

REPRINTED FROM HI-FI Choice

Six appeal

Spendor's new A6R floorstander is an extensively reworked version of an old favourite. ***David Price*** listens in

One of the best things about Spendor is that when its ranges are refreshed, it's a worthwhile update. The company's MD Philip Swift 'gets it' that buyers aren't always taken in by the addition of an alloy trim ring, a five percent more expensive crossover capacitor and set of gold-plated spikes. So when it does something, it's worth sitting up and taking notice. Any 'R' version (as it's 'Revised') really is worth paying attention to.

Currently the A series is the subject of Spendor's gaze. This is Spendor's mainstream range, fighting it out with mid-price speakers the world over. They look rather underwhelming, but they're really rather handy.

For the new A6R, Spendor claims "a dramatic uplift in dynamics,

It's one of those speakers that gets straight 'As' across all disciplines

resolution and low-frequency extension". This small-to-medium size box sports a new mid/bass driver that uses the company's latest EP77 'engineering polymer' cone, new surround and suspension materials. These are said to improve low-level linearity and mechanical stability. To go with this is a re-engineered crossover, devoid of series-attenuating resistors to minimise thermal modulation distortion. It also gets precision-wound high-linearity tapped inductors. At 4kHz, the new crossover begins feeding the same 29mm wide-surround tweeter with a bi-elliptical acoustic lens, which is said to give smooth extended high-frequency response.

The cabinets have also been breathed on, although you'd not know it from the outside. Spendor's linear-flow port is retained, sounding far less obvious than many rivals' cabinet apertures. It's also very forgiving when positioning; I can run the A6Rs pretty close to my back wall without any obvious nasties in the bass. Inside, the company's 'Dynamic Damping' is deployed – these are small low-mass constrained polymer dampers at key energy interface points. Silver-plated pure copper wiring is used, with halogen-free dielectrics. The speakers sit on four machined steel stabiliser inserts, secured directly into the main structure of the cabinet and give a firm foundation.

The review pair come in a very attractive light oak finish; they look discreet and tasteful in my listening room. Other finishes include cherry, dark walnut and black ash.

Electrically, the Spendors prove to be a very benign load; quoted sensitivity isn't earth shattering at 88dB, but a lowish power solid-state or tube amp will still drive them to decent levels in a largish room. And sitting just a few inches away from a rear wall with a subtle few-degree toe-in, they sound like they've been made for my listening room and Creek Destiny integrated amplifier. Very few of the 120W per channel are needed to get decent sound levels, and when more are deployed the Spendors take it like old pros.

Sound quality

Every speaker brand has a distinctive sound and Spendor is no exception. But rather than trying to voice in character, Spendors go the other way – they're self-effacing, even and neutral. This is both bad and good, because initially they don't sound so special; there's no amazing bass to be bowled over by, or a treble that's so sharp it could be emitting gamma rays. Nor does the midband come out and punch you in the face. But after you've got over your initial, slightly anti-climactic first acquaintance with these speakers, you soon begin to change your mind. You might find them over polite at first, but then you start listening in to the music itself.

This is the difference between the A6R and many flashier rivals. It doesn't bowl you over, but instead just seems to step aside and let you and the music get along together. Rather like a car salesman who's happy to leave you alone in the showroom to play with the object of your desire, the new Spendor has a very light, but deft and skilful touch. It knows how and when not to interfere, where less sophisticated, more impetuous rivals might be falling over themselves to demonstrate their punchy bass or laser-etched treble. Essentially then, the A6Rs are so boring that you're not distracted by them!

This means you can play pretty much any type of music and they'll still let it sing. Contrast this to all number of KEFs, Tannoys and Focals, which seem to be great with some types of programme material and rather less impressive with others. Take Manix's *Living In The Past*; this is a slice of retro techno, a sort of latter day rave anthem. It's pretty much the last piece of music I would ever imagine Spendor using to voice this new speaker, but still the A6Rs sing their hearts out – or rather let the music sing its heart out. Having recently lived with the higher-end Spendor D7, it's a case of *déjà vu* – because the A6Rs play the very same trick.

Bass is excellent and I can vouch that Spendor's special port design works very well. Even at high levels, there is no huffing, puffing or chuffing, and the low frequencies remain tight and supple. True, it isn't ▶

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Spendor A6R

ORIGIN
UK

TYPE
Floorstanding loudspeaker

WEIGHT
18kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
192 x 875 x 280mm

FEATURES
- 1x Spendor 180mm EP77 mid/bass unit
- 1x 29mm wide-surround dome tweeter
- Quoted power handling: 20-200W
- Quoted sensitivity: 88dB/1W/1m
- Quoted impedance: 8ohms nominal (min. 6ohms)

DISTRIBUTOR
Spendor Audio Systems

TELEPHONE
01323 843474

WEBSITE
spendoraudio.com

As gorgeous as the light oak is, there are also cherry, dark walnut and ash finishes



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Q&A

Philip Swift
MD, Spendor Audio



DP: Why do an 'R' version of the A6?
PS: We've recently introduced important new driver materials and crossover topologies in our D7 loudspeaker. We were sure we could use these as the basis for a significantly improved A6R. It has a significantly deeper more powerful bass and sounds more coherent, more transparent and dynamic. Essentially it is an entirely new loudspeaker, which retains all the positive elements of the A6.

What improvements has the new mid/bass cone material brought?
The old A6 had our EP38 translucent cone material, it was our first 'new generation' Engineering Polymer (EP) cone. It has taken us many years of research to find a substantially superior material. EP77 is more rigid for better bass. The residual break-up modes are vanishingly low, which results in a more natural, transparent, dynamic sound.

Why have you decided to do a traditional 2-way 'box' speaker?
Cost and size are significant factors and we think the A6R delivers an ideal balance of performance and size at a very affordable price. Our 2.5-way D7 is undoubtedly superior, but it is also bigger and more expensive. The cabinet isn't curved because in a typical home, furniture, equipment and layout tends to follow a very rectangular format. Everything fits and there is a pleasing timeless harmony. In a showroom fancy shapes can look impressive, but the novelty soon wears thin when you get them home! Carefully engineered curves and swoops in close proximity to mid and HF drivers can bring some sonic benefits, but a correctly dimensioned and braced rectangular cabinet is a highly effective way of creating a rigid enclosure, which also breaks up standing waves and avoids resonances and audible diffraction effects.

As it happens the A6R is very much on-trend with its pure form 'squared-off' cabinet. We notice many well-known loudspeaker manufacturers are turning away from curvy shapes – the future is simple and pure!

IN SIGHT



HOW IT COMPARES

Monitor Audio's GX200 is an obvious rival for the A6R, being one of the very best floorstanders at the price. The finish of the MA is more lavish, making the Spendor look plain. This 3-way design gives a very open, crisp, intricate sort of sound. It's a little more forensic than the A6R, with a lovely ribbon tweeter that boasts a wider and more atmospheric treble. The midband is very transparent, but slightly smaller scale than the Spendor, and lacks its easy rhythmic flow. On the other hand, there's a fraction more low-level detail. Bass is similarly good, although the A6R may just have the measure of the GX200 here.

ultra-taut like a good infinite baffle speaker, but it is still a very good implementation of a reflex port that lets the bass driver do its job accurately, with little interference. The result is a lovely, lilting musicality with just a tiny bit of softness and looseness, which any ported speaker gives. The low frequencies prove very even too; there's no big 'hump' around 100Hz to give the (false) sensation of a strong bass. But when called upon to deliver vast tracts of low frequencies, the A6R doesn't baulk – it proves able to dispense enough bottom end to flap your flares, if not quite blow your wig off.

The midrange performance of the A6R is lovely. It does that very special trick of being incisive and detailed without sounding like a speaker that's trying to be incisive and detailed! Rather it has a smooth, gentle, delicate sort of character that seems to dissolve away and let you focus on the mix; there's no honking or squawking from the cone, no sense that you're listening to something artificial. In absolute terms, that mid/bass unit lacks the amazing translucency of a ribbon or an electrostatic panel, but it's never muddy or grey or metallic sounding. Once again, it's sheer even-handedness wins the day! Cue up some lilting jazz from Hank Mobley's *Soul Station* and there's a fantastic sound to the saxophone – never harsh, it's nevertheless dripping with rich, resonant harmonics. Behind this, a wonderfully fluid groove gets going courtesy of great drum kit work; despite not throwing everything at you on a plate, the A6R still proves to be highly rhythmically adept.

