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MUNICH HIGH END

2019

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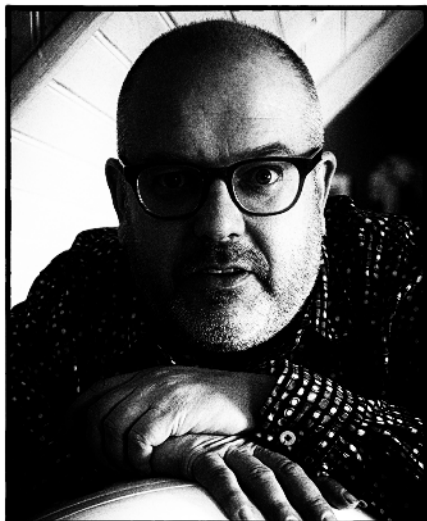


Stereo Times
The Complete Audiophile Magazine

BEST PRODUCT 2015 High Fidelity.pl

HI-FI WORLD





Hifi Pig
www.hifipig.com



HIGH END MUNICH 2019

Munich High End is always a packed event and this year was no exception with a great mix of industry people and music lovers alike.

Whether you are a fan of streaming audio, vinyl, tubes/valves, solid state, full range speakers, horn loudspeakers...or even sports cars, there is going to be lots for you to see and hear at High End and we hope our coverage of the show gives you a feeling of being there to some extent.

As well as being very well attended, the show is also absolutely huge and you can kind of tell the people who are making their first visit to High End as they begin the day looking not a little dazed and confused – or perhaps that was the previous night's beer intake.

We try to cover as much of the show as is physically possible but to get into every room, make notes and take pictures is impossible and this year we have been somewhat selective – but don't worry as we have reports from myself, Linette, Ian Ringstead and Janine Elliot, as well as a report from the HifiDeluxe show that takes place at the same time in Munich.

We've brought together much of the coverage from High End in these pages but you can click through our links to read the full coverage with many more photographs.

Stuart Smith



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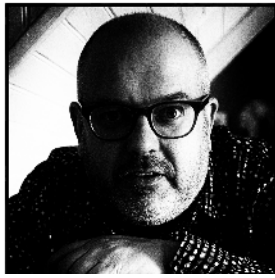
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HIGH END MUNICH 2019

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STUART SMITH

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LINETTE SMITH

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JANINE ELLIOT

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Coverage of **Munich High End 2019** sponsored by
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Winning Cables



HIGH END MUNICH 2019



OCTAVE

I do love a 300B tube and Octave didn't disappoint with their humungous Jubilee 300B power amplifiers that looked absolutely stunning at High end, but they also had less extreme and more affordable products on offer.

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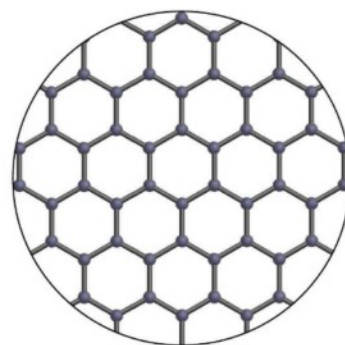


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Kii AUDIO

This is the Kii THREE BXT System and it is stonkingly good sounding playing of all things Infected Mushroom. You get two of the Kii THREE speakers 2 x BXT modules and a Kii control that allows you to select volume, input etc. This is a DSP controlled active system that allows for input of USB, SPDIF, TOSLINK, AES and an Analogue input. So all bases are covered and it even comes with all the cables you'll be needing. Kii claim response down to 20Hz and I'm not going to argue. This is the kind of system that bridges the gap between serious high-end audio and the convenience of a, and I hate to use the term, lifestyle system – and I mean that in the very best sense. If today's dem was anything to go by this is a system I could certainly very happily live with long term. Price of admission is around the £28k mark.

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TECHNICS

I make absolutely no apologies for my love of the Technics direct drive turntables and we've got one getting ready for review when we get back to Hifi Pig Towers when the Munich High End is over – and I'm looking forward to plugging it into the mid-priced system to see how it gets on.

The SL 1500C was launched earlier this year and it's hailed as a Premium Class Direct Drive Turntable. It's got a built in but bypassable phonostage, which is a clever move and even comes equipped with an Ortofon Red cartridge to allow for out of the box plug and play.

At the other end of their offering is the SL 1000R seen here with three tonearms including a tangential affair. Proper Japanese high-end loveliness!!

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GATO

Gato's speakers on the day were (I hope) their FM 50s, a three-way passive design using two 6" drivers for bass in a 50L enclosure and a smaller driver for mids. I think this is a case in point of a company able to make great sounding kit that also manages to look great too, as you can see from their electronics – just different enough to set them apart without being outlandish.

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FULL HORN SYSTEM

Dragon



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Dalian InterContinental Hotel

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Beijing International Music& Hifi Show
The Westin Beijing Chaoyang

11.08-11.10
New York Audio Show
Park Lane hotel

06.12-04.14
Guangzhou Audio Visual Show
Yuexiu Hotel

06.29-06.30
OTOTEN Audio Visual Festival
Tokyo International Forum

11.08-11.10
Shenzhen High End Audio Visual Show
The Panglin Hotel ShenZhen



AUDIO REFERENCE

Highlights of the room were getting a chance to chat with Ricardo from Absolute Sounds, the UK high-end distributor as well as Dan D'Agostino himself. New for the show were the Progression integrated amp that I failed miserably to get a shot of in my excitement and so excuse the library pictures. Progression is a modular amp and has two single-ended inputs and three balanced inputs including a passthrough for home theatre systems. You can add a moving coil phono stage and the Progression amp offers Bluetooth remote connectivity. Another option is to add a digital module that has two SPDIF coaxial inputs, two optical, USB A and USB B plus RJ 45 inputs. You get Roon music management for Tidal, Qobuz and MQA and the DAC will handle all the usual suspects with DSD up to 4xDSD (11.2 MHz). It outputs 200W into 8Ohms and 400W into 4 Ohms. It will begin shipping late Summer in the States and will cost \$18,000 for the most basic analogue model, add another \$2K for the phono and a further \$5K for the full-blown phono and digital version. As soon as we have UK prices we will, of course, let you know.

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The Taylor Acoustic brand is well known by musicians, studio engineers and upper-class high-end fanatics for manufacturing and constantly developing complete and aligned high-end audio solutions for the past 21 years.

All their components (loudspeakers, cables, DAC's, amplifiers, turntables, etc.) are handmade in limited small series and are individually hand-tuned by their owner-developer, David T. Taylor, who – like Stradivari – ear-tunes each and every component until he is personally satisfied with the result. This makes the sound experience of Taylor Acoustic inimitable and their products provide unique genuine dynamics even at a low volume (at 2-5 Watts in small spaces (20-40 sqm), and at 10-20 Watts in larger spaces (80-300 sqm)).

By listening to the Taylor Acoustic sound reproduction systems the listeners get a real emotional body response, like goosebumps or tears, which they usually experience at unplugged live music performances only. The dynamics, emotions and colours of live music are present at all points of the listening space, not just at the top of the musical triangle - even when music is played from a digital source - which distinguishes Taylor Acoustic from other high-end audio brands.

WWW.TAYLOR-ACOUSTIC.COM



HIGH END MUNICH 2019



AVM

Udo Besser and his team chose High End Munich to premiere AVM's first active loudspeakers adding to the turntable which they launched at last years High end Show.

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PRIMARE. PIEGA AND INAKUSTIK

Primare joined forces with inakustik to bring visitors to the Munich High End what was a very nice sounding system. They had the Pre35 Prisma preamplifier, DC35 Prisma CD player, R35 phonostage and A35.2 power amplifier.

The speakers are the Piega (from Switzerland) Master Line Source 3s which are stunning in the flesh standing at 165cm and using "acoustic lenses" around the back of the dipole speakers allowing for conventional room placement. Midrange and high frequencies are handled by four ribbons. The bass in these speakers is handled by two new 180mm UHQD drivers. They are 92dB sensitive and go down to a claimed 28HZ whilst weighing in at 65Kg. One of the most interesting speaker designs so far at the show.

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JOSOUND

Joe Jouhal used Munich High End to demonstrate his newest line of speakers and we liked them a lot. Joe has eschewed a pure full range driven loudspeaker to incorporate a bass unit. The horn is Perspex and slightly elliptical. I moaned at Joe some time ago about one of his previous speakers not being particularly dynamic (particularly in the bass) and if today's performance is anything to go by, he has certainly addressed these concerns.

