

The Carina series by Elac perfectly harmonises design and the latest technical solutions. It is aimed at discerning listeners who value the best sound and sophisticated design. We particularly liked this symbiosis with the bookshelf speaker Carina BS243.4. Then there is also a price that makes this speaker even more attractive.



The Carina BS243.4 take up little space, but are real eye-catchers.

Anyone who attaches greater importance to listening to music can hardly avoid ordinary hi-fi speakers. Stereo speakers do not have to be particularly expansive, however, to raise the level of music playback significantly. Thanks to sophisticated construction techniques, even comparatively compact loudspeakers create a voluminous sound that leaves nothing to be desired. Compact loudspeakers are therefore often the first choice, especially in small and medium-sized rooms. They do not dominate the room due to their size and at the same time benefit from shorter listening distances. While full-length floor-standing speakers sometimes require a distance of more than two meters from the listener, more compact speakers benefit from shorter distances. The distance to the rear wall can also be significantly smaller for small speakers, without causing problems in the bass range. In many living situations, bookshelf speakers are therefore clearly ahead and ensure greater satisfaction in the long term than the large loudspeaker, perhaps better under ideal conditions.



The Carina BS243.4 are beautiful and also really well made.

Die neuen Lautsprecher der Q-Serie.

From the same mould

The Elac Carina series was presented to me at the past high-end 2019 in Munich. My BS243.4, ready for testing, the BS stands for Bookshelf, is the smallest member of the family of three. At your side are the floorstanding speaker FS247.4 and the Center CC241.4. This would make it possible to put together a complete surround system around the pair of compact BS243.4. So much can be said in advance: I could well imagine a home cinema set of the Carina series in the living room cinema. The optical and tonal characteristics seem to be made for captivating and detailed soundtracks. However, I am currently sticking to the compact stereo pair. This should probably be an option for most customers because of the reasons mentioned above. Special here, because the BS243.4 is compact and looks just great. And it takes up little space. The footprint of the Elac Carina is a mere 22 by 25 centimeters, with the housing even tapering towards the rear.

Steadfast

Styled in this way, there is guaranteed to be a suitable place for this dainty speaker in every apartment. It can then confidently be in an exposed position, because the sophisticated design makes the Elacs an eye-catcher. The front merges seamlessly into the two sides of the speaker via a generous curve. These converge narrowing towards the back and in turn fit seamlessly into the back. With the uniform black or white paint finish in a matt finish, the Carina BS243.4 simply appears as if it were made from one piece. The underside of the speaker has an unusual shape: it becomes higher towards the back, as if the speaker were tilted. Fortunately, it has an elegant metal frame base that prevents this. This frame ensures that the speaker is straight and there is a wedge-shaped gap between the shelf and the housing. This is an unusual design feature on the one hand, and a technical trick on the other.



The speaker rests securely on an elegant metal frame.

Bass reflex

Through the said wedge-shaped gap between the housing and the shelf, the reflex opening could not be placed in the back, as usual, but in the bottom of the speaker. This makes the BS243.4 more independent of the distance to the rear wall. In this position, the exit interacts primarily with the subsurface and only then with the rear wall. A corresponding port is necessary, by the way, since the Carina is not a closed speaker, but

a bass reflex construction. This means that the inside of the cabinet acts as a bass amplifier. The chic bass chassis on the front of the speaker radiates the sound produced both to the front and to the rear. When the loudspeakers are closed, the part emitted on the back of the housing is converted into heat by insulating materials. Here, on the other hand, this part is reinforced by the clever dimensioning of the housing and released to the outside via the bass reflex opening, so that it adds to the sound.



Clever solution: The bass reflex opening is located on the underside of the housing and shines at a defined distance towards the floor.

Perfectly coordinated

This construction is particularly useful for small loudspeakers, because the comparatively small diaphragm area is compensated to a certain extent. Compared to closed speakers, however, they often sound a little less precise and less fast and crisp. However, this expressly does not apply to the Elac Carina BS243.4. The North German designers have given the speaker a woofer that is in no way inferior to the jet tweeter in terms of dynamics and agility. If you are wondering what a JET tweeter is, you are in good company. Whoever is not exactly one of the hi-fi nerds has probably never heard of it. This is also an indication that you have probably not owned an Elac loudspeaker so far, because the JET has a long tradition at Elac.