It is very good at soundstaging too; it's one of those speakers that seems to be able to throw out excellent stereo with precious little setting up or fine tuning. But time spent getting a few degrees toe-in, and the listening height right via the front spikes pays dividends, and they'll end up projecting the music like a hologram in your lounge. *Spring Rounds* from Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* shows the depth and breadth the Spendors are capable of; short of going up to £5,000 designs, you'll struggle to get a larger, more spacious recorded acoustic. Within this, instruments are located with pin-point precision.

Conclusion

Spendor's new A6R floorstander is actually quite a hard speaker to describe, as it really doesn't draw attention to itself. Rather, it lets you play pretty much any type of music you like, and gives you a very clean, open, engaging and enjoyable rendition. It's one of those speakers that gets straight 'As' across all disciplines, while never quite making it to A-star in any. Its sheer competence across the board means it's really hard, if not impossible, to beat. You just can't help really liking it, no matter what you're currently used to and how expensive it is. As such, it comes heartily recommended – if you want your music to do the talking and not your loudspeakers! ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
EASE OF DRIVE ★★★★½

LIKE: Clean, open, even sound; musicality; fine build

DISLIKE: Looks are perhaps a little underwhelming, but nothing else at the price

WE SAY: One of the very best mid-price floorstanders around

OVERALL ★★★★★

REFERENCE MUSIC TIMELESS CLASSIC

SPENDOR

SPENDOR CLASSIC

History

In 1971 BBC engineer Spencer Hughes (1924–1983) and his wife Dorothy established Spendor Audio Systems Ltd to manufacture a new generation of Broadcast Monitor loudspeakers.



- Spendor products are designed and manufactured in the UK

In 1975 Terry Miles joined Spendor as a trainee technician. Working directly with Spencer Hughes, Miles helped to create some of the great Spendor Classic loudspeakers while gaining a wealth of experience in loudspeaker transducer and system design. Today Terry Miles is Head of Engineering at Spendor.

In those memorable early years Philip Swift (founder of Audiolab) had the good fortune to meet Spencer Hughes. Swift was one of the first people to hear, and own, the legendary Spendor BC1 and BC3 loudspeakers. Swift and Hughes often met to discuss music and loudspeaker design. Swift gained an intimate understanding of the key concepts and engineering which, to this day, are the basis of every Spendor loudspeaker. In 2001 he acquired Spendor. Today Philip Swift is Managing Director of Spendor.





Tapped inductors
Precision wound



Drive units
Individually calibrated



Crossover network
Gold conductors



Deep profile cone
Made by Spendor

SPENDOR CLASSIC SP3/1R²

Innovation

For over 30 years discerning audiophiles, musicians and professional sound engineers have chosen Spendor Classic loudspeakers as their absolute reference.

When vital materials and parts started to become unavailable, environmentally unacceptable, or prohibitively expensive, Swift and Miles decided this was the perfect opportunity to apply Spendor's advanced engineering and materials technology to the Spendor Classics. The result is a range of significant engineering and sound quality improvements.

Reviewers and critical audiophiles have been amazed that the new Spendor Classic loudspeakers easily and obviously outperform the majority of modern loudspeakers, while preserving all the charm and musical character of the originals.

'That a product originating decades ago still challenges cutting-edge modern rivals is a truly amazing achievement.'

Spendor SP2/3R²
What Hi-Fi May 09

Compact Original

With high power handling and a natural sound that belies its size, the SP3/1R² draws together some of the most advanced features of Spendor designs.

The Spendor SP3/1R² reproduces original sound, free of colouration.

Latest in a long line of compact Spendor monitor loudspeakers the SP3/1R² is a dramatic step forward.

- Spendor/BBC cabinet with thin critically damped mdf panels
- Deep-formed ep38 polymer cone derived from Spendor ST technology
- Magnet motor pole phase correction
- High-saturation linear 3 terminal inductors
- Spendor bass-mid low distortion 38 mm motor
- Spendor products are designed and manufactured in the UK

'The real star of the show, was the Spendor SP3/1R². The SP3/1R² has a midrange to die for – beautifully neutral and essentially free from colouration with an exceptionally wide dynamic range and negligible boxiness. Excellent overall coherence attests to the fine integration of the two drive units, as well as the natural sweetness of the new tweeter, ensuring fine stereo imaging with good depth perspectives.'

Spendor Classic SP3/1R²
Hi-Fi Choice Test Winner Mar 09

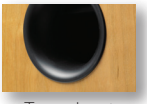


S3/1R² Cherry


Spendor 18 cm bass-mid
EP38 polymer cone


Crossover
Perfect balance


22 mm tweeter
Soft dome


Tapered port
Eliminates colouration

SPENDOR CLASSIC SP2/3R²

Traditional Performance

Without compromise to audio specification, the Spendor SP2/3R² demonstrates the silky smooth, neutral sound which made the larger SP1/2 and its successors a worldwide favourite with professional sound engineers, musicians and music lovers.

The SP2/3R² comfortably handles the most demanding and revealing programme material.

The beauty and virtue of the Spendor SP2/3R² is freedom from distortion, colouration and dynamic compression.

- Wide surround tweeter combines extended frequency response of small diaphragm with low frequency characteristics of larger diaphragm for stable low distortion response over wide frequency range
- Gold-plated double-sided printed circuit board for high conductivity and non-interactive signal routing
- Phase linear crossover for seamless integration and perfect stereo image
- Spendor products are designed and manufactured in the UK

'The SP2/3R² comfortably and unanimously topped the listening test rankings.

This is also a speaker that knows how to rock. There was no disagreement amongst the listening panel that the Spendor SP2/3R² was the pick of the bunch.'

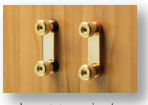
Spendor Classic SP2/3R²
Hi-Fi Choice Mar 11
Test Winner

'Stereo imaging is expansive yet focused, and the sense of authority is class-leading. The result is a wonderfully natural sounding midrange sandwiched between a sweet and insightful treble and weighty bass. This SP2 is the best yet. It can teach rivals plenty when it comes to sound quality.'

Spendor Classic SP2/3R²
What Hi-Fi May 09



S2/3R² Cherry


Input terminals
Bi-wire


Crossover
Meticulously refined


Spendor 21 cm unit
Low colouration


22 mm tweeter
Wide-surround

SPENDOR CLASSIC SP1/2R²

Timeless Masterpiece

Descended directly from the legendary and critically acclaimed Spendor BC1, the Spendor SP1/2R² offers a unique blend of audio quality, tonal accuracy, stereo precision, and traditional craftsmanship.

The SP1/2R² maintains the BC1's dimensions and uncanny mid-upper range accuracy. The SP1/2R2 can play comfortably at high sound levels. It has higher sensitivity, closer control of bass frequencies, and lower mid-band colouration than any of its predecessors.

The Spendor SP1/2R² effortlessly meets the challenge set by infinitely variable listening conditions and offers consistent, faithful sound reproduction.

'We are all tempted to think in words and to listen to verbal categories, to be analytical, rather than intuitive listeners.

But try instead to summon up the literal sound of music in your mind. Then listen to the SP1/2's. I believe you will then understand why I consider them a masterwork of speaker design.'

Spendor Classic SP1/2
Robert E Green
The Absolute Sound Issue 90

- 21 cm (8 inch) Spendor bass unit continues long tradition
- New front baffle design improves cabinet damping control
- Injection moulded port tubes for silent air-flow and improved appearance
- Classic 38 mm large dome tweeter with advanced shaded pole technology
- Spendor products are designed and manufactured in the UK



SP1/2R² Cherry


38 mm tweeter
Custom made


Crossover
High-saturation magnetics


Spendor 21 cm unit
Low colouration


Input terminals
Bi-wire

SPENDOR CLASSIC SP100R²

Evolution Standard

Presented in a traditional veneered enclosure, the Spendor SP100R² has a powerful visual presence to match its gloriously full scale sound.

The SP100R² is evolved from the famous Spendor BC3, S100, S100P and SP100 loudspeaker systems.

The Spendor SP100R² continues to set the standard by which other full-size loudspeakers must be judged.

'A wonderfully engaging sound with plenty of scale; tonal refinement; great midrange; easy to drive and partner – few if any can deliver music – any music from Metallica to Madonna to Mahler – in such a fluid, natural and downright insightful manner. There are some great speakers at this price level, but it's hard to think of any that deliver such a beguilingly balanced performance.'

