standmount loudspeaker of the year
Avalon Aspect

Reviewed in issue 66

In truth, we spent some time arguing whether the Avalon Aspect stand-mount loudspeaker *is* a standmount loudspeaker. The sides of the speaker cabinet extend to the floor and there is no 'stand' to speak of. So, it's technically a standmounted floorstander. Or something. Whatever, it is one of the most innovative loudspeaker designs this year and produces a sound that's every bit as impressive as its looks are distinctive.

The side walls of the Aspect extend below the main cabinet and to the floor, giving the unique A-shape of the product. The two-way, three driver design also features ports built into the base of the main cabinet and the top panel is finished in a half-inch slab of granite, all packed into huge packing crates. The net result is a non-parallel cabinet (even the front and rear panels are tapered slightly) and a sound that is extremely deep, coherent and musical… and remarkably unfussy about what it's partnered with. Although it's a refined and delicate-sounding speaker, it's energy makes you long to play loud rock through the Aspect, and the result doesn't disappoint. "These speakers don't just get down and get dirty, they get downright rude and do it with a smile" we said. And that means Avalon just made a speaker that rocks!

Price: £8,750/pair
Manufactured by Avalon Acoustics Inc
Net: www.avalonacoustics.com
Distributed by Audiofreaks Ltd
Net: www.audiofreaks.co.uk
Tel: +44(0)208 948 4153

Highly Commended
Audiosmile Kensai
Reviewed in issue 64
Price: £1,499/pair
Manufactured by AudioSmile
Net: www.audiosmile.co.uk
Tel: +44(0)7952 478193

Highly Commended
Spendor SA1
Reviewed in issue 61
Price: £1,100/pair (stands £400/pair)
Manufacturered by
Spendor Audio Systems Ltd
Net: www.spendoraudio.com
Tel: +44(0)1323 843474