup with the app and we were ready to go. Now, this really did get interesting. My first thoughts before hearing the same tunes I'd listened to before were that I was going to notice a bit of a degradation in sound quality – you'd assume that, wouldn't you? I sat, listened, and prepared myself to deliver the bad news to Wim as politely as I could. However, after listening to a few tunes, it was clear that the sound was marginally "better" – hard to describe but perhaps a little more space around bits in the mix. Certainly, the wireless connection wasn't in any way worse than the wired connection. However, the downside is that you can only stream from a streaming service like Qobuz, Tidal, or Spotify. If you want to use Roon, you need to select Kii Link in the app.

So to summarise: These are punchy and clear-sounding speakers that surprised me in how low they go. That bass doesn't seem to move much air, and I definitely preferred the speakers when cranked up a bit.

The next day, I was left to my own devices and had the speakers to listen to myself without Wim being present. This is important, and why we don't carry out reviews at factories, shows, or in retail premises (though I know some think this is acceptable) – essentially, I wanted time where there were no outside influences or influencers able to direct my thoughts. I was listening to them in wireless mode the whole of time. I'll comment a bit on my time with the SEVENS from here on in.

First tune up was from my latest obsession, "Future Islands" and their tune King Of Sweden (I freaking love this record), and I was playing at pretty low volume. Vocals are central, slightly lifted upwards, and out in the room with the rest of the mix laid out behind them. Of course, there's not the bass slam I love at this volume, but there's no doubting that the detail and clarity are there in full. Cranking the speakers up to 70/100 (their sweet spot, in my opinion) on the app and the speakers spring to life. More of the same, really, but just vastly more enjoyable and "real" – feet tapping and just getting into the tune. The noise that comes out of these little boxes is pretty incredible, and I can see us buying a pair down the line for use in whatever space we end up spending our last years. For volume control in wireless mode, you can use the app or the volume control in Qobuz, Tidal, or Spotify; I'd have loved the opportunity to be able to use an IR-remote – this is obviously a personal preference, and others will be happy using the app.

Dusty Kid's Here Comes the Techno has a lot going on in the mix, but the SEVENS manage to separate it all into a wonderful thing to listen to, with sounds flying all over the stage, but underpinned by a nagging bassline, beat, and equally nagging synth noise. There's excitement and power, but nothing ever seems to be out of control – the SEVENS are very much in control here. The sound is solid, clear, and driving – as it should be. I played a fair bit of electronic music through these speakers, and I can't fault them at all with this kind of music. Perhaps in a bigger room (this is already a decent-sized space – 5m x 10m), I'd want a bigger speaker, but I'm getting a bit picky and looking for things to pull these speakers on.

I turned to the HiFi PiG Official Playlist on Qobuz (it's a collection of tunes made up from stuff that we use for reviews and other stuff that we just love). Neil Young's Powderfinger is on there and is a bit of a fave of mine. Accuracy and great staging were all there, but I did find myself reaching for the iPad and turning the volume up a smidge. Everything is there, nothing is missing, and it's a joy to listen to. The positioning of instruments was the thing that caught my attention on this track, and I was drawn into the lead guitar track – everything is really pinpoint (accurate).

Lee Perry's Dreadlocks In Moonlight from the Countryman film sounds splendid, and you can kind of hear how this was recorded – a bit lo-fi, but none the worse for it. There's a grittiness and realness to this recording that the Kiis can't hide. The Clash's version of Police and Thieves comes on next, and I'm really drawn to Paul Simonon's bass playing – it stands alone in the track on the SEVENS but is also part of the whole. I guess this is why the Kiis are used in studios as monitors.

To mix things up a bit, I played Flamenco Sketches by Miles Davis – proper instruments, unsullied by amplification and effects. I'd listened mostly to electronic and rock up to this point. However, the SEVENS just got on with the job, and I loved listening to this record through these speakers. Everything just sounded right and was all timed perfectly. The raspiness and tone of the instruments just flowed out of the speakers in an unhurried but at the same time accurate-sounding way.

I can real off all the tunes I listened to, but there's not a lot more to say. The SEVENS just play the files they are fed without embellishment or taking anything away. At times I'd have liked a bit more oomph, but a quick virtual turn of the app's volume dial and all is good. I always find that all tunes have a point when they just sound right.