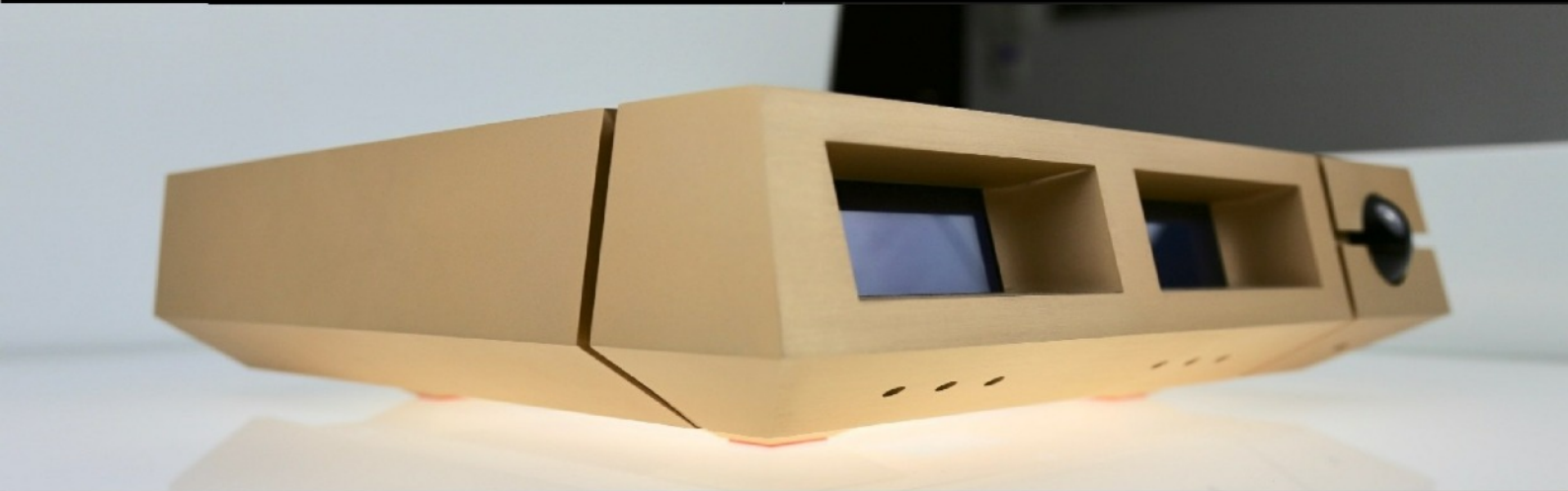
The speakers are called ecoJo YS Tribute and, Joe tells us, has been produced as a tribute to one of the audio industry's legends of the audio industry from Japan. Whilst JoSound's founder, Joe Jouhal, will not disclose his name, suffice to say that they both shared a great friendship and love of nature and music. The new model is named YS Tribute. It is a departure from JoSound's traditional cabinet material, bamboo, and instead has a 28 layer, high-gloss paint finish on ecoBoard, a material that is made from 100% recycled post-agricultural waste.. straw, which has a negative carbon footprint. The cabinet is also available, at extra cost, in JoSound's traditional bamboo or 100% recycled acrylic, in 8 different colours. It is a 2 way design, featuring an 8" full-range driver in a sealed cabinet with an acrylic wave guide. The volume of the cabinet is such that this driver rolls off at around 100hz. Below the sealed cabinet is an H-frame featuring an 18" woofer. The woofer is powered by it's own 250w Ncore class D amplifier from Hypex with built in DSP. A low pass filter is loaded on the DSP that matches the natural roll off of the upper sealed section.

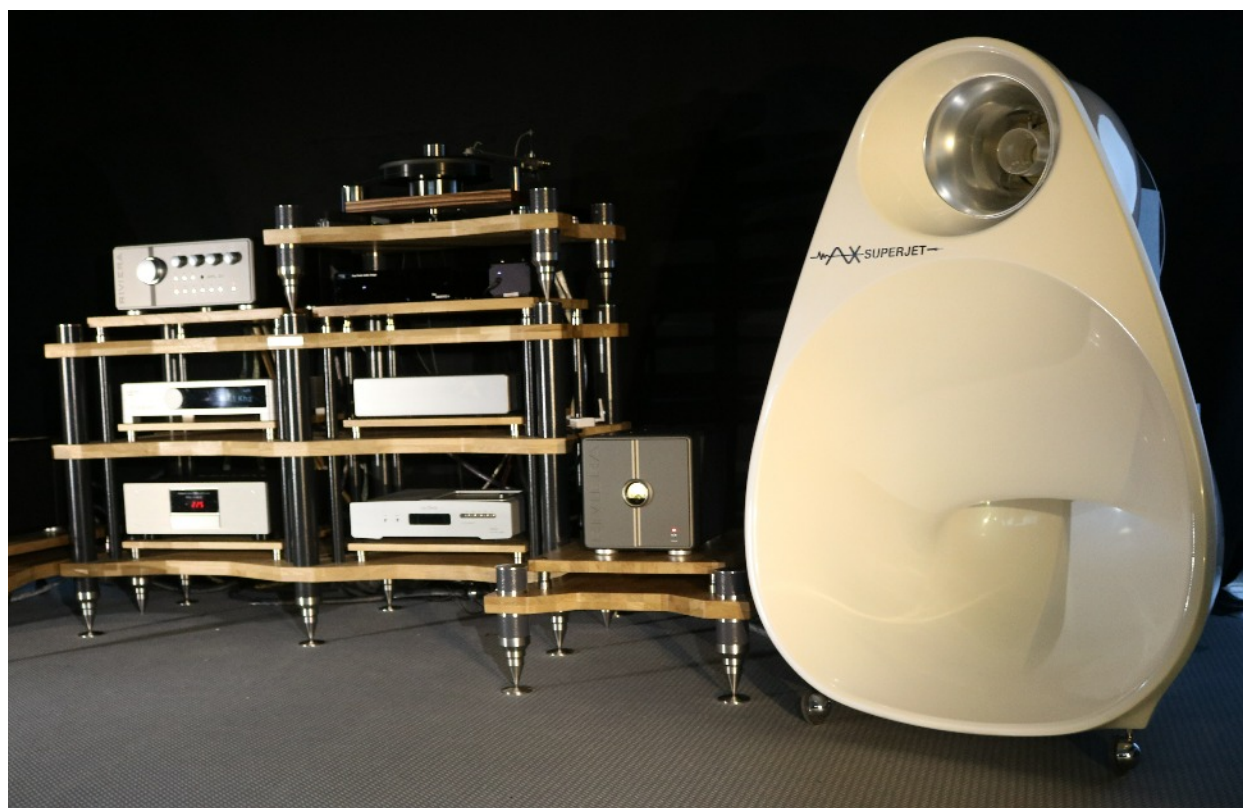
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AXJET

Axjets' Fred Davies showed off the AXsuperjets which are a very unusual design indeed and one that is now being distributed in the UK by Greg at G-Pont Audio. They use and AER BD4B (AX) wide-band driver and need only ten to twenty watts of power to drive them, being around 106dB sensitive. They are a 16ohm design with a response that goes down to 45Hz. Inside they use Atlas Ascent 3.5 OCC cable and Mundorf M-Connect Evo connectors.

They are made of glass reinforced cement in a fibreglass shell with PU foams. Weighing in at 65Kg they come on castors, which I thought was a nice touch and they come in any RAL colour you care to request. They are £68K in the UK, which may seem to be a fair old whack but when you consider the design and the fact the drivers alone command a price of £20K it put it into perspective somewhat.

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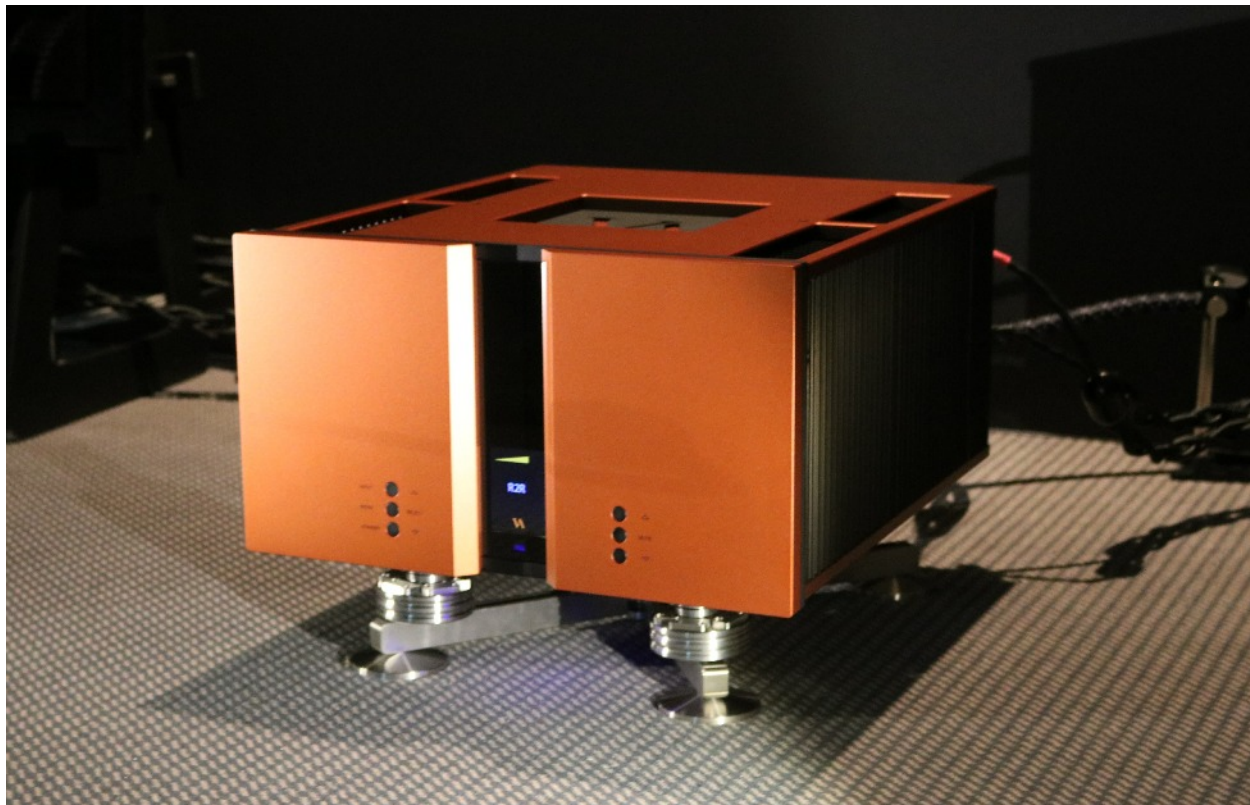
Wood spieces in oiled/waxed finish.