Spendor Classic SP100R
What Hi-Fi Apr 08

'The Spendors possessed a snappy, tight and extremely rhythmic bottom end – orchestral music had that great sense of authority and scale that it so believable, while well recorded rock music with real drums was just awesome.'

Spendor Classic SP100R
Hi-Fi+ Jan 08

- Unique 12 inch (30 cm) Spendor bextrene cone woofer with 40 year history
- Multi-layer elastomer woofer cone damping (like original BC3)
- State of the art crossover components for pure signal transmission
- Easy 8 ohm load for perfect sound with tube or solid state amplifiers
- High-grade silver plated internal cables
- Spendor products are designed and manufactured in the UK



SP100R² Cherry



18 cm mid-range
EP38 polymer cone



Input terminals
Bi-wire



Twin ports
Perfect tuning



30 cm woofer
Made by Spendor

SPENDOR CLASSIC S3/5R² NEW

Reference Mini-monitor

The Background

For more than 20 years Spendor was licensed to manufacture the BBC designed LS3/5a mini-monitor loudspeaker.

When manufacture of LS3/5a drive units ended in 1997 Spendor designed a special 14cm bass-mid drive unit for a next-generation mini-monitor. With a modern 20 mm soft dome tweeter, new crossover engineering and an up-to-date look we created the S3/5 (1997–2007). The Spendor S3/5 achieved worldwide recognition as the natural successor to the LS3/5a.

Ten years later a new S3/5R (2007–2010) achieved what many thought impossible – new levels of transparency and imaging coherency, more articulate bass delivery, and the enjoyable fatigue free listening experience which so clearly distinguished the original Spendor S3/5 from other small loudspeakers.

The new S3/5R² takes a big step forward with significant improvements in low frequency articulation, dynamics, power handling, transparency and sound integration. Like its distinguished predecessors it has a fine technical performance and an enjoyable fatigue-free sound.



S3/5R² Cherry

'The Spendor S3/5R can deliver most types of music at typical domestic levels with clarity and coherence that set it ahead of the pack. A strikingly natural monitor that's forgiving of placement and the rest of the system. Voices and acoustic instruments are portrayed with stunning accuracy.'

Spendor Classic S3/5R
Hi-Fi Choice Gold Award Winner 08

'Throughout the crucial midrange, this new model may be the most neutral and natural sounding mini-monitor I know. The S3/5R's bass is more well-defined and articulate than either of it's predecessors, the S3/5R also sounds more open and coherent. This remains a true mini-monitor. No laws of physics have been circumvented, but they have been intelligently manipulated to produce a superior example of the subcompact genre.'

Spendor Classic S3/5R
Paul Seydor The Absolute Sound Jul 08



S3/5R² Light oak



S3/5R² Dark walnut



S3/5R² Black ash



22 mm tweeter
Wide-surround



Mid-range
Phase correction



Drive units
Indiviually calibrated



14 cm unit
EP39 polymer cone

SPENDOR CLASSIC TECHNICAL

Loudspeaker Specifications

Model	Description	Enclosure	Drive Units	H x W x D	Weight ea
S3/5R²	2-way stand, open shelf	Sealed enclosure	MF/LF 14 cm, HF 22 mm	31 x 17 x 19 cm	4.6 kg
SP3/1R²	2-way stand mount	Spendor single reflex	MF/LF 18 cm, HF 22 mm	40 x 22 x 28 cm	9.5 kg
SP2/3R²	2-way stand mount	Spendor single reflex	MF/LF 21 cm, HF 22 mm	55 x 28 x 33 cm	14.3 kg
SP1/2R²	3-way stand mount	Spendor twin reflex	LF 21cm, MF 38 cm, HF 22 mm	64 x 30 x 30 cm	18.0 kg
SP100R²	3-way stand mount	Spendor twin reflex	LF 30cm, MF 18 cm, HF 22 mm	70 x 37 x 43 cm	36.0 kg

Model	Frequency Response Anechoic	Low Frequency Typical in-room	Crossover Frequency	Terminals Bi-wired	Power Unclipped programme	Impedance Nominal (min)	Sensitivity 1 watt at 1 metre
S3/5R²	75 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 60 Hz	4.2 KHz	Gold plated 4-way binding posts *	100 watts	8 (6.2) ohms	85dB
SP3/1R²	65 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 55 Hz	3.7 KHz	4-way gold plated binding posts	150 watts	8 (5.7) ohms	88dB
SP2/3R²	60 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 50 Hz	3.2 kHz	4-way gold plated binding posts	150 watts	8 (6.8) ohms	88dB
SP1/2R²	55 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 45 Hz	2.8 kHz & 13 kHz	4-way gold plated binding posts	150 watts	8 (7.0) ohms	88dB
SP100R²	45 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 35 Hz	550 Hz & 5.0 kHz	4-way gold plated binding posts	200 watts	8 (5.5) ohms	89dB

* S3/5R² single wired

NOTE

All Spendor loudspeakers are calibrated and pair matched within 1db to broadcast reference monitor standards.
All dimensions exclude feet and terminals.
All models include grilles.

RECOMMENDED STAND HEIGHTS

S3/5R² 50–65 cm, SP3/1R² 50–60 cm, SP2/3R² 45–50 cm, SP1/2R² 40–50 cm, SP100R² 35–50 cm

FINISHES

See brochure images for examples of finishes.

SP3/1R², SP2/3R², SP1/2R², SP100R²
Cherry.

SP3/1R², SP2/3R², SP1/2R², SP100R²
Black ash and dark walnut available to special order.

S3/5R²
Cherry, black ash, dark walnut, light oak.

SPENDOR

Spendor Audio Systems Ltd
G5 Ropemaker Park
South Road, Hailsham
East Sussex BN27 3GY

Telephone
+44 (0)1323 843474
info@spendoraudio.com
www.spendoraudio.com

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Mid-range
Phase correction


Drive units
Computer matched


Crossover network
Individually calibrated


Woofer SP100R²
Bextrene cone

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MYTEK STEREO192-DSD, KRELL CONNECT, TOWNSHEND
SEISMIC CORNERS, BURMESTER 036, NAIM NAP300,
AURORASOUND VIDA, ROKSAN CASPIAN M2,
AVALON COMPAS, AUDIOLAB M-DAC,
MUSICAL FIDELITY V90-DAC, MUSICAL FIDELITY M1CLIC,
RESOLUTION AUDIO CANTATA MUSIC CENTRE,
RING AUDIO MASTER HORN-JAZZ, SPENDOR D7,
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STREAMING KRELL Assessing the Krell Connect, the company's first streamer, complete with DAC and fresh from the solder bath

FLOATING THE SPEAKERS Speakers and stands need spikes, right? Max Townshend disagrees and reckons floating them on springs is the answer

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CLASSIC BURMESTER Stan Curtis tries out Burmester's least costly and most compact 036 power amp

AURORASOUND VIDA A high quality Japanese solid state phono stage examined by Chris Bryant

AVALON COMPAS The Avalon Compás is a substantial floorstander that puts the emphasis firmly on dynamic performance

LONG TALL SPENDOR Spendor's unassuming looking D7 has impressive but well hidden depths

MUSIC & MUCH MORE

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Editor | Paul Messenger

Writers
Colin Anderson
Chris Bryant
Martin Colloms
Stan Curtis
Greg Drygala
Nigel Finn
Jason Kennedy
Andrew Harrison
Paul Messenger
Mark Prendergast

Publisher | Martin Colloms

Design | Philippa Steward

Published by
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info@hificritic.com
www.hificritic.com

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Like the music we play on it, hi-fi is a broad church. My taste in music is not the same as yours, or Joe Bloggs' for that matter, so why should I presume I like the same things about music reproduction? I try not to make such assumptions, but am not sure it's possible to avoid doing so.

We're well aware that music has considerable effects on the human psyche, but don't really know either how or why. All manner of open questions remain about the way we interact with music, and by implication our hi-fi systems. I first got into hi-fi, simply because I'd become obsessed with the music of the time, and wanted to get as much out of it as possible. I'd already figured out that I had no natural ability playing musical instruments, but could play the record player (and the open-reel tape recorder too for that matter), and that didn't seem a bad substitute.

