When Naim launched its original Mu-so back in 2014 (HFC 391), the sleek one-box design earned mass-market appeal and took the Salisbury-based concern from purveyor of specialist hi-fi that worked best with its own components to a company with a product that could easily be sold by a non-specialist retailer with a high level of confidence to engage those customers looking for a one-box music solution. It turns out Naim was just getting started and since its introduction, Mu-so’s slick features and impressive user friendliness have been developed to fit into components further up the range to the point where its flagship ND 555 network music player (around £20k with dedicated PSU) has some convenience features that the original Mu-so design lacks. As a result, the Mu-so 2nd Generation takes the original and incorporates the company’s latest developments.

The basic design of a self-contained speaker system that uses a home network to deliver music and support the bulk of its functionality remains unchanged. Despite looking remarkably similar to its predecessor, the 2nd Generation model incorporates a lot that’s new. For example, the claimed power output still uses Class D amplifiers to deliver 75W to each of its six drivers – something that Naim describes as a “sonic array” – but now also benefits from optimised tuning in a joint partnership with French loudspeaker brand Focal.

The processing power of the Digital Signal Processing (DSP) system that controls the amplifier and driver arrangement claims to be significantly improved and is instrumental to the Mu-so’s sound. The system can’t be bypassed, but there are placement settings available via the app to tune its output to work closer to a rear wall or when placed in a corner.

The network streaming platform is the same as the one developed for Naim’s slick Uniti all-in-one systems and dedicated streaming products. It brings impressive format and sample rate support that’s more extensive than many other ‘lifestyle’ products to handle PCM up to 32-bit/384kHz and DSD up to DSD128 while gapless playback is supported throughout.

My Generation

Naim’s next-gen Mu-so boasts a host of new features and an updated streaming platform. Ed Selley takes a second look.

Vocals take centre stage and supporting instruments are perfectly recreated similar to its predecessor, the 2nd Generation model incorporates a lot that’s new. For example, the claimed power output still uses Class D amplifiers to deliver 75W to each of its six drivers – something that Naim describes as a “sonic array” – but now also benefits from optimised tuning in a joint partnership with French loudspeaker brand Focal.

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The real story, though, is the additional playback support. As with the original Mu-so, wired and wireless network connectivity are available along with native support for Tidal and Spotify Connect, plus internet radio, USB-A for external drives and optical and line input connections. AirPlay has been included to AirPlay 2, allowing it to work as part of a multi-room setup with similarly equipped products and Chromecast support has been enabled (for lossless streaming of services not natively supported). Room compatibility has been added and physical inputs have been augmented with an HDMI ARC connection (see box out) while Bluetooth now supports the AAC codec and aptX.

Despite looking remarkably similar to the original, there are some aesthetic differences. The cabinet volume has increased in the pursuit of improved bass – although this has aesthetic differences. The cabinet been added and physical inputs have been augmented with an HDMI ARC connection (see box out) while Bluetooth now supports the AAC codec and aptX.

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