

What Makes the D9 so Special?

Plays Like A Much Larger Loudspeaker

Look at the numbers and you'll see that Spendor suggest an in-room bandwidth that goes as low as 27Hz – not in itself unusual, but difficult to do well from a cabinet this size. Most speakers claiming that sort of extension achieve it at the expense of lumpy, uneven, and often one-note bass. Yet listen to the D9 and the first thing that strikes you is its clear and linear bass output. The bottom end of this speaker goes lower than you expect, but it's also articulate, tuneful, and agile, with no overhang and no thickness to clutter and smudge the midrange.

The 180mm Kevlar-coned bass drivers were developed specifically for the D9, their physical and electrical characteristics tuned specifically to match the requirements of the bass enclosure. So what we have here is a bass system, in which the various parts are designed in tandem to create a coherent whole. That's not unique, but it's the rest of the box that makes the D9 stand out from the crowd, both in terms of what's in it and how it sounds.

Innovative Cabinet Design for Sparkling Transparency

The box itself is constructed from specially selected HDF, and the walls are thinner than those on much of the competition. Instead, resonance in the structure is dealt with by strategically sited low-mass resonators, small, constrained layer slabs placed at vibrational nodes to absorb energy and dissipate it as heat. The result is a cabinet structure that's both better behaved and stores significantly less energy than conventional constructions. Add to that the lack of internal wadding and the use of Spendor's Linear Flow port technology, and you have an incredibly quiet cabinet that prevents stored energy belatedly finding its way back into the enclosed air-mass to muddy the output and limits spurious output from the port itself polluting the room.



Spike Stabilizers Allow Fine Musical Detail to be Reproduced with Precision

With all that attention paid to low-frequency linearity you also want to provide the most stable footing possible. Look underneath the diminutive plinth and you'll find that each corner of the solid plinth is supported on a substantial steel disc, 45mm in diameter. On the outer edge of each disc is the threaded hole for the M8 spike. It's an arrangement that combines a narrower plinth with the wider footprint associated with much more obtrusive structures, a happy match of aesthetic, domestic and mechanical requirements. The discs deliver a strong, stable, precision coupling of spike to cabinet, making for easy attitude adjustment and good energy transfer. Best of all, the mechanical stability allows the use of nice, long spikes, which allow easy adjustment in the crucial vertical dimension. The end result is both more discrete and more effective than many far more obvious arrangements.

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Spendor's Own LPZ Tweeter Makes Vocals To Die For

At the other end of the range, we find Spendor's innovative PLZ tweeter. This soft dome, coupled-cavity driver is familiar from both the D1 and D7. The perforated face plate acts to equalize phase and pressure across the face of the driver, producing time-and-phase-coherent output, while the equivalent cavities in front of and behind the diaphragm means that the moving parts constitute a linear, balanced-mode generator: simple but effective.



Of course, all that effort expended on the cabinet, bottom end, and high-frequencies is wasted if the midrange isn't up to it. But then, mid-band has always been a Spendor specialty and the 180mm midrange driver with its in-house EP77 polymer cone won't disappoint. The inherent self-damping and even mechanical behavior of the driver allows it to be used with shallow crossover slopes that lead in turn to an easy impedance characteristic – meaning that you are going to get the best out of your amp, too. Like everything else, the crossover components are carefully selected, as is the internal wiring and the single-wired terminals.

No Short Cuts to Great Sound

That's the basis of the Spendor story: there's a clarity of vision, fastened on the rigid low-storage cabinet and in-house drivers, but on the other side of the coin is the attention to detail that's been lavished on everything from the port to the spikes, the product's domestic impact to its packaging. It's a long and rocky road between an initial design and a viable end product. Look at the D9 – or any other Spendor product – and what becomes obvious is that somewhere in the factory, there's a large sign that reads 'No Short Cuts'. It's a philosophy that becomes even more apparent once you listen to this speaker.

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Read the full review at www.bluebirdmusic.com



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