

TEST > 5.1 speaker system



WHAT HOME CINEMA
EDITOR'S CHOICE

Treble sounds fresh and exciting to the ear

These snakey stands have plenty of charm

This sub is part of the heavy mob at 25kg

89% WHAT HOME CINEMA

RATINGS

STYLE	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆
FEATURES	★★★★☆
SOUND	★★★★★
VALUE	★★★★☆
OVERALL	★★★★★

TEST SCENE

> *Superman Returns*



The system puts in some performance with action sequences, as effects echo round the room cleanly while the subwoofer performs perfectly

AT A GLANCE

FEATURES

5.1 channel sub/sat system
Black piano gloss finish
25mm gold anodised tweeters
100mm metal matrix polymer midrange drivers
Integrated stand system for R90 satellites
300mm metal matrix polymer subwoofer driver
500W amplifier in active subwoofer

CONNECTIONS

R90 satellite/R90 stand/
R225 centre channel: one pair 4mm speaker sockets, with screw terminals to accept bare wire or spade lugs
RSW-12 paired stereo phono inputs, stereo phono outputs

www.monitoraudio.co.uk
01268 740580

£1,350

Monitor Audio R90AV-12

Cute-looking, beautifully-made and sounding better than ever, this system runs rings round the competition

Monitor Audio's Radius speakers have always been good-looking and better-sounding, but the R90AV-12 system shifts the subwoofer/satellite system up a gear.

The previous R90AV system, costing about £1,000, has been replaced by this R90AV-12 system, bumping the price up by £350. This price increase comes down to the presence of the RSW-12 subwoofer – and its an upgrade that more than earns its keep.

Mean radius

The system comprises two pairs of the ever-popular Radius 90 satellite speakers, resplendent in their black piano gloss finish. These speakers come with black and grey metal grilles. There's a separate one each for the 25mm C-CAM (ceramic coated aluminium/magnesium) dome tweeter and the 100mm 'MMP Mk II' (second generation metal matrix polymer) cone midrange driver. They are vital to keep the drivers from damage, but hard to fit properly.

These tiny boxes look great on Monitor Audio's tall stands, which lock the speaker in place from the

back and route cables through the stand itself, giving the speaker an uncluttered and stylish appeal.

These satellite speakers are partnered with the R225 centre speaker. This has the same treble unit as the R90, but this time a pair of the 100mm midrange units, and the black and silver metal grilles, cover all three drivers (but are just a little bit fiddly to fit).

The RSW-12's black cloth is much easier to fit, but the box is much harder to lift. At more than 25kg, this is a lot beefier than the rest of the system, but given it sports a whopping great 300mm MMP bass driver and an equally whop-filled 500W amp.

This powerful amp can knock out 1kW at peak. It puts the fit and

forget controls (phase, frequency roll-off) at the back and places volume and two 'EQ' settings on top of the black piano gloss cabinet. These allow the user to switch between subtle bass reproduction and action-boosted fun.

It's hard not to be impressed with the overall fit and finish. The gloss is rich and deep and the whole package looks distinctly professional.

Sound of the crowd

But it's the sound that keeps you enthralled. A quick spin of our test DVD of *Superman Returns* reveals this 5.1 system to be a more than capable sonic performer. The treble is zingy, fresh and exciting, the middle registers are articulate and make speech seem perfectly distinct. The bass is as subtle or as powerful as you care to make it.

We preferred the subtle (EQ1) setting, but couldn't resist a quick wiggling out session on EQ2.

It's not perfect – the zingy treble can be too much at times – but it makes a sound far bigger than those little boxes would suggest, and should be top of anyone's wish list ■

MIDDLE REGISTERS ARE ARTICULATE AND MAKE SPEECH SEEM PERFECTLY DISTINCT



Gold tweeter equals clean high frequencies



The subwoofer supports a mighty 500W amplifier