

MONITOR AUDIO GS10

Classic compact speakers with a sound that's entirely up to date

These high-quality small speakers sound as good as they look – and that's special, says **Andrew Everard**

It's been a good while since I've reviewed a pair of Monitor Audio speakers, which is surprising since for a long time I used a pair of the company's Studio 20 floorstanders as my reference speakers. And it seems I've been missing out on something!

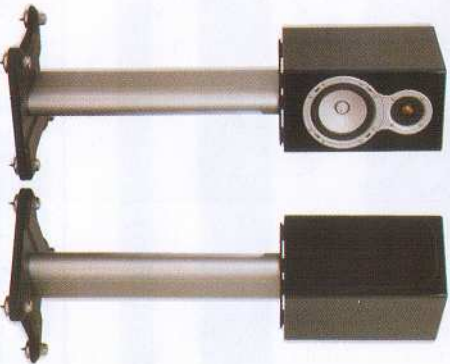
The GS10 is the smallest model in the Gold Signature range. As well as this \$800-a-pair model, the line-up includes larger models, the \$1500/pr GS20 and \$2000/pr GS60, the GS-LCR speaker for home cinema duties, at \$500 each, dedicated rear effects speakers in the form of the \$900/pr GS-FX, and a powered subwoofer, the GSW-12, at \$1000. There's a choice of real wood finishes – Santos rosewood, walnut, cherry and natural oak – with piano black and silver gloss available as options.

The GS10s are of a conventional two-way design, but show the company's extensive research into materials and design. The 16.5cm mid/bass unit uses a ceramic-coated magnesium/aluminium (C-CAM) alloy, the surface of the driver dimpled in what the company calls Rigid Surface Technology. The gold-anodised 25mm tweeter uses the same C-CAM material.

The drivers are clamped in place with die-cast aluminium/zinc plates, while the speakers use a rear-venting "HiVe 2" port, the inner surface of which is rifled to improve airflow and reduce turbulence. The cabinets use traditional tongue-and-groove joints, with extensive internal bracing and smoothly radius-edged, and elongated slots in the driver fixing plates hold the grilles in place.

PERFORMANCE

The GS10s can be used close to, or indeed fixed on, walls, and foam bungs are provided for the rear-venting ports to prevent boom when close to boundaries. But it's most likely that these



Dedicated stands enhance looks and sound

speakers will be standmounted, and the optional supports MA provided with the review pair were certainly elegant, rigid and finished to the same standards as the speakers.

"My" pair were assembled, but the instructions show that putting them together won't take too long. I like the attention to detail in the skeletal top and bottom plates, the hefty collars into which the carpet-spikes are screwed, and the pads on the top-plate, embossed with the company's logo, on which the speakers sit.

The sound was also all I remembered from Monitor Audios of old, but with a shade more refinement and smoothness, if memory serves. I biwired the GS10s to a variety of amplifiers and receivers, from the price-compatible to the just plain silly, and in each case the presentation combined commendable scale with open, fresh detail and a natural, unforced nature.

The speakers may stand just 36cm tall, but they are more than capable of filling relatively large spaces with music without showing any

signs of raggedness. But most striking of all is the focus and impression of depth they can create with a fine recording, whether it's a close-miked solo piano piece or concert-hall recording: they deliver a more than credible sense of space and atmosphere, while at the same time focusing performers within the recorded acoustic.

The result – at least with the right partnering equipment – is that the speakers "vanish" when you close your eyes, the music hanging in the room without a hint of coming from a pair of enclosures and a stack of electronics. It's a trick the GS10s, grilles off, on the optional stands, toed-in a shade and biwired or even better biamped, do so very well.

Notes of caution? From past experience I'd avoid players and amps known to have a brash or forthright sound, and stick with something a little more mellifluous, but that and the usual caution about taking a long hard listen for yourself aside, these are really superb little speakers. 🎧

MONITOR AUDIO GS10

Type Two-way standmount speakers

Price £800/pr

Drive units 16.5cm C-CAM/RST aluminium/magnesium woofer, 25mm C-CAM tweeter

Claimed frequency response 40Hz-43kHz

Crossover frequency 2.7kHz

Enclosure type Rear ported

Sensitivity 88dB/W/m

Impedance 8 ohms

Power handling 100W (40W minimum recommended)

Cabinet finishes Rosewood, walnut, cherry, oak, piano black and silver gloss

Dimensions (HxWxD) 36x20.6x27cm

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