Walnut and Cherry

| | |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Dims mm | : W 168 D 275 H 345 |
| Weight each | : 8.2 kg |
| Bandwidth | : 35Hz - 35kHz |
| Sensitivity | : 89dB |
| Amplification | : 25 - 150W |

Accessories : Custom floor stand





VITUS AUDIO

Hans-Ole Vitus was showing off his new Vitus SIA-030 integrated, that he's nicknaming the Beast. It's certainly impressive and boasts a total power output of 200 watts with the first 30 being in pure Class A.

It has two RCA inputs and three balanced XLR inputs plus a phono stage and the option to add digital by way of a DAC and streamer with USB, optical, SPDID and ethernet. Speakers on the day were Rockport Technology if memory serves me correctly and both Linette and I thoroughly enjoyed the sound in this room.

The DAC/Streamer module already known from the RI-101 /RD-101 but has been optimized and enhanced for a Plug and Play Board. The Phonostage supports MC/MM with max gain upto 70dB (expected) with two non-balanced inputs, mm/mc support 2x RCA inputs with individual settings stored. Vitus says the "the SIA-030 will be all you will need for a minimalistic 'uber' performing system".

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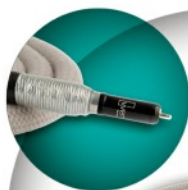


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THRAX

The big news in the Thrax room this year was their Yatus direct drive turntable.

Features include a “vibration-free” direct drive brushless DC motor with integrated bearing and being direct drive you can expect it to be incredibly stable with regards to speed control. You get a multi-layered platter with special damping, a low resonance and adjustable suspension for isolation and the whole caboodle comes in anodised aluminium with “constrained layer” damping. It offers speeds of 33, 45 and 78 RPM. It weighs 24Kg but manages to look sleek and elegant.

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degrading or modifying what the composer or artist intended.





RAIDHO AND SCANSONIC

Quite simply put this room was stunning. Front end was all Chord Electronics whilst making their debut was Raidho's TD3.8 loudspeakers. By Raidho's own admission the TD3.8 is an absolute beast and has been a dream-project for the whole team under the watchful eye of chief designer, Benno Baun Meldgaard.

The TD3.8 is a completely new design but with the signature Raidho-look. This is the first time Raidho has produced a midsized floorstanding speaker with big drivers, implementing their new patent pending driver design in a new 8" woofer in a dual configuration and used in conjunction with two new 5" midranges sharing the same, new driver design.

Both midranges and woofers have the new TD-cones (Tantalum/ Diamond), a 5-layer design with higher inner damping and increased stiffness with a new magnet system, new proprietary edge-wound voicecoils and a motor system with more than 1.1 tesla. The tweeter is also a new and upgraded design.

Speed, detail and pace are the order of the day here. Price is 89K and more in walnut but this is a seriously good sounding loudspeaker.

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LIVINGVOICE



JOSEPH AUDIO AND ALLUXITY

Was really looking forward to this room and it didn't disappoint.

Making their European debut from Joseph Audio were the Perspective2 Graphene. We read that people had raved about this speaker at Axpona and were keen to hear it in the flesh as the magnesium woofers are now coated in Graphene. Specs for those interested are 8 ohms nominal, 5.5 ohms minimum, and they have an asymmetrical Infinite Slope Crossover at 2 kHz (Joseph saying that "The steep filter slopes ensure good acoustical behaviour in the crossover regions, with a minimum of acoustical interference, along with low distortion and wide dynamic range. Driver acoustic responses are in-phase throughout the crossover regions.")

Alluxity from Denmark had their Media One server plus pre and power One. Now, I know there is a group of audiophiles out there that believe "real" hifi can only be declared as such if it has been battered with the ugly stick but Alluxity have managed to combine a lifestyle look with high-end performance and I for one don't see why this should not be the norm rather than the exception.

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ODEON AUDIO

In the late 1970s, Odeon's founder and CEO Axel Gersdorff started to develop loudspeaker systems, because he couldn't find the right loudspeakers for himself and then in 1987, he founded ARS-Elektroakustik to professionally design and manufacture studio and high-end audio products. In 1990 he developed spherical horns which were made out of plywood and with a unique horn curve. This was the Beginning of the Odeon product line.

At Munich High End the Odeon Audio Team were playing with the loudspeakers you see here and boy they were good, with dynamics to die for.

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VERTERE AND KUDOS

Vertere were joined by UK loudspeaker manufacturer, Kudos Audio, and its Titan series of isobaric-loading loudspeakers. The main unveiling by industry legend Touraj Moghaddam was of his entry level Dynamic Groove turntable, or as Vertere like to call them, record players.

The new DG-1 Dynamic Groove Record Player is aimed at a less demanding client than Vertere customers who buy their high-end offerings costing up to £200K but one who want great performance but needs almost Plug and Play setup.

Price of the DG-1 is £2850 (€3350) including cartridge. From the plinth to the arm and its bearings, everything has been redesigned and re-engineered, developing some of the basic principles of a record-playing system while completely rethinking others.

"The job of a record player is very simple and very linear" says Touraj Moghaddam "the most accurate measurement of something going past the stylus and throwing it from side to side over 1000 times every centimetre."

Advanced microprocessor generated electronic motor drive that as a fully programmable and copper/stainless steel shielded motor drive PCB which allows for future upgrades. It has a low voltage 24 pole synchronous motor, with its dedicated power supply and a polished stainless steel, high aspect ratio, main bearing spindle and main bearing housing with tungsten carbide super-precision ball. The drive pulley is CNC machined aluminium alloy and the platter is also an aluminium alloy platter with bonded PETG record interface

mat and cork/neoprene/nitrile bonded underside resonance control disk. The nylon thread tonearm bearings are each made up of hundreds of 3 microns thick twined Nylon 6.6/6 strands and the flat tonearm is made up of a two layer aluminium alloy / polymer sandwich. Tonearm wiring is a one piece, gold plated flexible PCB wire and the counterbalance is stainless steel. The main and sub-plinths are a non-resonant cast acrylic and there are three adjustable feet. Isolation is provided by low frequency compliant, tuned silicone rubber and the belt is also made of silicone rubber and is round. DG-1 has a programmable standby light. Has a 33/45 touch button speed selector and comes with an acrylic dust cover. The multi-voltage mains plug power adapter is suitable for most regions.

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AURALIC AND SPENDOR

Auralic used the High End Munich show to unveil a couple of new products to add to their G range of products and partnered with the Spondor speakers they were sounding absolutely brilliant. Both Linette and I could have stayed in this room MUCH longer than we had time for and thoroughly enjoyed what time we had in there.

The first product from Auralic was the Altair G-1 Digital Audio Streamer functions in much the same way as the original ALTAIR and is able to act as a preamp, a DAC, a streamer, and an all-in-one digital source, but is also now fitted with the G1 chassis, providing a matching 4-inch color display and Smart IR feature.

As a digital audio streamer, ALTAIR G1 has received several updates from both the G1 and G2 series of products, the first being that it now uses the ESS 9038Q2M conversion chip. The processor platform has been upgraded to Tesla G2 from Tesla G1, featuring 2GB of system memory. An internal storage option remains, and for a fee an upgrade kit can be provided to the dealer or the customer, allowing for storage of large music collections in any number of formats and resolutions.

As a digital hub, the ALTAIR G1 still functions as a Roon Endpoint, can stream subscription music services such as Tidal, Qobuz and Spotify Connect, and offers Bluetooth, Airplay, and SongCast.

ALTAIR EU Retail will be €2,199, UK Retail will be £1,899, US Retail will be \$2,499, and will be available for purchase in July/August 2019.

The second launch at High End from Auralic was the SIRIUS G2 Upsampling Processor. SIRIUS G2 operates on an open standard, allowing users to upgrade both the processing power and the original performance envelope of their Digital-to-Analog Converters (DACs), whether they're using an AURALiC branded DAC, or one developed by another manufacturer.

SIRIUS G2 delivers to the DAC a wide variety of resolutions and formats and can accept any input data with sampling rates from 44.1 kHz to 384 kHz in PCM, or DSD64 to DSD512 and can output USB, in any format, including PCM in 384 kHz and DSD51.

SIRIUS G2 EU Retail will be €6,299, UK Retail will be £5,499, US Retail will be \$5,999, and will be available for purchase in July/August 2019.

Using Nagra amps the whole was fed through a pair of Spondor SP 200s, part of the company's Classic line of loudspeakers. They are a three-way sealed floorstanding speakers using 2 x 300mm woofers to deal with bass, a 180mm mid and a 22mm tweeter. They're an impressive looking proposition standing almost 1.2 metres in height and will go as low as 20Hz, which I can well believe given the performance in the room at the show. They are 89dB sensitive and offer a load of 8 Ohms.

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OUR RECOMMENDATION:
BUY TWO!





STEIN

Changing the mood completely, the next room we ventured into was Stein's from Germany who were playing their TopLine Loudspeaker XL...and yes it really did deserve the XL part of that. The two boxes, one handling sub-bass (Bob XL) and the other with the very eye-catching horns, both stand 2.3 metres in height.

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HIGH END MUNICH 2019



HARBETH

Well loved British brand Harbeth were demonstrating their Monitor 40.2 loudspeakers priced at around €9000. These are a three-way design using Harbeths own 300mm bass unit, 200mm Radial2 mid and 25mm ferro-cooled soft dome tweeter to give a frequency response going down to 35Hz (+/- 3dB) and an easy 6-8 ohm load.

The photograph above is of Harbeth's static display.

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Your **perception** about HiEnd
is **about to change!**



WHARFEDALE

I'm a longtime lover of Wharfedale's loudspeakers with my first proper speakers being the brand's original Diamond series speaker. More recently we chose to put Wharfedale's D320s in our budget review system and I can't see them going anywhere soon (we gave them an outstanding product award when we reviewed them)...our youngest also bought a pair on the back of hearing them in our system.