Many years on I still love my music, and also the fact that hi-fi system improvements continue to get me closer to it as time goes by. But the changes that particularly turn me on aren't necessarily going to be the same as those that will appeal to another individual, any more than we're likely to have similar record collections. Some kindred spirits will doubtless share my tastes, but I only have to wander around any hi-fi show (taking care to keep lip well bitten) to appreciate that they're relatively few and far between.

One intriguing and usually overlooked factor concerns the age (as well as the tastes) of an individual. For example, I was very sceptical when CD first came on the scene, and realise with hindsight that sound quality issues were only partly to blame. Other factors included the fact that I'd already collected a lot of vinyl over 20 years and didn't see much need for change; I wasn't into classical music so didn't appreciate the lack of background noise; and didn't like the fact that those early CDs were much more costly than vinyl equivalents (plus ca change!).

Those born after 1980 may well have missed out on the vinyl era entirely, and have little knowledge of analogue audio. CD was their adolescent format, and today they're probably well into computer-based audio.

I don't much like computers, as the sector seems obsessed with change. (My current *MacBook Pro* won't even open files I created a mere 17 years ago, whereas I've 60 year old vinyl treasures.) But I'll happily concede that they're exceptionally convenient (just like the cassette was, 20 or 30 years ago!).

I'll therefore continue to spin my vinyl and play my FM radio and CD player, but in our digital age it seems that we all need a decent DAC – my own system currently uses three. Which is why we're busy trying to keep up with this rapidly changing field, devoting 13 pages of this issue to reviewing seven of the latest examples.

Paul Messenger
Editor

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Long Tall Spendor

SPENDOR'S NEW D7 FLOORSTANDER MIGHT LOOK UNASSUMING, BUT MARTIN COLLOMS UNCOVERS SOME HIDDEN DEPTHS



At first sight, these slim, finely finished floorstanding loudspeakers look much like many that have gone before, from Spendor and numerous other makers. Priced at £3,495 for the standard version (our luxury review samples carry a £500 premium), it's two-and-a-half-way design based on twin 180mm frame size drivers and a 22mm (nominal) doped fabric dome, arranged in a vertical driver array with the tweeter at the top of the stack.

Aspects of the specification suggest that the *D7* might marry well with valve as well as solid state amplification. The claimed sensitivity is a high 90dB/W, and perhaps still more interestingly it has a genuine '8ohm' impedance, in theory representing an easier loading on cable, contacts, crossovers and amplification. I am known to favour these aspects of a specification, as I consider they can contribute to overall sound quality.

Some build details deserve further examination. Eschewing fancy connections, a solid pair of 4mm socket/binding posts is provided, neatly concealed in the bass vent aperture – an oversize, low turbulence, gas flowed, twin venturi design. The high density, neatly styled base has reinforcing metal plates underside to accept rigid coupling spikes; alternatively, thin polymer interfaces are available for polished floors. The grille assembly has a conventional MDF frame with polyester cloth, retained by plastic pegs: it looks good, but is better left detached for optimum sound quality as such assemblies have somewhat negative diffraction and seismic effects.

Power handling is rated at 200W for unclipped speech and music drive, and early trials suggested that this was actually correct, with a loudness headroom that was beyond its size expectations, reaching a substantial 108dBA for a stereo pair in a medium size room. Our premium pair was designated 'dark' and had a near mirror gloss finish with a subtle almost hidden veneer undertow ('white' gloss is an alternative). These are the premium options; several more conventional veneer finishes are also available at £500 less.

The Tweeter Issue

The Spendor team continues striving to meld modern moving-coil technology into a seamless and convincing approach to sound reproduction, despite the known limitations of such vibrating machinery. Its products remain UK built and use its own main drivers. Spendor has used a number of good tweeters since the early days, including custom versions of superior quality, but perhaps the peculiarly natural characteristic signature heard on good BBC grade tweeters from the 1970s (notably selected Celestion *HF1300* examples), and used to good effect in the Spendor *BC1*, has still eluded them. That tweeter design is characterised by an acoustically slotted front plate over a 37mm pistonic curved radiator of bakelised cambric, with an integral 19mm straight-sided central conical cap. The plate, of stamped and pressed brass had an array of tangential slots to form a tuned cavity adjusting the output, and this assembly was termed a phase corrector, though these days we would use the term 'coupled cavity with controlled radiation'.

Spendor's researches indicated that the particular quality of percussion and vocal articulation found in the *BC1* was not just a product of Spencer Hughes' remarkable bass/mid driver, but also involved that acoustically loaded high frequency unit. The company therefore set about designing a new tweeter employing this principle. One key feature is the distinctive micro-perforated stainless steel mesh cover. Hidden below is a polyamide fabric dome, while the part-obscuring grille in fact acts as an acoustic load on the front of the diaphragm, altering its mechanical and acoustic behaviour and allegedly balancing the back load chamber already present in the design. Furthermore, it shapes the power response of the tweeter, improving the phase and directivity blend to the midrange unit by correcting the path lengths over the dome area (LPZ, the 'linear pressure zone'). This was clearly audible in the essentially seamless mid-to-treble blend we heard on test.

Cone Drivers

Spendor continues to explore new formulations for the copolymer bass/midrange cone, and *EP77* is the 77th such trial. Each plastic is prototyped as a working driver to quantify both the measured and subjective performance. The bass-only driver uses Kevlar-reinforced skins on a lightweight core, and is both pistonic and well damped over its range. The new low-loss surround has a more rapid break-in behaviour.

MARTIN COLLOMS

A variation on the two-and-a-half-way system design, usually the bass driver has its own tuned volume, but here the bass and bass-mid drivers share the entire enclosure and consequently the high power reflex port tuning. Very little interior absorption has been used contributing to an agile bass behaviour. Driven hard the two drivers appear to power share pretty well. The bass driver runs quite high, up to 900Hz, the bass mid to 3.2kHz, above which point the treble unit takes over, rated to 25kHz. The enclosure is of high density MDF extensively braced, with energy dissipation interfaces of selected polymer.

Sound Quality

Neat, slim and unassuming, any anticipation based on the *D7*'s unpretentious appearance proved no guide to the sound it was capable of producing. That sound was initially unfamiliar compared to many modern systems, sounding marginally laid back and restrained, lacking some sparkle, attack and exuberance. Furthermore, much modern pop material can sound brittle, hardened and lacking in richness, and that is just how this Spendor plays it. Then, try a well balanced, clean, transparent, focused and communicative classic recording, and that is just how it sounds on the *D7*.

It takes no prisoners, quickly establishing its monitor pedigree as it mercilessly reveals poor quality recording practices in a music collection. Conversely, first rate material from the likes of Decca and ECM is satisfyingly reproduced with grace, speed, involvement, and considerable introspection. More of the inherent performance quality is brought out, more of the inner subtleties, the fine micro shadings between percussion sections. With no shadow of a doubt, this speaker has a high resolution midrange.

With many modern speakers, ambience is reproduced with a touch of emphasis – a 'hissy' effect that places the treble slightly forward of the mix, with a familiar but unwelcome 'hi-fi' sheen. Not so with the *D7*, where the background has a natural restrained 'hussshhh', conveying that concert hall sense of atmosphere and expectation. And that expectation is not disappointed. No, it is not a *BC1*, not quite as lacking in box signature, but there is mighty proportion of that legend in this analytical and truthful midband. There's the tactile representation of transients, the subtle differentiation of complex percussion sounds, each properly pitched and playing a tune, an honest portrayal of those sounds, a special melding of mid and treble outputs and finally that incisive, natural, if rare 'crack' to midrange transients. It shows exceptional vocal articulation: female vocals are remarkably natural, and also show fine perspectives. Easy on the ears, it also has a powerful and extended bass providing a generous ambient field. On the minus side, a touch of bloom in the lower midband (maybe 250-350Hz) is just occasionally heard, and a tinge of treble grain on some recordings.

It resolves atmosphere well, can play loud but does not need to. While low in colouration it is not wholly free of enclosure panel resonances, but they are well controlled and remain largely unobtrusive. It can be unforgiving of coloured or 'hard' vocals, and of a gritty treble. But that is how it should be, while on big classical works and familiar neutral recordings the *D7* has an unmistakeable touch of magic. I enjoyed crisp, tuneful, and powerful bass with fine extension to 35Hz and a largely upbeat tempo. While the rhythms are not explicitly fast, the crisp tuneful definition shown in the bass helps to keep it up to speed. It was spacious where the programme has such content, and not when it hasn't. There is fine focus and an introspective unshowy, unflashy character – one where you pay attention and not expect the music to be thrown at you.