By tradition

Elac has been using the JET driver since 1993. It is a magnetostatic tweeter. It consists of a strong neodymium magnet and an extremely thin, folded foil. Conductor tracks are applied to it, through which the music signal flows. In connection with the magnet, a Lorentz force is created by the current flow, which moves the foil. It does not move back and forth like a classic loudspeaker, but the folds of the film open and close like the slats of an accordion. This is how air is sucked in and repelled, thus producing audible sound. The advantage of this construction is that the extremely light film is particularly agile and can follow the complex music signal with almost no delay. Also contributes to the good tone, that the JET tweeter plays particularly broadband, i.e. in a wide frequency range, and uncompressed. This means that even large differences in volume in the music signal are reproduced without any distortion.



Elac is particularly proud of the JET tweeter. It is also used in the Carina BS243.4.

Bass games

Such an agile tweeter naturally also presents challenges for the associated woofer. After all, he has to keep up with the lively colleague. Due to the larger membrane area in a stable aluminum sandwich construction, the woofer has to struggle with much greater inertia. So that he still plays as agile and crisp as his partner, he is equipped with a generously dimensioned drive. It exerts enough force to control the membrane quickly and

precisely. I'll check that in the hearing test. But what I already notice is the stylish integration of the chassis into the really well-made housing. The flush-mounted sound transducers are also surrounded by a shiny metal ring, which visually sets them apart from the housing. Especially in the black version, the Elac Carinas look really stunning. The manufacturer apparently agrees, because there are no membrane covers. After all, there is nothing to hide.

Connect correctly

On the back, the Carina BS243.4 then convinces with a connection terminal that matches the chic style of the loudspeaker. It consists of an embedded metal plate that holds four solid screw terminals. This makes bi-wiring and even more complex bi-amping possible even with this compact speaker. In these operating modes, the loudspeakers are operated on two separate cables or even two amplifiers per channel, which supply the high and low frequencies separately with energy. This should improve the control of the amplifier over the chassis and consequently the sound. For operation on a simple cable, the two associated terminals are connected with metal bridges as standard. The screw terminals on bare everything from bare cable ends to cable lugs and banana plugs.



The Carina BS243.4 is equipped with solid screw terminals for bi-wire or BI-amping operation.

Fine-tuning the Carina BS243.4

Otherwise there is not much to consider during commissioning. The speakers need a free and stable footprint. According to the instructions, the distance should be approximately 30 to 60 centimeters to the rear wall and the side boundaries. Furthermore, an approximately equilateral triangle is to be formed from speakers and preferred listening position. The distance between the speakers ideally corresponds to that of each speaker from the listening position. This is the best way for the stereo speakers to show their advantages. Take some time for placement and alignment. The desired three-dimensional sound image, which allows the music to appear in the room, can only be created with an optimal set-up. Direct angling of the loudspeakers into the listening position is possible, but not absolutely necessary. Just let your personal taste decide. I achieved the best sound result for me with speakers that are slightly aligned with the listening position.



Practical: This loudspeaker only has to be aligned slightly to the listening position in order to generate a spatial sound image. Even installation close to the wall (as in this picture) is possible with the Carina BS243.4.

Responsive

I start my listening test with an album from the 1980s. One of the few from this period that I can hear: "Sentimental Hygiene" by Warren Zevon. Even in the first sounds, the Elac Carina BS243.4 impress with their lively and offensive style of play. The speakers play freely and get started as if they were exactly designed to play this title. This is most clearly expressed in the way they represent all types of attacks. String stops on the bass can be heard via the Elacs before other speakers have noticed what is going on. In fact,

compared to my time-honored English floor-standing speakers, the chic compact speakers play so dynamically and quickly that I wondered during the first page of the record whether the Turntable may be running too fast. He doesn't, because the tonal performance continues with the albums mentioned below.

Fun with a kick

My explanation for this dynamic and fast way of playing is the tweeter. Thanks to its design, it is known for a lively and instantaneous high frequency. However, what impresses me at least as much is that the low-midrange driver can confidently keep up with this speed. Despite the absence of any heaviness, it delivers an extremely impressive bass for bookshelf speakers. In my test, the speakers were now also just half a meter away from the rear wall. All this in an approximately 25 square meter room and in the places where my floorstanding speakers are otherwise. I still cannot complain about the lack of bass quality. While it is absolutely indisputable that a much larger loudspeaker with more membrane area acts more confidently in the lowest positions, the BS243.4 do so well against that this is hardly important anymore. What the compact Elac lacks in absolute depth, they conceal with a clever focus on the bass fun area. Keyword: kickbass.



The bass-midrange is obviously perfectly matched to the JET tweeter and provides an agile basic tone and a neat base in the bass range.