At High End Peter Comeau gave us a listen to the Elysian speakers (the ones in white) which were on static display earlier in the year at the Bristol Show and expected for proper release in late Summer of this year with a price-tag of around £4500 – there will be a floorstanding model too that will tip the scales at around £7500.

I thoroughly enjoyed the sound in this room but then the Elysian 2 speakers use an AMT (Air Motion Transformer) tweeter which I am particularly fond of. Amplification on the day was from Audiolab.

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CH PRECISION, WILSON BENESCH, ETSURO URUSHI, MASTER BUILT & GIK

Wilson Benesch are celebrating thirty years of building hifi equipment and at Munich they chose to use their Eminence loudspeakers and GMT turntable. The GMTONE System features a new drive system called the Omega Drive. The Omega Drive is “the world’s first axially orientated, precision magnetically geared turntable drive”. In addition to the Omega Drive, Wilson Benesch has developed the Alpha Isolation System, Piezo VTA System, three new tonearms and a dedicated new cartridge.

The GMTONE System® derives its name from Greenwich Mean Time. The GMT reference is, say the Yorkshire based company, inspired by the novel drive system behind the GMTONE System® which lays claim to being the most accurate drive system ever developed for a turntable. This drive system does not rely upon a belt, it does not rely upon an idler drive, nor a direct drive system. The GMTONE System® deploys a recently patented magnetic gear technology Pricing: unconfirmed but it should be available in Q4 2019.

CH Precision from Switzerland provided the electronics in the form of their 1-line (in mono) whilst cabling was provided by Master Built. Cartridge on the turntable was the Etsuro Urushi Gold and room treatment was by GIK,

Now, I’ve owned a Wilson Benesch turntable in the past and immediately regretted selling it, and I know a good few people

who use Wilson Benesch loudspeakers, including our own Janine Elliot and Dave Robson, but at shows I’ve often found them to be lacking somewhat, however, at this year’s High End Munich I thought the whole came together really well and offered up a nicely balanced and dynamic system. Perhaps the room treatment by GIK is something more companies should look at when doing shows.

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VOXATIV

Voxativ used High End Munich to present their new all-in-one Hagen Absolut system.

Berlin-born Voxativ GmbH showed off a new line of affordable, plug+play, all-in-one Absolut systems. This is the brand's first integrated package to include both a pair of Voxativ loudspeakers along with a new integrated amp/DAC. The particular system they had at Munich was the Absolut Hagen system with speakers utilising a 5" single-driver and costing €7,900.

Providing both amplification and digital source capabilities, the accompanying Absolut Box is a new Class A/B integrated amp with built-in DAC optimised to make the most of the designated loudspeaker via amplification power and custom DSP. With the DSP, the handmade 5" drivers are linear down to an 45Hz which is pretty spectacular for such a small loudspeaker.

This is a bit of a departure for Voxativ as it is the company's first solid state amp, but it is also their first digital source component, allowing for a complete Voxativ system from DAC to drivers. To play music, all you need is a smartphone or computer to losslessly stream your music files or favourite services like Qobuz, TIDAL via Bluetooth Apt-X, WiFi or optical in (also ROON compatible over Wifi.) Additionally, there is an analogue input for the connection of an additional source (like phono-stage, etc.) as well as preamp output for active subwoofer or to be used as a dedicated source output into another amp (like the Voxativ T211 SET Integrated).

According to chief designer Holger Adler (pictured below), "Everything has been optimized to make the most of our horn-loaded wide-banders. To do this, we brought together some of the most verboten audio ingredients – Wifi, Bluetooth, solid-state, DSP, switching power supply – into a very special sounding recipe that challenges conventional audiophile prejudices. No one part makes or breaks a system — it's how it's all brought together. We even surprised ourselves."

The little system is a very cool introduction to the brand and is very well priced in my opinion. However, the big system that played in the room took my breath away and sounded amazing on the day.

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TUNE AUDIO, TRAFOMATIC, AUDIOBYTE, ROCKNA & SKOGRAND

This system stole the show for me at last years High End in Munich leaving me in tears – in a good way, though. The system was pretty much as last years and was just as stunning. The speakers are the Tune Audio Avaton (ἄβατον, ancient Greek, a place that entrance is allowed only for believers) is a three-way, all passive, fully horn loaded loudspeaker. Avaton is the realisation of a five-year development project aiming to deliver a no-compromise horn loudspeaker for large listening rooms.

Virtual mouth technology is applied on the bass horn loading which delivers a flat response down to 32Hz. The bass driver is a massive 27KGs 18" unit. The asymmetrical midbass horn has a mouth of 10.000cm², triple layer build with damping materials between, and, finally, the throat and beginning of the horn are coated with epoxy/CNT compound for extra stiffness. There is a first order cross-over for all three ways, internal cabling with waxed cotton insulated pure copper, graphite coated support feet and many more features. This is a perfect partnership for the Trafomatic amps and the wonderfully beautiful Skogrand cables made by Knut who hails from Norway.

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CHORD ELECTRONICS

Chord Electronics from the UK, who are celebrating thirty years in the business, were kind enough to invite us along to the launch of some new products and it was packed with the great and the good of the Hifi press from around the World (and us) which goes to show how well this British brand are regarded. Beer and wine flowed freely and the whole event was informative and thoroughly enjoyable with me getting the impression that whilst the folk behind the brand do not take themselves too seriously, they take the actual products they produce very seriously. All too often we get invited to events that are stuffy and boring, to the point you can't wait to leave and end up taking away very little other than the thought that you have just lost an hour that you will never get back...not so here.

The first unveiling was of the Huei phono preamplifier, a bit of a departure for the company we associate mostly for their fantastic digital products and amplifiers. Huei is entirely conceived, engineered and manufactured in Great Britain and has both Moving Magnet and Moving Coil functionality and offers compatibility with a huge range of cartridges thanks to comprehensive gain and impedance-matching options; Huei's high- and low-gain switching settings are easily accessible via front-panel controls which is a cool touch – there is even a switchable rumble filter, which again is a nice touch. Chord's Huei phonostage will cost £990 and will be available in black only in late summer- I'm dying to give it a go but reckon Janine will want to fight me for who gets to review it!

In addition to Huei Chord Electronics has also implemented its flagship ULTIMA amplifier topology into two new mono power

amplifiers, the Ultima 2 and Ultima 3. The new 750-watt ULTIMA 2 (£18,360 each) is a direct replacement for the SPM 6000 MKII and forms part of the company's flagship Reference range; the smaller 480-watt ULTIMA 3 (£11,000 each) replaces the SPM 1400 MKII and sits in the Full Size range. Both amplifiers are ready now.

ULTIMA's technology is based on a technical paper by Dr Malcolm J Hawksford (emeritus professor at Essex University) which was taken up and refined by Bob Cordell of Bell Labs. Chord Electronics' owner and Chief Designer, John Franks, then took the theory and developed it to a much higher level; a progression of Cordell's advanced dual-feed-forward error-correction topology incorporating Franks' own concepts in ultra-high-frequency power supplies, which have been a cornerstone of the company's proprietary-technology amplifiers since its inception in 1989.

The ULTIMA 2 and 3 mono amplifiers have 32 proprietary MOSFET power devices. The drive circuitry features an ultra-low-distortion, high-voltage amplifier operating at very high speed: 300 volts per microsecond technologies with advanced feed-forward and feedback compensation techniques. It also benefits from Chord Electronics' TO3-style dual die lateral matched MOSFETs, which are continuously monitored with output stage error-correction circuitry and feature fully balanced input circuitry with DC-tracking servos and full temperature compensation.

Let's Talk About Specs, Baby!

ULTIMA 2 mono power amp:

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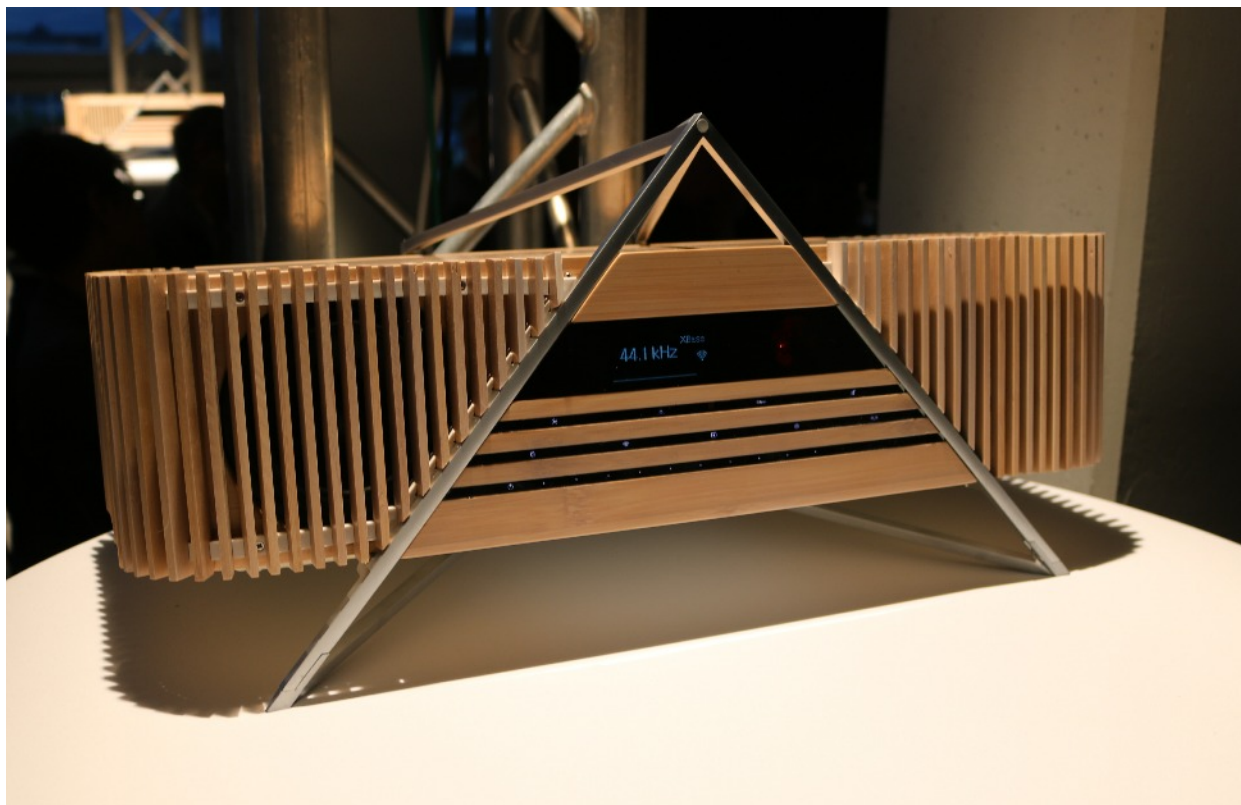