Lab Results

Although the impedance is not quite an 8ohm load, it's undoubtedly rather better than average with a minimum value only a little below 5ohms together with moderate associated phase angles. Thus it may be judged an overall 7ohm load that should be suitable for both valve and transistor amplification. The confirmed and genuinely high sensitivity of 90dB/W is a considerable achievement, and contributes to an unusually high possible maximum sound level of 108dBA for a pair in a typical room. The response curve indicates that the low port is tuned to a low 27Hz, which has the potential for both reduced group delay and less port coloration.

It showed its pedigree on the listener axis, with tightly toleranced ±2.5dB amplitude/frequency limits 60Hz - 18kHz, a realistic bass extension to 47Hz - 6dB, and a practical (room reinforced) lower limit of 30Hz. Real power is available here since the effective cone area of the driven pair is actually equivalent to a 250mm (10in) bass driver.

Despite the disparity in driver size, the tweeter output blends nicely with the midrange, as shown in the measured vertical responses which are exceptionally accurate, with only a minor loss at 4.5kHz. Laterally off-axis it is also very well behaved out to a wide 45 degrees, albeit with a minor dip around 3kHz that not unexpectedly deepens at the more extreme lateral angles of 60 and 75 degrees.

Among this sea of fine results, it should be pointed out that the data for distortion is merely average, if only just at the audible threshold, and not



HIFICRITIC
AUDIO EXCELLENCE

Review System

System: Naim *NAP300* and D'Agostino *Momentum Stereo* power amps; Audio Research *REF5 SE,* Townshend *Allegri* control units; MSB *Platinum Signature IV/Diamond* DAC/ supply, *Metrum Hex* DAC; Naim *UnitiServe* network server and S/PDIF source; NAIM *NDS* Streamer/DAC, Wilson Audio *Sophia 3*, Avalon *Compás*, BBC *LS3/5a* (15ohm), Quad *ESL63* speakers; Finite Elemente *Pagode Reference* racks; Cardas *Golden Reference* and Transparent *XLmm2* cables.



Contact:
Spendor Audio Systems Ltd.
Tel: 01323 843474
www.spendoraudio.com

untypical of its peers. At 86dB spl, treble distortion averaged 0.3%, rising at higher powers. Upper midband distortion was low, at around 0.1% for 2nd and 3rd harmonic, but the figures rose at lower frequencies to 1% at both 500Hz and 100Hz at this loudness. At lower frequencies the power sharing between the two drivers was helpful and 90dB was possible at typically 50Hz and 35Hz for a fine 0.5% 2nd and 1.5% 3rd harmonic. It could sustain 12W continuously at 26Hz, which in practice represents plenty of low bass power.

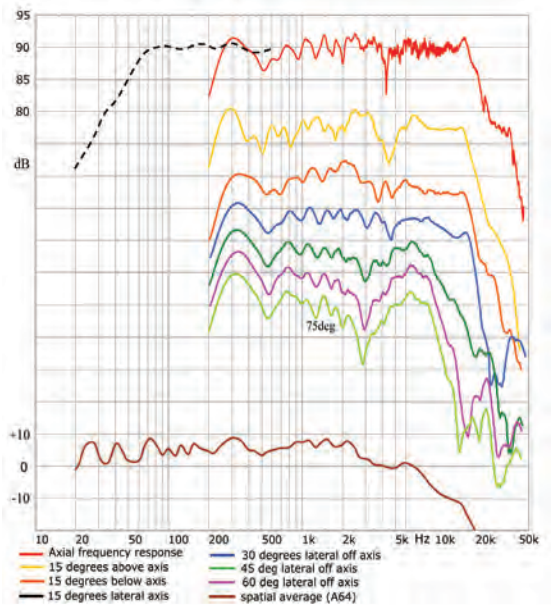
The waterfall presentation of mid and treble energy decay over frequency is very presentable. It's well integrated, almost linear phase in the crossover region and shows commendably low levels of midrange coloration, as heard (see the 30Hz - 3kHz region of the decay graph, which is mainly residual random clutter).

Analysing the room response, I will not nitpick over the mild 300Hz energy rise, or the mild prominence in the 1-2kHz octave (very occasionally heard as a touch of 'mid glare', made more audible by the mild shelf loss above 3kHz), since the overall trace is actually well balanced. It also shows deep bass extension that's free from boom.

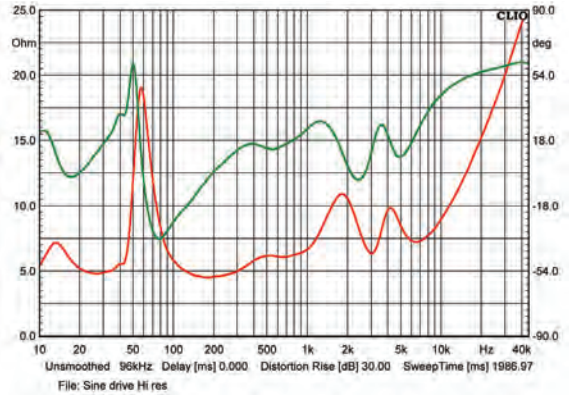
Conclusions

The Spendor technology deployed here will run and run. It has a decent helping of the original mid 1970s BBC magic midrange but with a modern twist. For those with the ears to hear it, here is a modern interpretation of the classically neutral, accurate and well integrated design. The D7 is easy to drive, truly compatible with valve amplifiers, and also genuinely efficient. Undemanding of placement, it has fine stereo and extended powerful bass, sounds upbeat and well balanced, and will drive larger rooms as required. And the build and finish is first rate: what more can one ask?

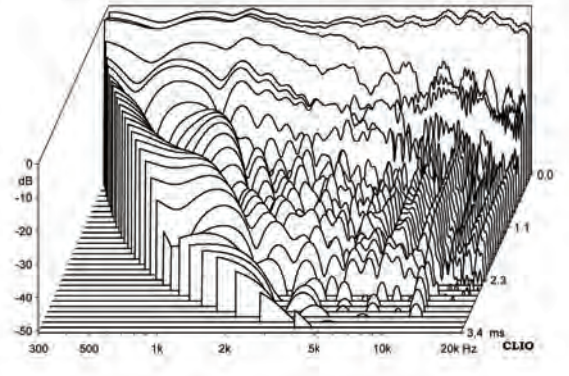
Spendor D7 Frequency Responses



Spendor D7 Impedance (red) and Phase with frequency



Spendor D7 Waterfall Display of Energy with frequency and Time



HIFICRITIC loudspeaker measured test results

Make	Spendor
Country	manufactured in UK
Model	D7; movingcoil, floorstanding
Price per pair	£3,500 standard finish, (£4,000 in lacquer piano gloss: 'dark' or white)
Finishes	Standard: cherry, light oak, black ash, dark walnut
Size (HxWxD), weight	95x 91.2x 32 cm, 21kg
Type	2.5-way: 18cm bass, 18cm bass-mid, 22mm HF, reflex bass loading
Sensitivity for 2.83V	90dB/W measured/8ohm Watt
Amplifier loading	7ohms typical, 4.5ohm min: 'good loading'
Frequency response, axial	60 Hz to 18kHz ±2.5 dB (listener axis) very good tolerance
Frequency response off- axis	Very good: see graphs and in-room response
Bass extension	47Hz for -6dB (30Hz in-room)
Max loudness, in room	108dBA for a stereo pair
Power rating (max, min)	200W, 15W
Placement	spike coupled to floor, from free space to near wall

SPENDOR D9 LOUDSPEAKER

The new Spendor D9 is an elegant, modern, full-size, 3-way, 4-driver, floor-standing loudspeaker. The D9 delivers music with exceptional resolution and a vibrant realism that conventional loudspeakers cannot match. It delivers low frequencies with breath-taking power, scale and authority. It is easy to place in real-world listening rooms, very efficient, and compatible with all good amplifiers. With a tall slim enclosure and smart modern finishes the Spendor D9 is entirely at home in any living environment. The D9 incorporates all the engineering innovation developed for our 3-way Spendor D7 loudspeaker, but the new D9 is far more than just a big D7 . . .

Spendor loudspeakers, cabinets, crossovers and drive units are all designed and manufactured in-house in the UK.



