



Above Wharfedale Super Denton in walnut wood veneer

Roots manoeuvre

Britain's most famous loudspeaker brand delves deep into its rich history of innovation to deliver another exciting arrival to its hugely popular Heritage Series: the compact three-way Super Denton

Cambridgeshire, England – Wharfedale's great history as a maker of loudspeakers stretches back to 1932 – a quarter of a century before the introduction of stereo sound to consumers. In the 92 years since, the company has delivered many innovations that have since become commonplace, such as marrying separate bass and treble units to make the first two-way speaker system; most speakers are still designed this way today. Year after year, decade after decade, Wharfedale created some of Britain's best-loved loudspeakers, many of which are considered among the finest of their era.

Today, Wharfedale celebrates its past with the Heritage Series – a range of classic stereo speakers from the 1960s and 1970s, re-engineered for the modern age. This range sits alongside the company's latest highly acclaimed designs, such the Diamond 12 Series, EVO4 Series, Aura Series and Elysian Series, offering an enticing choice for discerning music lovers with a penchant for vintage style. And yet Wharfedale is not simply cloning past glories; instead, it applies the latest techniques and technologies to ensure the build quality, finish and performance of these classic designs is greatly enhanced, whilst remaining faithful to the spirit of the originals.

The first speakers to join the Heritage line were the Denton 80 and Denton 85, launched to celebrate Wharfedale's 80th and 85th anniversaries. These were followed by the hugely popular Linton – a speaker that has fuelled the popularity of revived and re-engineered vintage speakers more than any other. Then, last year, the big, beautiful Dovedale – the uppermost model in the Heritage range, lovingly made in Wharfedale's facility in Cambridgeshire.

The latest addition sees Wharfedale returning to the model that sparked the Heritage Series more than a decade ago. Introduced in 1967, the original Denton exemplified Wharfedale's twin edicts of quality and value, balancing fine craftsmanship, natural sound quality and affordability in a speaker that sold in high quantity across the globe. Successive Denton designs ran until the late 1970s, at which point the famous Denton name was confined to loudspeaker history... until the Denton 80 arrived in 2012.

One of the notable things about the original Denton was its compact size, helping to popularise the concept of 'bookshelf' speakers at a time when hi-fi speakers were usually bigger, bulkier boxes. Most Denton iterations were two-way designs, combining a mid/bass driver with a treble unit, and the same is true of the two existing 21st Century models. However, in 1971 Wharfedale launched the Denton 3, sporting a three-way driver configuration with separate bass, midrange and treble units – in doing so, Wharfedale created the smallest three-way speaker on the market, claimed to be capable of delivering the performance of much larger speaker systems.



Left Launched in 1971, the Denton 3's compact three-way design inspired the new Super Denton

The Denton 3's three-way configuration provides inspiration for the new Super Denton, which takes its place in the Heritage line-up alongside the two-way Denton 85 and Denton 80 (the latter now has limited availability). The existence of multiple Denton iterations running concurrently is faithful to Wharfedale's 20th Century history, as is the use of the word 'Super' to designate an enhanced version of an existing model.

Measuring 360x246x275mm (HxWxD), the Super Denton's size is similar to the Denton 3, making it one of the world's smallest three-way hi-fi speakers – if not the smallest, like the Denton 3 over 50 years ago. But while the look is reminiscent, the similarities between the Denton 3 and the new Super Denton end there – the drivers, the crossover and the cabinet make use of the latest techniques, technologies and materials to deliver an entirely different level of sonic performance. The elevated quality of engineering applied to the Super Denton lifts it above all other Denton iterations, past and present – and, indeed, all other Heritage models, barring the range-topping Dovedale.

The drive units

The Super Denton sports domed midrange and treble units, with 50mm and 25mm diameters respectively, and a 165mm bass driver. The latter's diaphragm is fashioned from woven Kevlar and tuned with the cabinet and rear-firing reflex ports to deliver bass extension down to 40Hz, below the fundamental 'E1' tuning of a standard bass guitar – impressive for a speaker of the Super Denton's compact dimensions. This driver handles bass and lower-midrange frequencies with engaging definition and expression, bringing instruments and voices to life.

Developed from the midrange driver in the award-winning EVO4 Series, the Super Denton's 50mm fabric dome delivers upper-midrange and lower-treble frequencies with aplomb. The wide dispersion of this dome diaphragm ensures clarity and finesse that brings the musical performance alive, seamlessly transitioning from the fundamental tones carried by the bass unit to the harmonic overtones further up the frequency range.

The new treble unit inherits much of its design from the one used in the £5,000-per-pair Dovedale, combining a ceramic magnet motor system with a 25mm fabric dome and a damped rear chamber to absorb the output from the back of the diaphragm. This reduces the resonant frequency of the treble unit to well below the crossover region, allowing full treble detail and harmonics to be revealed without affecting the smoothness of the high-frequency performance.



Left The Super Denton's compact cabinet incorporates separate bass, mid and treble drivers with twin rear-firing ports

The crossover

The electrical crossover between the drive units is of vital importance in a loudspeaker, as it not only divides up the frequencies between bass, midrange and treble but also blends the outputs of the drivers into a seamless musical presentation. The Super Denton's crossover components, including aircore inductor coils and high-specification polypropylene capacitors, have been chosen for their revealing and transparent character, seamlessly meshing the three drivers together.