Output Power: 750W RMS per channel @ 0.05% distortion into 8Ω; 1305w into 4Ω
Frequency Response: -1dB @ 0.2Hz to 46kHz and -3dB 0.1Hz to 200kHz
Signal to Noise Ratio: Better than -89dB
Channel Separation: Better than 90dB
Input Impedance: 100kΩ Unbalanced/Balanced
Output Impedance: 0.04Ω
Gain: 30dB
Dimensions without integra legs: 420mm (w) x 670mm (d) x 310mm (h)
Dimensions with included integra legs: 481mm x 176mm x 681mm
Weight: 86kg

ULTIMA 3 mono power amp:

Output Power: 480W RMS per channel @ 0.05% distortion into 8Ω;
Frequency Response: 1dB @ 0.2Hz to 46kHz and -3dB 0.1Hz to 200kHz
Signal to Noise Ratio: Better than -84dB
Channel Separation: Better than 90dB
Input Impedance: 100kΩ Unbalanced/Balanced
Output Impedance: 0.04Ω
Dimensions with included integra legs: 481mm x 176mm x 377mm

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iFi

It had been a busy but thoroughly enjoyable day and I really could have done with heading back to the hotel and getting some shut-eye but I'm so pleased I didn't and accepted Team iFi's invitation to pop along to see the unveiling of their new product.

Vicky Pickles was an absolute star and coped with the late bus and the subsequent magical mystery tour with brilliant humour and the event itself was great with lovely food and lots of beer and wine – a small mention to Tim from Hashstar for looking after us so well!

Clad in bamboo and elevated by a distinctive aluminium frame, the Aurora's design is certainly striking in its looks with iFi telling us that the aesthetic was created by French product designer Julien Haziza, inspired by the architecture in Tokyo's Omotesandō and Harajuku districts. Six drive units nestle behind the bamboo fins that curve around the Aurora's sides, with a further two bass radiators underneath. The system's control panel sits front and centre, with touch-sensitive controls and an OLED display inlaid with bamboo.

The Aurora connects to a home Wi-Fi network, enabling users to stream music via their favourite apps, or play audio files stored on networked devices such as computers and NAS drives. Bluetooth is also included, so that users may stream directly from any smart device.

It will support data up to 32-bit/192kHz without conversion or downsampling via Wi-Fi, USB or Ethernet cable. The latest

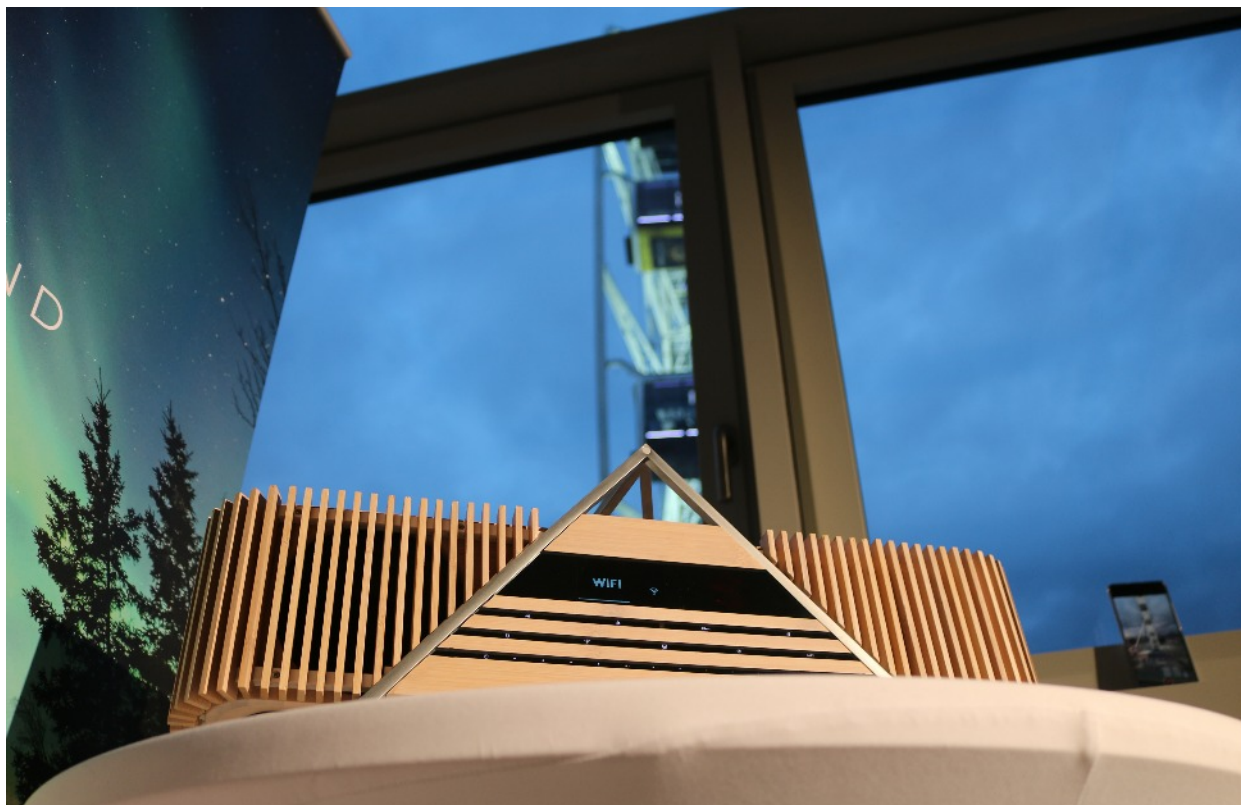
Bluetooth codecs are supported, including aptX HD, LDAC and LDHC, as well as AAC.

iFi tell us that connecting to a Wi-Fi network couldn't be simpler, with push-button WPS set-up. Linkplay's MUZO Player app – or any UPnP/DLNA streaming app – may be used to configure the system and control music. AirPlay and Spotify Connect are also supported.

Several Auroras may be linked together on a Wi-Fi network to make a multi-room system, playing in-sync, as they were on the night, or controlled individually.

At Aurora's heart lies proprietary amp technology that iFi calls 'PureEmotion' – a hybrid circuit design comprising several key stages. The first of these – the preamp stage – incorporates a Russian 6N3P valve (visible through a window next to the OLED display). This takes the analogue audio signal delivered by the Aurora's DAC (Digital-to-Analogue Converter) circuitry – based around a chip from ESS Technology's 32-bit Sabre DAC family – and adds gain in preparation for further amplification. The resulting low-level signal then passes to the power amp stage – iFi's 'current multiplier circuit'. This is a highly efficient switching power amplifier, a description it has in common with Class D amplification – but there the similarity ends with iFi explaining "iFi's current multiplier circuit is entirely different because the switching frequency is fixed at an ultra-high level – around 1.5MHz, far beyond the audible frequency spectrum. This results in a high level of efficiency, multiplying the current supplied by the valve several thousand-fold, whilst maintaining far greater linearity and lower noise than typical switching amplifiers. Coupled to this is a low-pass circuit and a feedback loop, the latter ensuring the output frequency is ideal for the load, and everything is 'clock-locked' via iFi's

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(Global Master Timing) circuit to ensure unerring precision.”

The PureEmotion amp stage delivers a total of 320W to power the Aurora’s custom-made speaker drive units. The main drivers, of which there are four – two firing from the front and one from each side – sport a 120mm cone made from coated long-fibre paper. This is coupled to a large magnet, a basket that resonates above the audible range and extensive measures to ensure excursion is controlled and damped mechanically, so that clarity and control are maintained even at high volume levels. Unusually, these main drivers are deployed in a wide-bandwidth role to cover the vast majority of the audible frequency spectrum, rolling off towards very low and very high frequencies. The drive unit design, together with the inert nature of the Aurora’s housing – stiff, well-braced, naturally sound-absorbent bamboo with strategically placed damping material – enables a flat frequency response from around 60Hz to 8kHz. Avoiding the need for a crossover.

In addition, there are two 28mm silk-dome tweeters, one at each side, cover frequencies from 8kHz to 35kHz. With a simple first-order crossover for the smoothest possible transition and a shallow waveguide to provide time-alignment, these tweeters not only deliver high-frequency sounds such as cymbals but are also critical to the Aurora’s spacious soundstage, say iFi.

Two further drivers – a pair of rectangular passive bass radiators – fire downwards from the underside of the cabinet. The diaphragm used by these drivers is formed from a composite of carbon, iron and ethylene-vinyl acetate, a well-damped material enabling the correct resonant frequency to be obtained from a diaphragm of appropriate thickness. This is combined with a self-centring, double-ribbed rubber

(presumably for extra pleasure) surround, negating the need for a basket.

