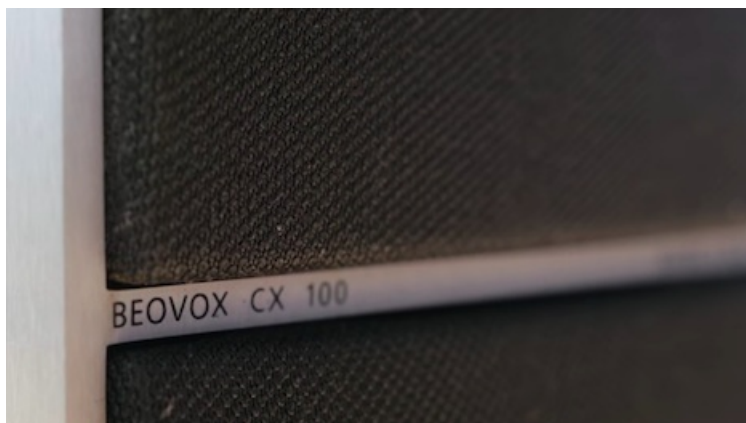


CONSUMER ELECTRONICS

## Bang & Olufsen brings upcycling to vintage speakers

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*B&O's new Beocrate project was created in collaboration with HiFiBerry. Image credit: B&O*

By DANNY PARISI

Danish electronics and audio company Bang & Olufsen is bringing new life to the upcycling trend by letting customers upgrade its vintage, non-wireless speakers with wireless and Bluetooth connectivity.

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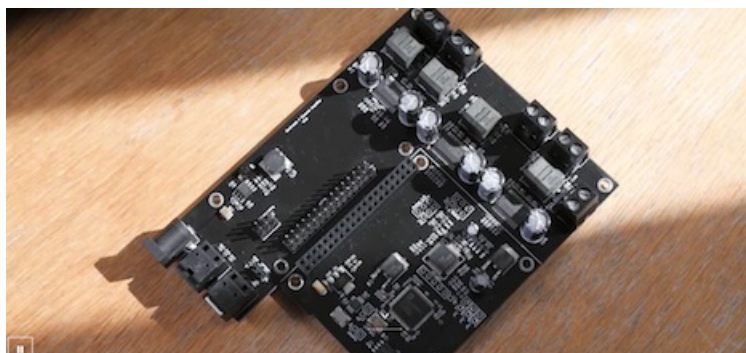
The program is called the Beocrate and it allows customers to purchase a custom-made B&O DSP board which can be installed in vintage speakers to give them the modern wireless connections consumers expect while still remaining the warmth and sound quality of a vintage speaker. The move is part of a larger luxury trend in upcycling to give products a new life.

### Breathing new life

While mass-market brands may be able to get away with products that fail after a few years, requiring a new purchase, luxury needs to be better.

That has been the philosophy for much of the luxury business over the years, with the idea that consumers should be able to get many years of use and life out of their luxury products to cement their status as the best.

But while a pair of boots may be able to last for decades if made with high-quality materials, luxury electronics have it a bit tougher with the incredibly quick rate of innovation in technology.



*The Beocrate board. Image credit: B&O*

Products that were cutting-edge in 2014 are already obsolete in many ways, and the pace makes it difficult for a luxury consumer to get a lot of life out of an electronic.

B&O's solution to this problem is upcycling, the act of repurposing or upgrading older products to have increased value or utility. The brand has begun selling an upgraded DSP board that can be installed in vintage B&O speakers to give them wireless and Bluetooth connectivity, keeping in line with how the majority of people play music in their homes today.

Beocrate, as the initiative is called, is expensive and requires some modification to the speaker's internal components, but the end result is a vintage product that can last much longer than its initial lifespan thanks to upcycling.

Sustainability and upcycling

The upcycling trend has become increasingly popular across the luxury business.

Last year, LVMH-owned Glenmorangie began repurposing its Scotch whisky casks as a mode of transportation.

The distiller has teamed with Portland, OR's Renovo Hardwood Bicycles to upcycle its used casks to create a one-of-a-kind bicycle. The collaboration serves to celebrate the Scotch whisky distillery's history as well as its wood management policy to leave a smaller environmental footprint ([see story](#)).

Upcycling also fits into the luxury business' larger move towards sustainability, as upgrading existing products is less wasteful than creating new ones.



*Technical specifications. Image credit: B&O*

As the luxury industry at large becomes more environmentally friendly, brands will move toward the use of sustainable materials to manufacture goods.

One sector where this is particularly notable is eyewear. Brands such as Kering Eyewear, which makes the frames for brands such as Gucci, Bottega Veneta and Saint Laurent, have begun using new materials to make products more sustainable to produce ([see story](#)).

As B&O continues to roll out its Beocrate project, owners of vintage B&O speakers now have more options to bring their favorite audio equipment into the future, allowing them to keep their preferred product rather than tossing it in the trash and buying a new one.