


CAN THE NEW PIVOTING
CEILING SPEAKERS PLEASE
DEMANDING DESIGNERS &
SERIOUS LISTENERS?

POINTED DEBATE

As Featured in

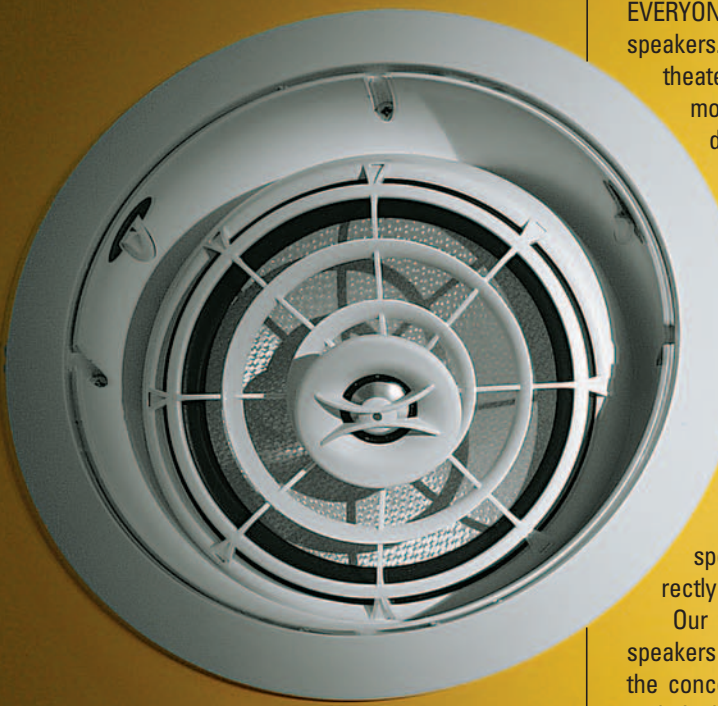
Robb Report
HOME ENTERTAINMENT

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EVERYONE LOVES THE SOUND OF GREAT HOME THEATER speakers. Unfortunately, few love the *look* of great home theater speakers. Even an unobtrusive, Coke-can-sized model may find the door to the living room barred by a determined interior designer.

Savvy speaker companies have confronted this problem by adding a new twist—or rather, a new pivoting mechanism—to their in-ceiling speakers. No matter where one of these inconspicuous speakers is mounted in the room, your installer can turn it to face you. This should produce better sound than an ordinary ceiling speaker, which points directly down.





Our tests of early pivoting speakers leave us thrilled with the concept but uncertain of its technical merit. So we decide to sample newer models—including designs from Conexion, Russound, Sonance and SpeakerCraft—to firm up our conclusions.

Are pivoting ceiling speakers the solution for design-conscious home theater enthusiasts?

Turn the page and take a listen with us.

By Brent Butterworth
Photography by
Randall Cordero Studios



■ Clockwise from top:
Conexion z600c, Sonance
Ellipse LCR 2.0, Russound
SP-H8TT and Speaker-
Craft AIM8 Five

POINTED DEBATE



A STEP UP Sonance made a splash two years ago with its Ellipse LCR 1.0. It was not the first ceiling speaker designed for home theater use, but it was the first to attract a lot of attention. The **Sonance Ellipse LCR 2.0** ups the ante with higher-quality components and a thin interior foam lining intended to minimize sound reflections inside the speaker.

The 15 degrees of tilt offered by most pivoting speakers are generally insufficient to point the speaker directly at the listener. Sonance achieves a greater degree of tilt—and better-focused sound—by placing a pivoting midrange driver/tweeter assembly inside a large recess and tilting it about 30 degrees. With the pivot, the midrange/tweeter assembly tilts a total of about 40 degrees, so you can probably point it directly at your favorite chair. A woofer on the other end of the recess provides bass. The company offers an optional enclosure (or back box) that should substantially improve sound quality.

Sonance seems to have geared the Ellipse 2.0 LCR for movie sound. Its bass is the most satisfying we have heard from a speaker in this category. In fact, you might find the bass ample enough that you can use the 2.0 without a subwoofer—a good thing given that there are not many good subwoofers you can mount in the ceiling. The upper midrange seems boosted a bit, which sounds less natural but adds emphasis to movie dialogue. The treble could use refinement, though; the speaker adds some sibilance to voices.

The 2.0 does not seduce us for music listening, but three of these up front by the TV screen and two of Sonance's matching Ellipse surround speakers in the rear might be the ticket for a stealth home theater system.

PRICE: \$750 each
CONTACT: 800.582.7777, sonance.com