The Aurora incorporates a ‘room correction’ system called ART (Automatic Room Tailoring), entirely developed in-house. At the press of a button, six microphones measure the distance to the surrounding walls using ultrasonic sound. Then, a 32-bit ARM Cortex microprocessor adjusts the output from the driver array to tailor Aurora’s performance. All the adjustments are made strictly in the analogue domain, without relying on DSP or feedback in the manner of many other room correction systems

You can purchase a rechargeable battery pack and attach it to Aurora’s 12v input, so you can take it outside for a garden party which is a pretty cool idea.

In addition to wireless connectivity, there are plenty of cable inputs to connect source devices. Optical, coaxial, USB and Ethernet inputs cater for digital sources, while 3.5mm socket provides an analogue input. There is even a slot for microSDHC cards – upload music onto a card and play it on the Aurora.

Aurora will be available from July 2019 at the following RRP/MSRPs:

£1,299 (GBP) including VAT

€1,499 (Euro) including VAT

\$1,299 (USD) excluding sales tax

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PMC

Right here is where you will read about what was, for me, the highlight of this year's Munich High end, and I don't say that lightly given some of the stunning kit we had the pleasure of seeing and hearing. Not only had PMC a couple of new speaker unveilings for us, they also had a remix in Dolby Atmos of Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* and *Sketches of Spain* - and both were absolutely STUNNING! I'm no fan of movies and surround sound and all that guff and never really thought of Atmos being used for music playback, but you know what, it works - or it works here and with these remixes!

PMC had been given access to the original master tapes of the recordings and the whole was remixed at Capitol Studios in LA which is equipped with a full PMC Dolby Atmos system. They worked closely with the Miles Davis estate PMC USA's Maurice Patist, Grammy Award winning engineer David Rideau and Senior Engineer Steve Genewick.

"A few years back David and I worked together on a presentation of *Sketches of Spain* in 5.1," says Patist, "And the Miles Davis family were very happy with the results, so I went to them and said how about a Dolby Atmos mix for '*Kind of Blue*' and '*Sketches of Spain*'? We were delighted when they said yes and arranged for the original master tapes to be retrieved from Sony's Legacy Recordings for us to work with."

Finishing the mix, the family were invited to Capitol to hear the results and immediately said, "People have to hear this! This is the way Miles' music should be heard!" As a result of the reaction of the family and Sony executives, PMC has been granted exclusive permission to share the results with

the audience at the High End Show. And in attendance to present this seminal album in Dolby Atmos were Erin Davis, son of Miles, and his drummer and nephew, Vince Wilburn, who together with Miles' daughter Cheryl Davis manage Miles Davis' estate and keep his legacy alive. How exciting and what an honour for us humble Hifi Pig's to be able to chat with these kinds of people. However, we were declared cool enough to have a picture (or Lin was) with them with Erin saying that "You cats are so cool, we really need to get you out to LA!"

The system was PMC's flagship model, the fact fenestria, complemented by an array of its Wafer on-wall speakers for the surround and height channels and a selection of its professional subwoofers, mimicking the system at Capitol Studios.

All I can say is that the sound we heard took the music to a whole new level and switching from the very good stereo mix to the Atmos was a bit of an eye-opener. STUNNING!

We were also got to take a look at the new fact signature series that are re-engineered versions of the fact.8 and fact.12 loudspeakers, with innovations and technology developed for the fenestria flagship. Keith Tonge of PMC gave us an intro to the new members of the fact family that have new crossovers, mounted on military-grade circuit boards, are populated with the same hand-selected components employed in the fenestria, with the positioning of each component carefully calculated to minimise unwanted interference. Audiophile grade switching, set into the solid aluminium back panel, permits tailoring of the bass and treble response of the speakers to create the perfect sound balance in the listening room. Connections to the amplifier are via

HIGH END MUNICH 2019



silver coated binding posts and it is possible to bi/tri-wire or bi/tri-amp the speakers.

The two-way fact.8 signature and three-way fact.12 signature retain the familiar features of their predecessors. The SONOMEX™ dome treble unit is common across both models and the fact.12 utilises a hand-made 50mm dome midrange that incorporates design elements from the mid-range driver in fenestria. Fact.8 features light, super-stiff, natural fibre bass drivers and the fact.12 retains its bespoke woofers made from an ultra-light alloy cone. And, of course, both speakers have at their hearts PMC's Advanced Transmission Line bass-loading technology. They are available in two new finishes: White Silk and Metallic Graphite.

The fact.8 signature and fact.12 signature will be available for RRP £6,995 (SRP €9,495) and RRP £14,995 (SRP €18,995) including VAT respectively and they are available from July 2019.

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GRIMM AUDIO

Grimm are an interesting brand and they have interesting speakers that I first happened across at one of the Paris shows a good few years back. They are Dutch based and offer products to the pro world of audio as well as the home Hifi market. Their product range includes cables, loudspeakers, music players and master clocks.

Speakers in use at Munich High End were the company's flagship in the form of their LS1be that uses a wide dispersion Beryllium tweeter and a seas Magnesium woofer. What is interesting is that the LS1be, like all the LS1 range from the company, is pretty much plug and play – you just need to add a source. You get DSP control, DAC, amps and obviously the transducers so all you need to add is a record player, CD transport, media player or a computer. Simple. Price of entry is €23 750.

I asked about the severe toe-in that Grimm always use when demonstrating at shows and the response was the same that Ken Ishiwata of Marantz gave when we asked him about the toe in he uses at shows and that is to allow the maximum width of the sweet spot.

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MSB TECHNOLOGY

MSB is based in Silicon Valley in California and everything in the room bar the loudspeakers were MSB products.

The amps on the floor are the company's own M500s which give out a healthy 500 Watts of power into 8 Ohms and double that into 4 Ohms and cost \$118 500 a pair. A stereo S500 amp is available at \$58 500. Also used in the room was the Pro USB interface that converts USB to MSB's proprietary Pro ISL interface to full electrical isolation – essentially you can use this to remove computers, servers and noisy electronics out of your system.

When asked what we'd like to hear I noticed they had Wild World by Cat Stevens on their server and so asked them to play that. It's a great tune that I play only seldomly so it was great to hear it in through such a fabulous system – I must confess it brought a tear to my eye. This is the thing with truly wonderful systems; the technology should just do its stuff without getting in the way of the music and allow the listener to connect emotionally with the art. Loudspeakers are the Magico M6.

One of the highlights of the show for me.

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ASCENDO, LUXMAN AND ISOTEK

Ascendo are a new brand to me but are based in Germany and make a wide range of passive and active loudspeakers. Luxman, on the other hand, needs no introduction as they have been around for longer than I have been buying HiFi.

IsoTek are based in Winchester in the UK and provide a wide range of power conditioners and regenerators at pretty much every price-point. The three units on the floor are their EVO3 Titan One, the EVO3 Nova One which both flank their EVO3 Genesis One. Genesis One is an interesting bit of kit being a single cell sine wave generator with the idea being to improve the performance of front-end components. Several Genesis Ones can be linked together so that you need only have one power cable for several units. It will provide up to 100 Watts.

IsoTek used the Munich High end show to launch their new Super Nova power cleaning system. The Super Nova is designed for primary components that typically have a constant current draw, thus CD Players, Music Servers, DAC, Pre-Amplifiers, Phono stages etc. Each of the eight power outlets has its own dedicated power cleaning system, and each output has over 100'000 Amps (1840 joules) of protection, that's over 800'000 combined. Priced at £9995.00 (including VAT), the Super Nova features ground filtering which is fully compliant with certification and safety standards; this is further clamped with an electronic protection circuit. Therefore, each connected component's functional lifetime will increase as well as being totally protected against dangerous power surges and voltage spikes.

The Super Nova design includes a new choke which allows a series connection that quadruples the inductance giving a vast increase in filtering at a constant 10 Amps if needed. In turn, this provides a typical load of 25-40W a massive power reserve. In addition, two specialised radio frequency chokes which combined with capacitances produce a high level of classical (Pi filter) design filtration. Furthermore, there is the unique Nova adaptive gate system which produces the optimum resistance capacitance barrier eliminating differential mode cross-contamination.

All internal wiring features silver plated ultra-pure OCC (Ohno Continuous Cast) Copper with IsoTek's VAD (Virtual Air Dielectric) technology. All PCB circuits feature double Oz copper. These qualities are remarkable in themselves however when they multiple eight times they achieve exactly with IsoTek standards, which is total isolation of each output socket from mains noise or in other words ultimate "isolation technology".

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VAC, VON SCHWEIKERT AUDIO, MASTERBUILT, AIRTIGHT ESOTERIC, ARTESANIA & ACOUSTIC SIGNATURE

This was an interesting system that included the Statement 450i iQ integrated amplifier from VAC (Valve Amplifier Company) that costs around \$150K, Von Schweikert's Ultra 9 loudspeakers, Masterbuilt's Ultra Line cables, an Acoustic Signature Invictus Junior turntable which was fitted with an Airtight Opus cartridge and then Esoteric provided the Grandioso transport, Grandioso D1 mono-block DAC, Grandioso G1 master clock and the N-01 network player whilst Artesania Audio provided all the racking.

The amplifier from VAC is an usual design but looks fabulous and the speakers are HUGE and use Accuton drivers in the main. The speakers were launched at RMAF and is the second loudspeaker in their flagship reference series. Its technology and performance are essentially identical to the ULTRA 11, but in a smaller form - SMALLER? Each channel features drivers including two 9" reinforced ceramic woofers, one 7" reinforced ceramic midrange, one Beryllium Tweeter, two Ribbon Super Tweeters (one front, one rear), one magnesium horn loaded tweeter (rear) and one 15" compound woven subwoofer (rear) with dedicated 1,000-watt amplifier. MasterBuilt Audio ULTRA wire is used exclusively for all signal paths. The ULTRA 9 has point to point hand-built networks with isolated architecture that protects crossover parts and wiring from electrical noise contamination. They also feature Version 2.0 Active Cabinet Vibration Control and

the ULTRA 9 achieves full-range response from 10Hz to 45kHz.