Consistent and detailed

Sure, smaller speakers generally produce less deep bass and less volume. But I have to honestly say that I have absolutely nothing missing here in the bass range. I suppose it is because of the contoured and detailed bass reproduction, which is in no way inferior to the high frequency. I actually really enjoy exploring the details in the bass that remain hidden in the lush speakers. Ultimately, during my test, I ended up with music that I particularly enjoy because of its details. For example Bill Withers "Live At Carnegie Hall", an album that creates a large live atmosphere with a small cast. And that offers many details that can be explored. The detailed Elac Carina BS243.4 allow the listener to change focus at any time.



The housing of the BS243.4 elegantly tapers to the back. The processing of this speaker is simply excellent.

Detail explorer

When I notice this feature, I switch to classical music, which has so far been underrepresented in my listening habits. Played over the chic Elac bookshelf speakers, I develop a lot of fun with classical orchestral music. While recorded orchestras like to present themselves as an undifferentiated carpet of sound, it is easy for me to follow the events carefully. So I even manage to hear individual voices and instruments. With the excellently detailed high tone and the stirring dynamic playing style, the Elacs also make it

easy for me to get carried away and to explore every detail. Especially when the music makes it possible, or even almost demands it, as is the case with orchestral music or with live recordings like the one mentioned above. In addition to the primary elements of music, there are always the reactions of the audience, the room or background noises, such as the rustling of the sheet music when turning the page. The BS243.4 makes exactly that possible, without dissecting the sound or making it appear sterile in any way. At the latest now, this bookshelf loudspeaker is a very hot recommendation for discerning music lovers who have little space for boxes but who require a realistic spatial representation, richness of detail and temperament from their new sound transducers. such as the rustling of the sheet of music when turning the page. The BS243.4 makes exactly that possible, without dissecting the sound or making it appear sterile in any way. At the latest now, this bookshelf loudspeaker is a very hot recommendation for discerning music lovers who have little space for boxes but who require a realistic spatial representation, richness of detail and temperament from their new sound transducers. such as the rustling of the sheet of music when turning the page. The BS243.4 makes exactly that possible, without dissecting the sound or making it appear sterile in any way. At the latest now, this bookshelf loudspeaker is a very hot recommendation for discerning music lovers who have little space for boxes but who require a realistic spatial representation, richness of detail and temperament from their new sound transducers.



The Carina BS243.4 scores especially in smaller living environments due to its temperament and its obviously perfect coordination!

Conclusion

The Elac Carina BS243.4 is a chic, independently styled and yet everyday usable shelf speaker. Especially in the completely black version left to me for the test, the Carina BS243.4 is a real eye-catcher. Here, optics and technology merge to form a committed unit. Even a look at the technology, especially the magnetostatic JET tweeter, is part of the design concept here. This AMT is also responsible for the airy, detailed and agile sound of these delicate bookshelf speakers. The woofer enthroned underneath is in no way inferior to its play partner in terms of agility and joy. Thanks to it, the playback range is effectively expanded downwards without the bass range being overpowering or overbearing. So there is a sound image,

Test & Text: Jonas Bednarz

Photos: Simone Maier

RATING

Overall grade: 90/90

Class: Upper class

Price / performance: excellent

sound	<div style="width: 90%;"><div style="width: 90%;"></div></div>	90
practice	<div style="width: 90%;"><div style="width: 90%;"></div></div>	90
Furnishing	<div style="width: 89%;"><div style="width: 89%;"></div></div>	89



Technical specifications

Model: Elac Carina BS243.4

Product category: Bookshelf speakers

Model:	Elac Carina BS243.4
Price:	500.00 euros / piece
Warranty:	- 5 years
Versions:	- white - black
Distribution:	Elac, Kiel 0431/647740 www.elac.de
Dimensions (HBT):	319 x 216 x 245 mm
Weight:	6.7 kg / each
Tweeter:	JET AMT
Bass-midrange:	150 mm
Frequency range:	46 Hz - 30 kHz (manufacturer information)
Crossover frequency:	2,700 hertz
Scope of delivery:	- Carina BS243.4 - operating instructions
Pros and cons:	+ chic design + excellent workmanship + flexible installation options + bi-wire connection panel + realistic room layout + punchy basic tone + effective bass tuning - no covers
Grading:	
Sound (60%):	90/90
Practice (20%):	90/90
Features (20%):	89/90

Model:	Elac Carina BS243.4
Overall grade:	90/90
Class:	Luxury class
Price-performance	outstanding