SPENDOR D9 - SPENDOR DARK HI GLOSS (special finish)

KEY TECHNOLOGY

SPENDOR LPZ (LINEAR PRESSURE ZONE) TWEETER

The goal of every tweeter designer is to achieve linear acoustic output over a wide frequency range. In practice this is extremely difficult. Spendor's approach to this challenge is radical, and it works. The Spendor LPZ tweeter is built around a stainless steel front plate which forms a damped acoustic chamber directly in front of a lightweight woven polyamide diaphragm. The front plate incorporates a phase correcting micro foil to equalise sound wave path lengths across the diaphragm surface. Simultaneously it generates a symmetrical pressure environment on both faces of the diaphragm so the tweeter always operates in a balanced linear mode. The front plate also provides excellent mechanical protection for the delicate tweeter dome and a smart modern appearance.

Imagine focusing an ultra-high quality camera lens until you see a clear bright image. That's the effect of Spendor LPZ Technology. Our sequential geometry micro-foil operates like an acoustic lens. The result is perfect focus, uninhibited sound transmission and a very wide listening window. Sound images are vivid, in-the-air, as bright or sweet as any music demands.



SPENDOR LPZ TWEETER

NEW SPENDOR 18CM DRIVE UNITS DEVELOPED FOR D9

The D9 mid-bass drive unit has an advanced EP77 polymer cone. Housed in an isolated enclosure at the top of the cabinet, it handles only mid-range frequencies which eliminates mid-low frequency intermodulation. It delivers music with superb clarity and vanishingly low colouration. The two D9 low frequency drivers have ultra-rigid, two part bonded, lightweight Kevlar composite cone assemblies. The bass drivers are in a large dedicated low-frequency acoustic enclosure. This allows the D9 to deliver accurate powerful bass without distortion or compression. All three drivers feature cast magnesium alloy chassis, high efficiency motor systems, optimised electro-dynamic damping, and excellent thermal dissipation for wide dynamic range. New polymer surrounds with very stable molecular composition reduce driver break-in time significantly.



SPENDOR D9 DRIVE UNITS



SPENDOR 18CM MID-RANGE DRIVE UNIT COMPONENTS

FIFTH GENERATION SPENDOR LINEAR FLOW PORT

When extended low frequency sound reproduction is the goal there is simply no substitute for volume. In the D9 low frequencies are handled by two specially designed bass drivers in a substantial volume enclosure. For optimum low frequency response and power handling the enclosure is ported, but not like any conventional loudspeaker. The D9 incorporates our innovative Fifth Generation Spendor Linear Flow Port Technology. Inspired by Formula 1 diffuser technology it offers significant advantages over any conventional port or transmission line loading. An aerodynamically profiled central baffle, like an aircraft wing, creates a tapered twin-venturi port. Air at the port extremities is smoothly decelerated and there is a further reduction in air velocity in the large tapered area at the cabinet base. The result is evenly balanced acoustic pressure and linear air-flow along the whole length of the port. Rapidly decreasing air velocity at the port extremities creates an air-curtain effect to eliminate port noise and spurious mid-band radiation. A carefully optimised combination of bass driver electrical and mechanical parameters, enclosure volume, air flow and wide-band (very low Q & very low phase shift) alignment allows the D9 to deliver deep, fast, articulate bass in a way no conventional loudspeaker can challenge.

High quality terminals are recessed within the port aperture to hide plug and cable connections.



SPENDOR FIFTH GENERATION LINEAR FLOW PORT

UNCONSTRAINED AIRFLOW

Conventional loudspeakers incorporate foam or fibre to provide low frequency acoustic damping. The damping material stores energy. As stored energy is released it is no longer in-time with the original music and it creates an unnaturally, heavy, slow sound. Inside the D9 there is no low frequency damping, the sound path, from the bass drivers to the listening room, is totally unrestricted. Consequently, the Spendor D9 is entirely free from damping material energy storage effects. The advantage is clearly audible, music sounds naturally fast, agile and coherent.

SPENDOR DYNAMIC DAMPING AND ASYMMETRICAL APERTURE BRACING

Timing is a fundamental element of all music. In conventional loudspeakers rigid high density cabinet panels are mass-damped to reduce cabinet-talk. Spurious energy is stored and released slowly. This introduces unacceptable and unnatural blurring and slowing of the sound. Spendor's solution is Asymmetrical Aperture Bracing to disperse internal waves and create a very rigid non-resonant enclosure, while Spendor Dynamic Damping with small low mass constrained polymer dampers at key energy interface points instantly convert any spurious energy in the cabinet structure into inaudible heat. The result is a silent rigid cabinet and a naturally fast engaging sound.

STABILISER INSERTS

The base of each cabinet has four levelling feet attached via forged steel inserts to hold the cabinet rock-steady. The elimination of micro-vibration allows fine musical detail to be reproduced with delicate precision.



SPENDOR STABILISER INSERT

CROSSOVER NETWORK

A meticulously refined crossover network with precision wound inductors and high-linearity plastic film capacitors integrates the drivers seamlessly in a minimum phase alignment.

All crossover components and Spendor drive units are calibrated and matched to stringent broadcast reference standards.



SPENDOR D9 CROSSOVER NETWORK

HIGH EFFICIENCY

90dB efficiency and an easy to drive 8ohm load ensure complete compatibility with all good amplifiers and cables. With substantial power handling the D9's can play very loud without compression. At low replay levels the sound is always clear and balanced.

ELEGANT MODERN DESIGN

The Spendor D9 looks as good as it sounds. Our special finishes perfectly complement today's on-trend interiors. Spendor Dark, a diamond polished gloss lacquer over a dark natural veneer, for an alluring modern look. Satin white, a silky pure white lacquer, for a distinctive contemporary look. Dark ebony for a deep luxurious look, and natural rosewood for a timeless exotic look. Standard finishes are light oak, dark walnut, cherry and black ash.



D9 Satin white (special finish)



D9 Spendor Dark Hi Gloss (special finish)



D9 Dark walnut



D9 Light oak



D9 Cherry



D9 Black ash

Spendor Audio Systems Ltd
G5 Ropemaker Park
South Road
Hailsham
East Sussex
BN27 3GY

T +44 (0)1323 843474
E info@spendoraudio.com
www.spendoraudio.com

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

D9 loudspeaker

Description	3-way floor standing loudspeaker
Enclosure type	Rigid, asymmetric braced, vented cabinet with dynamic damping
Vent type	Fifth generation Spendor linear flow, tapered twin-venturi port
Input connection	Single pair recessed precision binding posts
Typical in-room response	27Hz - 25kHz
Power handling	250 watts unclipped programme
Sensitivity	90dB for 1 watt at 1 metre
Nominal impedance	8 ohms
HF driver	Spendor 22mm LPZ polyamide dome
Mid driver	Spendor 18cm EP77 polymer cone
Bass driver	2 x Spendor 18cm Kevlar© composite cone
Crossover frequencies	500Hz, 4.2kHz
Net Weight	35kg
Height	1,125mm (excluding feet)
Width	Cabinet 210mm, plinth 222mm
Depth	Cabinet 385mm, plinth 409mm
Finishes	Special: Spendor dark (hi-gloss), satin white
	Standard: black ash, cherry, dark walnut, natural oak
	Plinth satin black
Accessories	Height adjustable spike feet, grille, non-slip polymer feet

Kevlar© is a registered trademark of DuPont Corporation
Spendor reserves the right to alter specifications and prices without notice

TECHNOLOGY MUSIC INNOVATION NOW

SPENDOR

The Spendor A-line

With smart styling and natural veneer finishes the new Spendor A-line floor standing loudspeakers will complement any room decor. Each model benefits from significant advances in Spendor drive unit technology, cabinet damping, crossover topology and low frequency engineering.

There is a model to suit every room and budget. Each one offers class leading performance.

To experience clear natural sound – visit your local Spendor dealer for a demonstration.



'They are terrific all-rounders that revel in any type of music. Endlessly listenable, these are accomplished beyond their price.'

Spendor A5
What Hi-Fi Mar 11
What Hi-Fi Group Test Winner Mar 11 and Feb 09

'It just sounds like music, like people, like a band having fun. I love the A6's. They're GRRRRREAT!'

Spendor A6 *Hi-Fi+ Issue 63 Feb 09*

'As at home with Ice T as they are with Mahler. These are brilliant speakers for the money.'

Spendor A6
What Hi-Fi Feb 09
What Hi-Fi Award Winner 2009

'Amazingly clean and transparent sound, agility and seamless integration.'