The Statement 450i iQ integrated from includes a Statement 450S iQ power amplifier, a Statement Line Stage, and phono stage with multiple inputs, variable gain, and adjustable loading. Power supply arrangements are dual mono throughout, with six main power transformers for left and right power amplifier, left and right line stage, and left and right phono stage. The internal topology is fully balanced.

VAC's patented iQ Continuous Stable Automatic Bias System* keeps the KT88 output tubes set at the intended operating point at all times.

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BOENICKE

We like the Boenicke loudspeakers and gave their teeny standmounters our top award when we reviewed them. Now the company has launched their E2 amplifier which gives out 400 W into 4 Ohms and is an integrated design. You can have it in standard or SE versions.

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ISO ACOUSTIC

I say it every time I hear this demonstration, but it is amazing what these isolation units bring to the table. Basically, the demonstration is a minute or so of the Focal speakers with their standard platform and then an instant switch using the Gaia or Titan units. The effect is pretty dramatic and positive, bringing the whole stereo image into sharper focus. This is a product I will be buying in the near future!

The company used Munich High End to introduce their new isolation platform for turntables and electronics – another product I want to test here at Hifi Pig Towers.

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DCS, D'AGOSTINO & WILSON AUDIO

This was a high-end marriage made in heaven and so good I forgot to take notes but the system is Vivaldi and Rossini from dCS through a D'Agostino amp and Wilson loudspeakers. Elsewhere at Munich High End dCS had a dedicated listening booth dedicated to headphones and featuring their new Bartok amp.

Four Barto'ks were on demonstration and dCS staff were on hand to demonstrate the wide functionality of this new network DAC with headphone. The cost of the headphone amplifier equipped version costs £11,999, and features a custom-designed Class A headphone stage that works with both high and low impedance headphones and IEM's in balanced or unbalanced formats. Barto'k also comes with a crossfeed option as standard.

Barto'k supports all major music codecs including high-resolution PCM and DSD, with user-selectable upsampling. The network streaming section currently runs at up to 24-bit, 384kS/s and DSD128, supporting all major lossless codecs, plus DSD in DoP format and native DSD.

Barto'k plays music through an array of industry-standard USB, AES or S/PDIF digital inputs. It streams over Ethernet from a NAS drive or online music services, and from Apple devices via Airplay. Its network interface performs full MQA decoding and rendering.

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EGGLESTON WORKS, DOSHI, WAY CABLES & PRE AUDIO TURNTABLES

Doshi is a new name to me but are based in Virginia in the US and make a range of amplifiers. The monoblocks used at High End were the V3.0 using the KT150 tube and giving out 160 watts into 4Ohms and weighing in at 75lbs each. Phonostage was also their V3.0 as was the preamplifier.

EgglestonWorks used Munich High end to show off their latest standmounter, the Nico EVO priced at just shy of \$5000 a pair and sporting a 6" woofer and 1" tweeter and a slot port around the rear. Sadly these were not on dem when we were in the room.

Pre Audio supplied the turntables in the room.

Cables for the whole room were provided by Way Cables who launched their new Poetry+ range, including the Poetry+ analogue RCA cable, at Munich 2019.

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MANGER, SCHEU, ZEN SATI & SPL

Turntables by Scheu, Cables by ZenSati and a pre/DAC in the form of the SPL Director Mk2 all feeding their signals into a pair of Manger active loudspeakers. I say it every time we go into this room that it is an oasis of calm in an otherwise hectic show – great sound too! The speakers are Mangers C1 Studio Monitors that have onboard room adaptation filters, near-field/cinema-screen EQ settings, and an input trimming stage controller that can set the two-channel or multi-channel equality to within a tenth of a decibel. It's a two-way system that will go down to 30Hz and has AB amps powering the bass driver at 250W and the tweeter at 180W.

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ZELLATON & YS SOUND

Zellaton may be a new name to many but they have been making speakers in Germany since 1932. The speakers in the picture are their Reference MK2s weighing in at around \$150K. It's a three-way design using a 2" tweeter a 7" mid driver and three 9" bass drivers all in, unusually, a cabinet with an open back. Amplification is by YS Sound in the form of their 1500 W per channel YSS-772 JP monos that weigh 108kg each.

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ENGSTROM, CAD, BIBACORD, VERITY & FRANC AUDIO ACCESSORIES

Computer Audio Design were showcasing their GC-R Reference Ground Control box which contains "a mixture of materials that converts high frequency energy into heat". Loudspeakers are by Verity and the amplifier is ARNE from Engstrom and using 300B tubes.

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DIGITALE AUDIO SYSTEME, WEINER LAUTSPRECHER MANUFAKTUR & WAY CABLES

Now this was an interesting room and sounded very good I thought. The DAS HD-Player Model 2 is a fantastic looking bit of kit that manages to blend the ultra-modern with a retro feel. You add an amp and loudspeakers and off you go. It has a DAC stage that uses 3 toroidal transformers from Lundahl and the dual-mono converter boards are galvanically isolated. Price is from €9000. WLM introduced two new models of loudspeakers at the show – Maximilian and Ferdinand which are both made in Innsbruck. The whole lot was connected by Way cables and there was some interesting reel to reel machines in the room to look at.

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VIVID AUDIO, CH PRECISION, TECH DAS, AGS & ARTESANIA AUDIO

This was a pleasant sounding room and we'd have loved to have been able to have a listen to the new Tech DAS turntable – The Airforce Zero that was launched in Tokyo earlier this and is in the UK via Absolute Sounds.

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TOTEM ACOUSTICS

Vince was also keen to tell us about the Kin Play Bluetooth speakers which you connect to by your phone to play your tunes.

Sadly we couldn't get back to the room for a demonstration of the smaller speakers but were impressed with what we heard.

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NAIM & FOCAL

Naim used High End Munich to launch their new version of the much-loved Mu-so.

Mu-so 2nd Generation evolves the styling of its predecessor, but under its aluminium casing are game-changing performance, feature and functionality upgrades says the UK based legend.

At the heart of Mu-so 2nd Generation is Naim's music-streaming platform, developed by 25 engineers over 3 years and is uniquely found in Naim music-streaming products, such as its Uniti range and dedicated network players, including the £20,000 flagship ND 555.

Mu-so 2nd Generation's 450 Watts of music power are joined by all-new speaker drivers – optimised in conjunction with Focal, and Naim's Vervent Audio associate; more than 10 times more processing power for "even greater musical accuracy, and a re-engineered cabinet design to further enhance bass delivery". It will stream music in high-resolution (up to 32bit/384kHz) via UPnP/DLNA, or AirPlay 2 (including Apple Music), Spotify Connect, TIDAL, Chromecast built-in and Internet radio. Upgraded Wi-Fi connectivity promises a slicker streaming experience, while Ethernet remains an option, which would suggest that all bases are covered by Mu-so 2G - you can also add a USB drive to pop in your hard-drive. There is also the addition of HDMI ARC, to allow easy connection to TVs for films and games. "In its 45 years, Naim has both created and recreated product categories - all in our founding quest for the most authentic musical experience. Mu-so was the first truly high-quality wireless music speaker; five years on we've re-engineered 95% of it to develop Mu-so

2nd Generation, and redefined what's possible from a one-box system", says Naim Audio MD, Charlie Henderson. Mu-so 2nd Generation has a new touch control panel ringed by an illuminated dial with a proximity sensor: it lights up in welcome as a hand approaches which is a cool feature. It has easy access key playback controls, favourite playlists and radio stations, Spotify resume, multiroom functionality and more from this tactile new interface.

The system has an aluminium casing, in a new burnished grey finish, fronted by a new style of speaker grille - supplied in black as standard, but also available in Terracotta, Olive or Peacock colourways.

Mu-so 2nd Generation works on its own or as part of a multiroom music set-up. There are three ways to make it multiroom: combine it with other networked Naim products (including 1st Generation Mu-so and Mu-so Qb) via the updated Naim app; with other AirPlay 2-compatible wireless speakers via the Apple Home app; or with other Chromecast devices via groups controlled by the Google Home app.

Available for iOS and Android devices, the updated Naim app allows you to browse by artist, genre, album and more, complete with artwork and extended music information. You can also control volume, light settings, room modes and create playlists. As a further option, Mu-so 2nd Generation is Room Ready, too.

Mu-so 2nd Generation will be available from a wide range of retailers from 9th May, priced £1299/\$1599/€1499.

Focal, celebrating 40 years, used High End Munich to show and tell us about their SPECTRAL 40th & SCALA 40th.

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Spectral 40th is made in France and is equipped with the K2 Power cone and Focal's pure Beryllium tweeter. Spectral 40th is a 3-way bass-reflex loudspeaker with what Focal are calling a neo-retro style.

Scala 40th is a very limited edition (4 pairs only) of the Scala Utopia Evo 3-way floorstanding loudspeaker. To celebrate its 40 years in business, Focal has chosen to adorn this made in France product with a Black Silver finish.

Not at the show, but we were told about Focal's teams having always been committed to Car Audio and have put cars centre stage as well, by designing F40th. This unique kit includes Flax sandwich cone speaker drivers and a pair of pure Beryllium inverted dome tweeters: major Focal innovations, designed, developed and manufactured in Focal's workshops. A 5-channel amplifier and an 8-way audio processor (DSP) for electronics complete the kit.

