

EXCLUSIVE ★★★★★

## Spendor SR5 speaker £1,000

Spendor is best known for creating high-accuracy monitoring loudspeakers with roots planted firmly in the BBC tradition, and indeed was one of the pioneers of the free-space standmount approach. Which makes this new SR5 all the more radical, because it's expressly designed to be fixed onto a structural wall, and wall proximity is integral to the acoustic design.

That in turn is why you get a decidedly unorthodox shape, stainless steel bracket and fixing screws, plus a number of other subtle but important details to suit this little speaker to its allotted task. And that's also why this attractive little miniature costs £1,000 per pair (or £500 each). It's very logical, as a major obstacle to multichannel acceptance lies in accommodating the extra speakers

### KEY FEATURES

- ▶ 25mm coated fabric dome tweeter
- ▶ 140mm bass/mid driver
- ▶ Sensitivity: 88dB/W
- ▶ Impedance: 6 ohms minimum
- ▶ Size (WxHxD): 31x31x18cm (inc bracket)
- ▶ Wood veneers: cherry, maple, rosenut or black ash
- ▶ Stainless steel wall bracket and fixings included
- ▶ Magnetically shielded
- ▶ Asymmetric enclosure
- ▶ Heavy gold-plated terminals allow bi-wiring

shape helps 'blend' the speaker front panel to the wall, permitting some swivelling to taste, and the speakers may be used either way up, depending on how high up the wall they are mounted. The box is very tough, usefully shaped to avoid lateral standing waves, and with the front and back braced via driver and a damping pad. Further controlled damping is used between bracket and box.

Sonically these strategies seem to have been successful in creating a substantially neutral loudspeaker that can be fixed close to a wall without suffering the usual characteristic 'honk'. (Listen to someone talking with their face close to a wall and you'll hear it!)

The SR5 simply doesn't sound like a wall-mount. It isn't entirely free from coloration – slight 'thickening' is audible in the lower midband region – but there's certainly no sign of the usual midband 'quack', and the stereo image shows fine spaciousness and even a measure of depth, though central focus did seem a little vague.

### ROOM INTERACTION

The way that the loudspeakers interact with the room plays a crucial role in the overall performance of the system. One of the most important mechanisms involved is the reflection of sound from walls, as these act just like 'mirrors', acoustically speaking.

The wall behind a loudspeaker is by far the most significant one in the room. The bass output of a box speaker is omnidirectional, so it's reinforced through reflection when close to a wall. With a normal box speaker, however, the reflections cause unevenness and hence colorations well up into the midband. The difficult trick is to design a speaker that can give good bass alignment when wall-mounted, while avoiding the midband colorations.

extra subwoofery, and does present a rather different set of compromises to most conventional speakers. But it's nevertheless a very impressive achievement, combining fine accuracy and genuine hi-fi performance in a uniquely discreet wall-mounted package, particularly well suited to multichannel applications.

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***"The midband has all the traditional Spendor hallmarks of smoothness, evenness and low coloration, while the treble is clean, detailed and nicely restrained."***

required without undue clutter.

The basic facts are that the SR5 is a two-way sealed-box 'miniature', with a small, high quality 140mm bass/mid drive unit sporting a large shielded magnet, cast frame and 90mm polypropylene cone. The tweeter has a 25mm coated fabric dome, and the unit is fed via a high-quality crossover and twin bi-wire/amp terminals.

The combination of sealed-box loading and a large magnet is crucial to creating a well damped and controlled bass alignment to compensate for the close-to-wall reinforcement. The tapered

The midband has all the traditional Spendor hallmarks of smoothness, evenness and low coloration, while the treble is clean, detailed and nicely restrained, ensuring fine clarity alongside an impressively wide dynamic range.

The overall tonal balance is a little lightweight and forward, and the bass region is clearly lacking some warmth. But what it might lack in sheer weight and 'punch', it more than makes up for with impressive evenness and considerable agility. The bottom end might be a little dry, but its sheer speed ensures a fine combination of propulsion and information.

The SR5 might benefit from some

