

AUTOMOTIVE

## Audi turns car into concert hall with Bang & Olufsen

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*Audi's A8 includes speakers by Bang & Olufsen. Image courtesy of Audi*

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By STAFF REPORTS

German automaker Audi is partnering with Danish consumer electronics maker Bang & Olufsen to bring a surround sound audio experience to every passenger in the A8.

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While Audi first worked with Bang & Olufsen on 3D sound for its 2015 Q7, the new A8 marks the first time that this feature extends to the backseat of the vehicle. Consumers are increasingly looking to automakers to deliver quality entertainment as part of the driving experience, making collaborations such as Audi's with Bang & Olufsen a way to enhance this key selling point.

### Surround sound

Bang & Olufsen's Advanced Sound System includes 23 speakers containing neodymium magnets that are low distortion. This translates music the way it was recorded, more accurately recreating a live performance.

Two loudspeakers are positioned on the A pillars by the front windows, while two others are situated above the rear passenger seats.

The 3D system adapts to each individual track to send sound through the four loudspeakers. This process uses an algorithm developed by Audi in collaboration with the Fraunhofer Institute in Erlangen that can translate 5.1 or stereo recordings for the speaker system.

Consumers riding in the car can customize their sound by focusing it in the front or back, as well as choosing to have sound spread across all four speakers.



*Inside the Audi A8. Image courtesy of Audi*

Audi has been working with Bang & Olufsen since early in the 2000s. The 2005 A8 was the first vehicle to have a factory-fitted sound system, which was a result of their partnership.

"Bang & Olufsen performs basic tuning of the system at its premises," said Mario Fresner, head of sound development at Audi AG, in a statement. "We independently conduct in-depth development work on the system and its components here in Ingolstadt.

"The 3D coordination work then takes place in Erlangen," he said. "Everyone involved has the same ambitious aim: to offer our customers the best possible sound system one that is technically extremely sophisticated and capable of conveying the emotion that resides in the music."

Consumer behavior and interest in in-vehicle infotainment systems is drastically shifting the luxury auto industry, forcing automakers to up their standards in terms of connectivity.

A new report from BIS Automotive is showing that a compound annual growth rate of 7.5 percent is expected to propel the in-car infotainment market to \$52.2 billion by 2022. Infotainment systems include luxuries such as in-dashboard navigation, rear seat entertainment, quality audio systems and music streaming, traffic and weather conditions, entertainment applications and parking information ([see story](#)).