

## Best all-in-one system

### Ruark R2 Mk3 £400

In many ways, Ruark's latest (and third) all-in-one R2 system is the antithesis of Denon's classic microsystem, opting for network streaming over CD playback, going for built-in speakers rather than separate bookshelves.

So if vanguard features and space-efficient build is of the essence, this one-box Ruark has an impressive CV. Alongside FM, DAB and internet radio, the R2 features Spotify Connect for premium subscribers to the music service. DLNA affinity, too, means it will - once connected to the internet over its built-in wi-fi

- dig up music from any laptop or NAS box on the same network, and offline streaming via aptX Bluetooth provides another alternative to its pair of analogue inputs, 3.5mm jack and USB port, for playback and smartphone charging.

#### Rhythmic punch

Aesthetically, it's every inch a timeless classic. The wooden cabinet, steel front panel and OLED display straddle the line between modern and retro. The slim, palm-sized remote favours the former, but part of the system's charm is the unit's RotoDial, which you twirl to change volume, switch sources and scroll music library.

For a unit that could fit on your bedside table, this R2 whacks a decent amount of power out of two 9cm drivers, the soundstage astonishingly big and wide. The twin down-firing ports help to produce deep bass response, but the presentation doesn't get bogged down with it.

The talented midrange makes voices sound solid and intimate. The R2's rhythmic punch gives songs a great deal of attack, and engaging dynamics make them all the more captivating. Radio stations sound weighty and dynamic too, with voices clear and focused.

A recent software upgrade also magics up multi-room powers, letting you link two R2s together. A dedicated app is in the works, but for now Ruark recommends using third-party apps. Even without it, the R2 Mk3 is one of the best-sounding, most seamlessly integrated do-it-all we've come across.



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## Network tools

#### What else will I need?

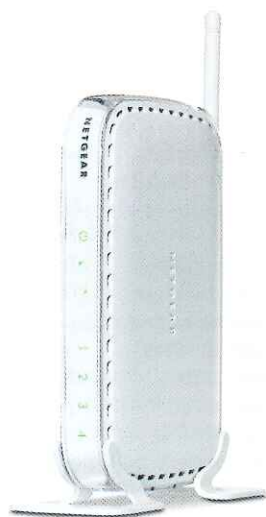
As digital media usage increases all the time, more and more people are embracing streaming for their hi-fi solutions. Our handy guide will tell you what equipment you will need before setting up a streaming system in your home.



#### Router

##### Netgear N600 £60

Every network needs a router. Netgear's N600 is dual band, so wireless 'g' and 'n' are available separately, keeping interference between the two to a minimum. In a basic system, you'll connect your NAS and your streamer to the router.



#### Ethernet switch

##### Netgear FS605 £15

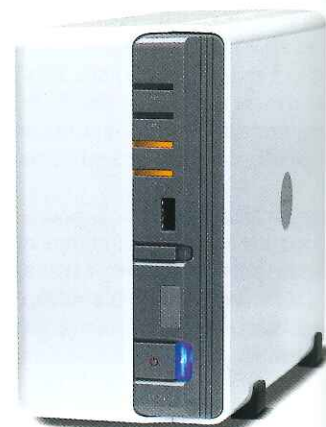
Instead of hooking everything straight up to the router, many manufacturers suggest you plug your components into an Ethernet switch first. This way, you isolate the key audio components from any possible interference generated by your router.



#### Adapter kit

##### Netgear Powerline 500 £25

If your router is located far from the streamer and/or NAS device, consider a set of Powerline plugs. These turn your home mains circuit into an extension of your network. For the best sound, we always recommend a wired connection above wi-fi.



#### Network storage

##### Synology DS215j £140

This sophisticated box of tricks can hold a maximum of 16TB of storage - that's enough to hold thousands of music tracks. Just connect it to your home network and every media player on the same network will be able to access the music library.