

STEREO SPEAKERS

Spendor towers are brilliant performers

STEREO SPEAKERS
SPENDOR A5

£ 1495
FOR

Powerful bass; insightful sound; even-handed nature; solid build and finish; compact cabinets

AGAINST

Small size may affect perceived value, though it shouldn't

VERDICT

Excellent speakers from Spendor. If you want a top class floorstander they should be at the top of the list

DO THESE SPEAKERS look familiar? We think so – in fact, we reckon the new A5s look just like Spendor's S5es with a different veneer. These older models theoretically remain in production, but the new A5s are so good, and so obviously worth £200 over their siblings, we wouldn't be surprised if Spendor stopped making them soon.

Drivers are all-new

Though the two speakers look similar, pretty much everything bar the cabinet dimensions is different. The new speakers' drive units owe a lot to those developed for Spendor's mightily impressive SA1 mini monitor: the tweeter and mid/bass driver are pretty much identical. The other new driver, a dedicated

bass unit, is a brand new design optimised to deliver chunkier bass than you'd expect from a 79-cm high floorstander. Aided by rear firing slot-shaped reflex ports, that's exactly what it does.

In fact, nothing prepared us for the depth, precision and power of these speakers at low frequencies. They cope well with the demanding *Gladiator* soundtrack, something that can't be said of many similarly priced rivals, even larger ones.

"Nothing prepared us for the precision and power of the A5s"

Midrange and higher frequencies keep up the good work, impressing with their resolution, naturalness and dynamics. Everything coheres into an expertly balanced sound that's neutral without being boring, dynamic while sounding unforced, and detailed without tearing the flow of your music apart.

Some may look at the A5s and think they're overpriced. But we reckon if heard with a suitably talented system – think Roksan M-series kit at least – they deliver astonishing results. They aren't even fussy about positioning: slightly away from the rear wall works fine, as does a touch of toe-in. It's just another reason why the A5s are great speakers: they're good enough to worry the best at this price level.


ALSO CONSIDER ?
DYNAUDIO X32

£1600
Awards 2008

These Dynaudios are considerably larger than the Spendors and are capable of more volume. They're not quite as crisp as their formidable new rivals, though

PROAC STUDIO 140

£1440
May 2006

These are multiple award winners that deliver a great all-round performance. They're less even-sounding than the Spendors, which might be an issue