Spendor A9
What Hi-Fi Jun 10
What Hi-Fi Award Winner 2010



Deep profile cone
Made by Spendor



Monobloc port panel
Resonance-free



Spendor 18 cm unit
A6 bass-mid



29 mm tweeter
Acoustic lens

Spendor A3 NEW

Our new ultra-compact floor standing loudspeaker. The Spendor A3 delivers clear natural sound with real low frequency power and scale.

Powerful electromagnetic damping of the new Spendor bass driver and an optimised low Q acoustic enclosure, with a large diameter rear mounted reflex port, ensures deep well-controlled bass in any listening room.

Spendor A5

A compact floor standing loudspeaker offering exceptional performance in relation to its modest dimensions. The Spendor A5 delivers a clear mid-range and a big powerful articulate bass that rival designs simply cannot match.

'Nothing prepared us for the depth, precision and power of these speakers. They deliver astonishing results.'
Spendor A5 *What Hi-Fi Jan 09*

'These are astoundingly good. From the deepest bass to the highest treble there's an admirable tightness, punch and attack. Notes begin and end with superb precision.'
Spendor A5 *What Hi-Fi Feb 09*
What Hi-Fi Test Winner

Spendor A6

With a larger enclosure and more sophisticated drive units, the Spendor A6 delivers greater clarity, resolution, power handling and bass extension than the remarkable little A5.

The Spendor A6 is likely to be the ultimate loudspeaker for your music system – until you hear the A9!

'These are brilliant speakers for the money. The A6's are stunning.'
Spendor A6 *What Hi-Fi Feb 09*

'These Spendors are true must-hear hi-fi.'
Spendor A6 *What Hi-Fi+ Jul 09*


A3 Light oak


A5 Light oak


A6 Light oak


Spendor drivers
A5 15 cm


Crossover network
Spendor topology


Stabiliser inserts
Vibration-free


Wenge finish
A5, A6, A9

Spendor A9

A full-size loudspeaker with the resolution, dynamic range, and low frequency extension to realise the breathtaking musical experience which the finest digital media streamers can deliver.

The Spendor A9 establishes a new standard for 'hi-end' performance, flexibility and value.

'Excellently engineered and finished, the Spendor A9 is a fine loudspeaker with a thoroughly modern appearance and sound quality, with class leading bass power, extension, attack and speed.

Representing good value and overall performance, the A9 deserves HIFICRITIC recommendation.'

Spendor A9
Hi-Fi Critic Issue 10
Recommended Product 2010

'Spendor's new A9 is one impressive loudspeaker.'

Spendor A9
Hi-Fi World Mar 11

'It presents music with a charm and poise that is rare in audio of any price.

I would imagine that in 20 years time, when all the shiny 'must have' loudspeakers of 2010 are long forgotten, there will still be a lot of people happily playing music through their Spendor A9s. That's how good they are.'

Spendor A9
Hi-Fi+ Issue 77 Mar 11



A9 Light oak



Linear flow port
Perfect timing



Tapped inductors
Precision wound



Drive units
Computer matched

SPENDOR ST

DESIGNED FOR PERFORMANCE • ENGINEERED WITH CARBON FIBRE • CREATED FOR MUSIC

A distinctive and innovative **statement** for discerning individuals. The beautifully styled ST conceals a wealth of new Spendor engineering and innovation.

The clarity, focus, purity and seamless dynamics of the Spendor ST define new standards.

- Bespoke inlay finishes are available to special order

'The quality of the finish is superlative – the feel of the speaker is faultless – I was struck by their purity – and they don't hang on to the opening transient attack of the note; it is allowed to fall off into the blackness of the mix almost immediately. There was real insight into the recording, showing delicacy and an immaculately finely etched presentation. Best of all is the way the bass doesn't jump out at you and interfere with the rest of the mix, nor does it underwhelm. The Spendors have an openess and a delicacy that's more redolent of an electrostatic – but without their problems!'

Spendor ST
Hi-Fi World Apr 10



ST Carbon



ST Ebony





Linear flow port
Low distortion



Crossover ST
Ultra linear



Stabiliser inserts
No loss of detail



WBT Next Gen
No compromise



SA1 Zebrano high gloss



SA1 Wenge deep satin



SA1 Black piano lacquer

SPENDOR SA1

Ultimate Mini-monitor

The Spendor SA1 is the most musical revealing small loudspeaker ever created by Spendor. You will be captivated by its charming sound, surprised by its clarity and definition, assured by performance and engineering of the highest order, and delighted by luxurious modern finishes.

To complement the performance and style of the SA1 we have created an optional matching stand. It is a rigid, light, non-resonant structure complete with a front inlay to match your SA1 – or choose a carbon fibre inlay – just like the Spendor ST carbon.

- New finish for 2011
  Piano white lacquer (not shown)

'It's a musical tour de force. Don't be fooled by its diminutive dimensions.'
Spendor SA1 *Hi-Fi Issue 60*

'The Spendor is unquestionably one of the finest sub-miniatures ever. It works beautifully when placed close to a wall and looks superb in its hi-gloss lacquer finish.'
Spendor SA1
Hi-Fi Choice
Group Test Winner Jul 10

'If you're short of space and want a pair of supremely talented loudspeakers, the SA1's should be top of your list.'
Spendor SA1 *What Hi-Fi Jun 08*



SA1 Zebrano high gloss



Crossover configuration
Linear phase



15 cm mid-bass
Designed by Spendor



Input terminals
WBT performance



18 cm drive units (ST)
Perfected

SPENDOR S3/5R² NEW

Reference Mini-monitor

The Background

For over two decades Spendor was licensed to manufacture the BBC designed LS3/5a mini-monitor loudspeaker. The Spendor S3/5 was launched in 1997. It gained worldwide recognition amongst audiophiles and critical reviewers as the natural successor to the LS3/5a.

Ten years later a new S3/5R (2007–2010) achieved what many thought impossible – new levels of transparency and imaging coherency, more articulate bass delivery, and the enjoyable fatigue free listening experience which so clearly distinguished the original Spendor S3/5 from other small loudspeakers.

The S3/5R (2007–2010) is a versatile small 'bookshelf' loudspeaker that is easy to place, easy to drive, and always delivers an enjoyable listening experience.

The new S3/5R² takes a big step forward with significant improvements in low frequency articulation, dynamics, power handling, transparency and sound integration. Like its distinguished predecessors it has a fine technical performance and an enjoyable fatigue-free sound.



S3/5R² Light oak

- Special version S3/5R² wall is a refined on-wall surround/rear channel loudspeaker

'The S3/5R's are loveable, talented speakers that can provide hour after hour of enjoyment. They serve up beautifully pure clean sound; fast articulate delivery; there's a natural fluidity to the music.'

Spendor S3/5R
What Hi-Fi Jun 09

'The Spendor S3/5R can deliver most types of music at typical domestic levels with clarity and coherence that set it ahead of the pack. A strikingly natural monitor that's forgiving of placement and the rest of the system. Voices and acoustic instruments are portrayed with stunning accuracy.'

Spendor S3/5R
Hi-Fi Choice Gold Award Winner 2008



S3/5R² Cherry



S3/5R² Dark walnut



S3/5R² Black ash



22 mm tweeter
Wide-surround



Mid-range
Phase correction



Drive units
Individually calibrated



Crossover network
Individually calibrated

SPENDOR TECHNICAL

Loudspeaker Specifications

Model	Description	Enclosure	Drive Units	H x W x D	Weight ea
A3	2-way floor standing	Spendor low Q reflex	LF 15 cm, HF 22 mm	76 x 17 x 25 cm	12.5 kg
A5	2.5-way floor standing	Spendor linear flow reflex	LF 15 cm, LF/MF 15 cm, HF 22 mm	79 x 17 x 25 cm	16.0 kg
A6	2-way floor standing	Spendor linear flow reflex	LF/MF 18 cm, HF 29 mm	88 x 19 x 28 cm	18.0 kg
A9	3-way floor standing	Spendor linear flow reflex	LF 2 x 18 cm, MF 15 cm, HF 29 mm	103 x 21 x 35 cm	27.0 kg
ST	2.5-way floor standing	Spendor linear flow reflex	LF 18 cm, LF/MF 18 cm, HF 29 mm	97 x 20 x 33 cm	22.5 kg
SA1	2-way stand, open shelf	Sealed enclosure	LF/MF 15 cm, HF 22 mm	31 x 17 x 19 cm	5.4 kg
S3/5R²	2-way stand, open shelf	Sealed enclosure	LF/MF 14 cm, HF 22 mm	31 x 17 x 19 cm	4.6 kg
SA1	Stand – option	Rigid low mass non-resonant	3 point base, adjustable spike feet	height 60 cm	4.1 kg