THE DSP QUESTION DSP (Digital Signal Processing) is a bit of a dirty word in some audiophile circles, and I do kind of get this. We are analogue beings (unless the whole simulation theory gubbins is correct) and there's not a small amount of anti-digital sentiment in the audiophile world. I get it, I really do, but having sat in front of these speakers for a while, I get the benefits of DSP. I recall talking to Dave at GIK many years ago and him suggesting that a room should be treated with physical room treatment products, with the final tweaking being left to DPS – this is pretty much what we have done here at HiFi PiG Towers when using the SEVENS. However, I reckon that most rooms will have the stuff of life in them – the stuff we accumulate over the years, like furniture, books, and the rest of it – and the SEVENS will deal with the rest of it in DSP.

As an experiment, Wim came round and moved the speakers into the untreated part of the space – the bit where we have the telly, the fire, a sofa, and a couple of chairs. Wim erased the settings on the speakers, did the whole frequency sweep thing again for this room, fannied about with the frequency curve on the Kii control to get it flat, and we were off again – the whole procedure took maybe ten minutes.

What can I say? First tune up was High Rise by Hawkwind, and it was basically more of the same that we heard in the other room – tight bass, clarity, and detail. Then back to Future Islands and the King of Sweden, and we get more of the driving bassline (I love the bass on these speakers as it's also tight and fast) with the vocal dead centre and a little forward. We also listened to an Infected Mushroom track that I also played whilst the speakers were in the other space, and that banging bass kick had absolutely no hanging about in the air, making it as punchy as you can imagine. I'd cranked the volume right up by this point, and whilst it was loud (very), you could still talk over the music and

make yourself understood quite easily. Banging! I didn't have an optical cable to connect the telly to the Kii Control box, but I'd very much like that and can see that many folk will have their speakers set up in this position so they can watch films through the speakers, whilst also being able to enjoy their tunes. Without over-egging it, I'm really, really beginning to "get" these speakers. I played a few tunes, but the SEVENS just work wherever you put them! And if you do have several pairs of them (or single speakers), you can have them permanently set up around the house and just pick which "zone" you want to use.

QUIBBLES From a practicality perspective, I'd have loved to have been able to access our own files and Roon more easily when the speakers were in wireless mode. However, the speakers (somehow) sound better in wireless mode, so you lose a little in functionality and access, but gain a slight improvement in sound – your call – but then (somehow) the speakers sound better in this mode, and so what you lose in functionality and access, you gain in a slight improvement in sound – your call!

CONCLUSION These are very good-sounding loudspeakers that will appeal to those home users who are looking to reduce their box count, whilst still getting really great sound quality. The big selling point of these speakers is the big sound they get from such compact boxes and the way they are adaptable to the room.

Yes, they are kind of a lifestyle product, but don't let that put you off if you are serious about your listening experience, and also value your living environment.

They are clean (clinical – in a good way), accurate, and filled our decent-sized room with sound. Soundstaging and imaging are excellent. Bass is well ample in this room, but I think some would want to look at the bigger THREES or THREE BXTs – just because we can.

Connectivity is great, and if you do play with records, then you are sorted with XLRs into the back of the speakers and you can select this from the simple to use app or not he touch pads on the back of the "master" speaker.

We aren't currently in the market for a compact pair of speakers that don't need amps (or any other boxes, for that matter), but when we are, I've got a good idea of who will be getting the call.

I'm giving them the highest award I can, given that they are a great-sounding speaker that just works wherever you put them.

Given that we fully intend to buy a pair of these down the line, I cannot give these speakers anything but our highest award.

I dread to think how good the BXT system will sound at PiG Towers, but I can't wait to find out!

AT A GLANCE

Build Quality and Features:

Compact and well put together

Cool cable management is built into the stands

Brimming with internal wizardry outlined in the full review

Good app

You can plug in analogue sources

Sound Quality:

Accurate from top to bottom and with punchy bass

Definitely a foot-tapping experience from start to finish, and with all kinds of music

Value For Money:

Always a difficult one, but when you consider that you have a ready-to-go system, I think the asking price is very fair

We Loved:

Bass slam and an overall accuracy of sound

Cool looking and unobtrusive

Presets so you can tailor the sound to different genres/bands

We Didn't Love So Much:

Accessibility of our NAS and Roon when the speakers were in wireless mode

Would have liked a remote rather than the app to control the volume; others may well disagree with that, I am aware

Elevator Pitch Review: The SEVENS from Kii are a compact active speaker with onboard DSP, so you can tailor the speakers to the room you are using them in. Once they are set up, they are accurate-sounding and punchy, with the room not really having any effect on them. They are used in studios, but don't let that put you off, as they look cool in the home environment, too.

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<https://www.hifipig.com/kii-seven-loudspeakers/>