Ed Selley discovers what happens when a pro audio brand makes a lifestyle speaker

ATC HTS 5.1/53.500

ATC is going some way to filling that gap in the market. What you see here is a system made from the smallest members of its brand new HTS series. Appearances can be a little deceptive, though. The HTS speakers are actually close relatives of the SCM models that have been on sale for a few years. Each HTS takes the driver arrangement of the corresponding SCM offering and places it in a cabinet that’s been adapted for use on a wall. The HTS7, therefore, is the thin-profile version of the SCM7 standmount that we previously played with in HCC #267.

This means you get a 1in soft dome tweeter and 5in mid/bass driver, both of which are built in-house at ATC’s UK HQ. They are placed in a cabinet that is taller and wider than their conventional cousins but correspondingly shallower. As a result, the internal volume remains the same at seven litres. ATC has a reputation for practicality and speakers that will work in demanding environments come what may, and the HTS models are no exception. The cabinet is supported by not one but two keyhole mounts to evenly spread its 8kg weight. The rear surface has soft foam contact pads at the corners to ensure that the cabinet will sit flush on the wall and not rattle once it does.

There are some other nice touches, too. The terminal panel (which is for single wiring only) is up near the top of the cabinet, ATC then runs a channel down from this to the base of the speaker’s rear, so that any cabling won’t interfere with that flush fit.

A full-size template is supplied for drilling your holes and ATC has foregone the usual steel basket grilles for more unobtrusive room placement. The only slight downside is that the speaker’s black drivers did tend to show through the white cloths on my review package. A satin black finish is also available.

There’s no direct equivalent of the C1C centre channel (the go-to model for the SCM lineup) in the HTS range. Instead, ATC has rotated the driver complement of the HTS7 through ninety degrees to create its new HTS7C. While this means you are technically a driver down over the standard model, you gain the advantage of having the same drivers arranged in the same way in all speakers, which should improve transition throughout the soundstage.

This on-wall series, for obvious reasons, also has no dedicated subwoofer, so this 5.1 setup has been supplied with a white-finished version of the C1 Sub that I’ve used previously. This is no bad thing though – the C1 is a strong performer with a useful panel-driven setup.

Like their conventional box relatives, the HTS speakers are sealed and sound their best with plenty of good-quality power behind them. They aren’t particularly sensitive (rated at 84dB), but have a nominal 8ohm impedance (which ATC says doesn’t dip significantly) that should help the job of your AV receiver.

One interesting side effect of their design is that as they are meant to be placed against a wall, the HTS7 has better in-room extension than their standmount relatives, as they are voiced to use the wall for reinforcement.

As the price suggests, these are beautifully made and solid-feeling devices that should last for years.

The truth is... on your wall

These HTS speakers are very much the Dana Scully of the AV speaker world, seeking to find logic and order in the most chaotic of situations. The street fight on Jedha

5.1 slim and sonic

A key advantage of satellite speakers is their ability to be wall-mounted. With larger, full-bandwidth models, mounting up and out of the way becomes a much tougher business – a reason why they remain a rarity. Which is a shame, as even if you don’t want a full surround set, they can be useful as rear speakers.

Okay, the subwoofer won’t mount on wall but the rest will...

Ed Selley
The tiny sounds of the near-deserted property and the shootings have occurred in *Nightcrawler*. Explosions. When Jake Gyllenhaal enters the house where that aren't simply a loosely strung together bunch of the 5.1 set works well with more considered soundmixes but involving and exciting. Much any level you choose to play them, these are refined the same points keep cropping up in my notes. At pretty comparison between them and their wall-mounted kin, but returned to ATC, so it is hard to make a completely accurate on imaging. The SCM7 review package has long been wide apart, there doesn't seem to be any negative hit to toe-in, and even when they are installed comparatively not entirely real, and – at times – joyfully visceral. Notably, as the speakers are placed on the wall with no consistent when FX and score are being flung about. Speakers, the result is a soundfield that is even and immersive soundfield.

**Even and consistent**

With the rest of the package using five almost identical speakers, the result is a soundfield that is even and consistent when FX and score are being flung about. Notably, as the speakers are placed on the wall with no toe-in, and even when they are installed comparatively wide apart, there doesn't seem to be any negative hit on imaging. The SCM7 review package has long been returned to ATC, so it is hard to make a completely accurate comparison between them and their wall-mounted kin, but the same points keep cropping up in my notes. At pretty much any level you choose to play them, these are refined but involving and exciting. An assured sense of space and control means that this 5.1 set works well with more considered soundmixes that aren't simply a loosely strung together bunch of explosions. When Jake Gyllenhaal enters the house where the shootings have occurred in *Nightcrawler* (Blu-ray), the tiny sounds of the near-deserted property and the low-level buzz of the city outside ooze into my listening room with clarity and precision. Again, it's a performance that's easy to lose yourself in, although when you drop to a very low, late-night listening level, some of this fine detail becomes harder to discern.

Where the HTS7 scores over a more conventional satellite speaker, and even over the SCM7, is that thanks to that boost from wall-mounting, stereo performance – without the aid of the C1 subwoofer – is fabulous. If you need a speaker that will perform both music and television/movie roles, the HTS7 has to be heard. And that's before you consider that it is taking up very little space.

Multichannel music also convinces. The audition period coincided with the BBC’s Glastonbury coverage, and this package proved unfailingly impressive at locking the musicians onto the stage and capturing the sound of the crowd, not simply as a vast single noise but as a body of people.

**Compromise? Not me**

The HTS7 and HTS7C are an impressive achievement. For what is only a slightly higher price than the SCM7 5.1 package, the UK brand has assembled a quintet of speakers that have the same unburstable sense of capability and excitement — and at the same time enable you to reclaim some precious floorspace. If you'd been considering investing in on-wall speakers as an unwanted compromise, these will definitely cheer you up.

**HCC VERDICT**

![Rating Icon](https://www.homecinemachoice.com/images/rating-icons/5-star.png)

**ATC HTS7 5.1**

£3,500 → atcloudspeakers.co.uk

**WE SAY**: An extremely happy marriage of capability and convenience, ATC’s HTS speakers might be just what your cinema room is crying out for.