The crossover slopes and the shape of the Super Denton's power response have been refined by extensive listening tests with a wide variety of music to ensure the speaker is simply a conduit between the performers and the listener. As a result, this sophisticated standmount speaker reveals a lively and transparent level of reproduction that suits all styles of music at whatever power level you choose.

The cabinet

Incorporating the Super Denton's three drive units into a cabinet of such compact dimensions to optimal sonic effect is quite a feat of acoustic engineering. The midrange and treble units are offset from the centre, which helps to maintain the speaker's compact stature as well as scatter reflections from the cabinet edges.

The cabinet itself uses a combination of woods to scatter panel resonances rather than having a single, audibly obvious resonant frequency. An inner layer of high-density particle board is bonded to an outer layer of MDF by an inter-layer of special glue with resonance-damping properties.

Critical analysis of the performance of each cabinet surface has resulted in the application of precisely shaped and positioned internal bracing, combined with specially sourced damping material. This ensures that cabinet resonances are controlled to well below the level of the music signal, allowing you to hear through to the recording without colouration intruding on your listening enjoyment.

The Super Denton is supplied in matched, mirror-imaged pairs. Users can place the speakers with the treble units on the inside and midrange drivers on the outside, or vice versa, according to sonic preference in their room. With the speakers sited appropriately, accurate stereo imaging within a deep, broad soundstage is assured.



Left The Super Denton works brilliantly with a wide range of amplifiers. LEAK's Stereo 230 is a great match for anyone wanting to maximise the mid-century vintage vibe

A classic reinvented for the modern age

The requirements of modern-day speakers are quite different to those designed half a century or so ago. Today's solid-state amps deliver greater power, and modern speakers need power handling to match. The demands placed on frequency response by contemporary digital recordings and sources, especially at the extremes of bass and treble, are also quite different to the midrange-focused vinyl records and turntables of the 1960s and 1970s.

The new Super Denton is ideally adapted to these requirements, combining the most advanced drive units, crossover and cabinet construction of any speaker bearing the Denton name. The speaker's Left The Super Denton works brilliantly with a wide range of amplifiers. LEAK's Stereo 230 is a great match for anyone wanting to maximise the mid-century vintage vibe. The appearance has been thoroughly updated in line with modern standards too, distinctively 'vintage' with its recessed baffle and wood veneer, yet greatly improved from the original Denton 3 in terms of fit, finish and attention to detail.

Real-wood veneers in walnut, mahogany or black are applied to the cabinet's top, bottom, back and sides, hand-polished and lacquered to a satin finish. Every pair of Super Denton speakers is matched with extreme care, the standard of finish ensuring their furniture-quality status.

The speaker's protective grille appears faithful to the original Denton designs, in terms of its material and heritage-style Wharfedale badge, but in truth it is much more sophisticated. It attaches magnetically to the Super Denton's recessed baffle and incorporates internal shaping to maximise the power performance of the drivers and avoid reflections from the edges of the cabinet. For this reason, the Super Denton is designed to be listened to with the grilles on – this is not always the case with modern speakers but is true to the design of speakers of the original Denton's vintage.

Speaking about the development of the Super Denton, Peter Comeau, Wharfedale's Director of Acoustic Design, said: "I've always had tremendous admiration for the original Denton – it's one of the reasons I became a loudspeaker designer. The Denton 3 was a remarkable design in many ways, with a big sound that belied its compact dimensions; we wanted the Super Denton to pay homage to its innovation as a compact three-way speaker whilst elevating it in every way. The room-filling scale, energy and detail the Super Denton delivers are highly impressive for a speaker of its size.

"To achieve this, we've applied the latest materials, techniques and technologies to redesign every aspect of the speaker from the ground up. We've utilised advanced computer modelling and the latest lab technologies to design and assess every critical aspect; and yet, as ever, final tuning comes down to thousands of hours of listening tests. Just as Wharfedale's founder, Gilbert Briggs, would emphasise: 'Response curves alone can hide a multitude of sins'"

Brimming with authentic British heritage, vintage style and state-of-the-art performance, the Wharfedale Super Denton is available from mid-March in a choice of walnut, mahogany and black wood veneer at an RRP of £999 per pair.



Above Wharfedale's 21st Century Denton models: Denton 80 (2012), Denton 85 (2017) and Super Denton (2024)

SPECIFICATIONS	WHARFEDALE SUPER DENTON
Speaker type	Three-way standmount
Enclosure type	Bass reflex (2x rear ports)
Treble driver	25mm fabric dome
Midrange driver	50mm fabric dome
Bass driver	165mm woven Kevlar cone
Sensitivity (2.8V @ 1m)	87dB
Nominal impedance	6Ω (8Ω compatible)
Recommended amp power	25-120W
Frequency response (+/-3dB)	52Hz-20kHz
Bass extension (-6dB)	40Hz
Crossover frequencies	940Hz and 4,6kHz
Cabinet volume	14.7L
Speaker dimensions (HxWxD)	360x246x275mm
Weight (each speaker)	9.2kg