Model	Frequency Response Anechoic	Low Frequency Typical in-room	Crossover Frequency	Terminals Single wired	Power Unclipped programme	Impedance Nominal (min)	Sensitivity 1 watt at 1 metre
A3	70 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 45 Hz	4.2 KHz	Gold plated 4 way binding posts	125 watts	8 (6.2) ohms	85dB
A5	58 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 48 Hz	700 Hz & 4.5 KHz	WBT 4-way binding posts	150 watts	8 (5.0) ohms	86dB
A6	53 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 43 Hz	4.0 kHz	WBT 4-way binding posts	200 watts	8 (6.0) ohms	88dB
A9	50 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 28 Hz	500 Hz & 5.0 kHz	WBT 4-way binding posts	250 watts	8 (6.2) ohms	90dB
ST	47 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 37 Hz	700 Hz & 4.0 kHz	WBT Next Gen 4 way binding posts	200 watts	8 (4.2) ohms	88dB
SA1	75 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 60 Hz	4.8 KHz	WBT 4 way binding posts	125 watts	8 (6.3) ohms	85dB
S3/5R²	75 Hz to 20 kHz ± 3dB	-6dB at 60 Hz	4.2 KHz	Gold plated 4 way binding posts	100 watts	8 (6.2) ohms	85dB

NOTE

All floor standing models include height adjustable spike feet.
All dimensions exclude feet and terminals.
All models include grilles.
SA1 and S3/5R² recommended stand height 50–65 cm.

FOR SURROUND SOUND & MULTI CHANNEL SYSTEMS

S3/5R² wall	Special version S3/5R² with wall bracket for use as surround/rear loudspeaker.
CR3 new	2–way compact centre channel.
C5.2	2–way centre channel.

For details visit www.spendoraudio.com or ask your Spendor dealer.

FINISHES

See brochure images for examples of finishes.

A3	Black ash, cherry, dark walnut, light oak
A5, A6, A9	Black ash, cherry, wenge
A5, A6, A9	Dark walnut available Q3 2011
S3/5R²	Black ash, cherry, dark walnut, light oak
ST	Jet black piano lacquer cabinet with carbon fibre or ebony inlays.
SA1	Zebrano high gloss, black piano lacquer, white piano lacquer (new 2011), wenge deep satin.
SA1 stand	Satin black with inlay to match SA1, also available with carbon fibre inlay.

SPENDOR

Spendor Audio Systems Ltd
G5 Ropemaker Park
South Road, Hailsham
East Sussex BN27 3GY

Telephone
+44 (0)1323 843474
info@spendoraudio.com
www.spendoraudio.com

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Kevlar is a registered trademark of DuPont.
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Crossover network
Individually calibrated


Tapped inductors
Precision wound


Input terminal WBT
Natural sound


Low frequency unit (A9)
Kevlar

SPENDOR CLASSIC SP200 LOUDSPEAKER

The Spendor SP200 loudspeaker is our all-new top-of-line Spendor Classic. It is a 3-way 4-driver system featuring two large 30cm (12 inch) Spendor woofers in an original Spendor 70's style floor-standing enclosure. The Spendor SP200 delivers music with captivating clarity and real dynamics. It can fill the largest listening rooms with deep natural sound. For Spendor SP100 fans the SP200 is an easy plug-and play upgrade.



Spendor SP200 Cherry

For extended low frequency response, high power handling and minimal room interaction, the SP200 has a sealed (non-ported) enclosure with two specially engineered Spendor 30cm woofers. The lightweight plastic woofer cones use the same catenary profile and bextrene material as our legendary 'big' Spendor BC3 Broadcast reference monitor. Forty years on this cone still performs so well we found no reason to change it, except for the addition of an ultra-rigid Kevlar composite stabiliser dome bonded to the centre of the bextrene cone. Our combination of a sealed enclosure and optimised woofers brings significant benefits at low frequencies. Extremely low group delay distortion preserves original 'as recorded' musical timing which is critical for a totally immersive and believable listening experience. As there is no resonant port output, room positioning is far less critical than with a conventional ported loudspeaker. You will be surprised how much this benefits vinyl replay, and it also allows the SP200 to deliver great sound in a relatively small room.

The SP200 has a new Spendor 18cm mid-range unit with EP77 polymer cone, cast magnesium alloy chassis, high efficiency motor system, optimised electro-dynamic damping, and excellent thermal dissipation. It delivers sound with new levels of transparency and dynamic contrast. High frequencies are handled by a 22mm wide-surround polyamide dome tweeter. In combination they ensure sound with outstanding coherence and definition over a wide deep listening area.

For the SP200 our Classic cabinet engineering has been refined to a new level of sophistication. The cabinet is constructed with thin lightly braced panels attached to a rigid front baffle. Critically dimensioned visco-elastic damping pads are bonded to each panel. At mid and high frequencies the cabinet produces virtually no audible movement, while at low frequencies the side panel are allowed to flex slightly in harmony with the output from the woofers. This subtle synchronised movement adds a captivating warmth and charm to any music, which many listeners find irresistible. The mechanically damped plinth has four levelling feet attached via forged steel inserts to hold the cabinet rock steady. The elimination of micro-vibration allows fine musical detail to be reproduced with delicate precision.

A meticulously refined crossover network with precision wound inductors and high-linearity plastic film capacitors integrates the drivers seamlessly in a minimum phase alignment. Excellent efficiency (89dB) and an easy to drive load ensure complete compatibility with all good amplifiers, from powerful solid state to the most esoteric tube designs.

Every critical component and every complete Spendor loudspeaker is calibrated to stringent broadcast reference standards. The SP200 is 100% UK designed and manufactured by Spendor.

Standard finish is Classic Cherry veneer. Special, manufactured to order, finishes will be quoted on request. Examples of recently supplied special finishes include Dark walnut, Rosewood, Dark ebony.



SP200 ROSEWOOD

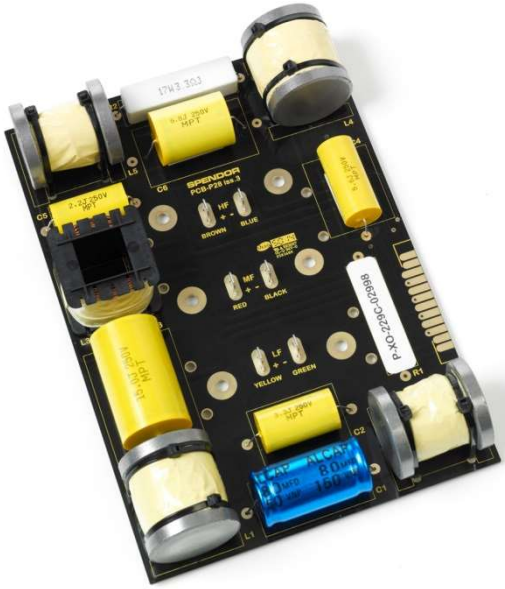


SP200 DARK EBONY

Spendor SP200 drive units



Spendor SP200 crossover



Spendor Audio Systems Ltd
G5 Ropemaker Park
South Road
Hailsham
East Sussex
BN27 3GY

T +44 (0) 1323 843474
E info@spendoraudio.com
www.spendoraudio.com

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Spendor SP200

Description	3 way floor standing loudspeaker
Enclosure type	Thin walled, damped, braced, sealed
Input connection	Three pairs gold plated precision binding posts
	Links allow for single, bi or tri-wiring
Typical in-room response	20Hz - 25kHz
Power handling	300 watts unclipped programme
Sensitivity	89dB for 1 watt at 1 metre
Nominal impedance	8 ohms (min 6.2)
HF driver	22mm polyamide dome
Bass/mid driver	Spendor 18cm EP77 polymer cone
Lower bass driver x2	Spendor 30cm bextrene cone with Kevlar© composite stabiliser
Crossover frequencies	550Hz, 3.8kHz
Net Weight	55kg
Height	1085mm (excluding feet)
Width	370mm
Depth	515mm (excluding terminals)
Finish	Cherry (Special finishes quoted on request)
	Plinth satin black
Accessories	Height adjustable spike feet, grille

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