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AUDIO SOLUTIONS

Lithuanian brand AudioSolutions is headed up by Gediminas Gaidelis and used the High End show to launch their Virtuoso loudspeaker concept. The speaker sits between the Figaro and Vantage range of speakers with regards price. Virtuoso has two 7.5" woofers, a 6.5" midrange driver and a 1.2" tweeter. The midrange covers 500-7000Hz. Interestingly Virtuoso has three different crossovers which the listener can choose between. The version we got to listen to was the he middle-sized pair, Virtuoso M, which retails at 25000€ and we both thought it sounded excellent. Claimed frequency response is down to 25Hz and it is 92dB sensitive making it an easy to drive speaker. It has a 3cm silk dome tweeter, a 16.5cm hard pulp paper mid driver and a pair of 19cm hard pulp paper bass drivers. It stands 1240mm tall and weighs 75kg.

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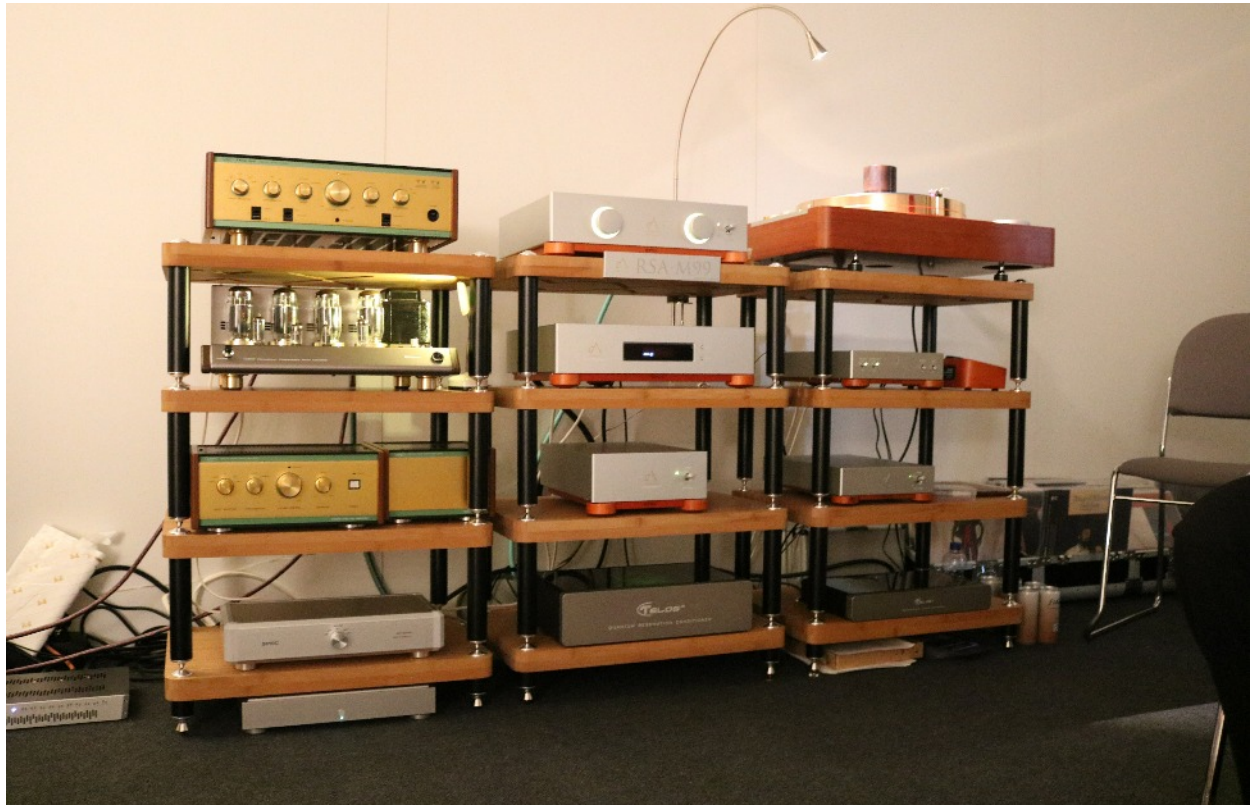


AUDIO HUNGARY

I have a soft spot for Audio Hungary's products and we own one of their i20 amplifiers which sounds fantastic – and I really ought to write a review of it. What caught my eye was the Qualiton MC which has an output level of 5mV and a frequency response of 5 to 90kHz and it can be factory tunes to individual needs.

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SPEC & LEBEN

I really liked this room and the SPEC kit looks fabulous in an understated kind of way. Leben, we didn't get to hear any, has a very distinctive look and has plenty of fans.

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LINE MAGNETIC & SUPRAVOX

Line Magnetic was founded in 2005 by two brothers, both audiophiles and both passionate about tubes and specifically American achievements of the 50s. The company produce amps, speakers and spare parts.

Supravox is based in France and makes a wide range of speakers, wid-band drive units as well as loudspeaker kits.

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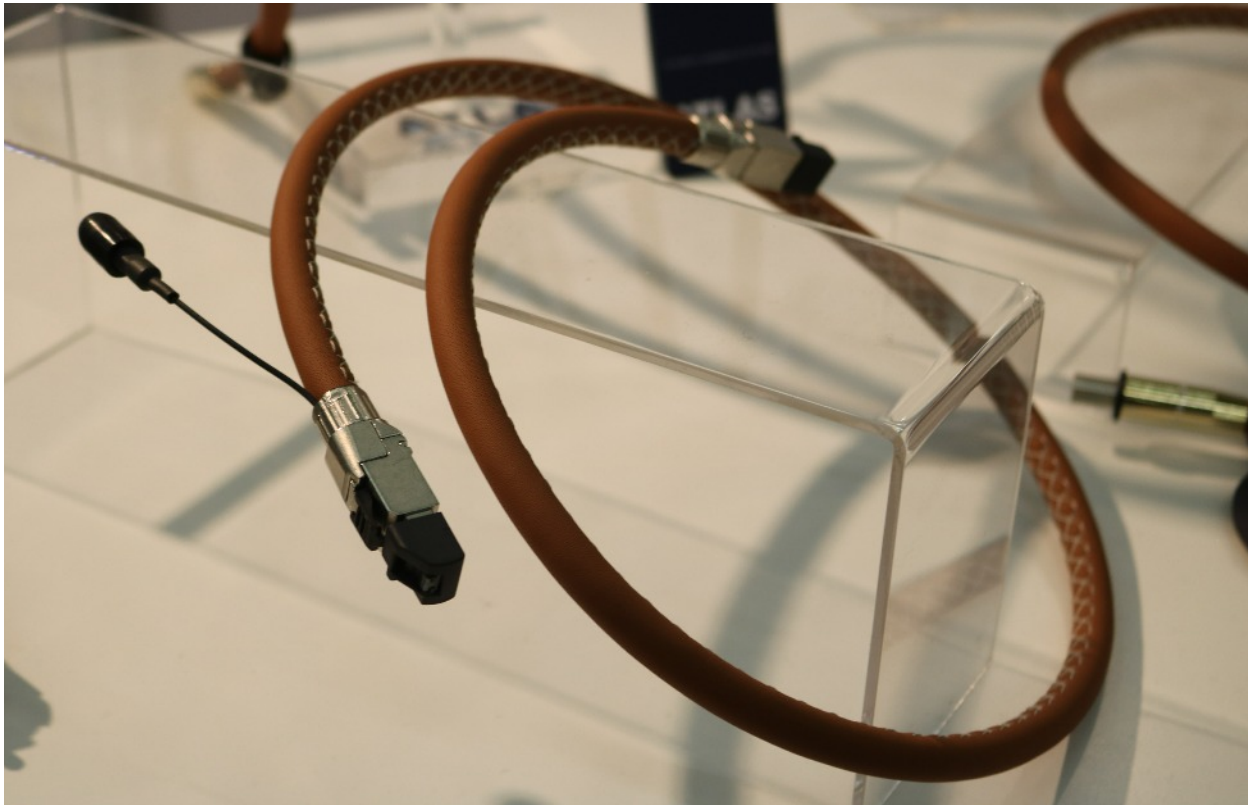


ARIES CERAT

Now this was a stunningly good room, if a little difficult to photograph. Aries Cerat had the world premier of their six-chassis Aries Cerat Achilleas SET amplifier and was driving their Symphonia horn speakers, and paired with their new bass horn, the Erevus model S. Pre-amplifier was their Impera Reference, showcasing the brand's Inverted Triode technology. For music streaming they had the Pink Faun 2.16x server, which is equipped with the latest OCXO clock technology and the Cassandra Series two chassis Signature DAC.

Rui Borges was demonstrating their latest turntable, the Pendulum 2 through the Aries Cerat Talos Signature phono system - another World premiere. This new development in phono pre-amplification was paired with the Top Wing Red Sparrow cartridge. The system also featured isolation platforms from Stacore who we first came across at Munich a few years ago and Signal Projects provided power and signal cables.

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ATLAS CABLES

Scottish cable manufacturer used High End Munich to launch a number of innovative new cables to add to their ever growing range. Martin and Kevin were keen to show off their new Atlas streaming cables, the Atlas Mavros Luxe streaming cable, their EOS DD power cables, a new Mavros Luxe USB cable and Mavros tonearm and turntable cables.

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LAB 12

LAB12 always have a well put together and clean looking stand at Munich High End which reflects the clean and modern/retro feel of their products. As well as their full range of products, including the melto2 phono-pre-amplifier that we gave our highest accolade in a recent review, LAB12's Stratos Vichos was keen to show of the Greek company's latest DAC, the DAC1 Reference which has two coaxial inputs, an optical input and a USB input allowing for playback of hi-resolution files and DSD. I can't help but think the prices LAB12 charge for their products is on the low side for such well done products.

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ACOUSTIC SIGNATURE

Impressive German turntables based on sound engineering practices. We've heard these at close quarters when we visited them and they are very good indeed.

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LAWRENCE AUDIO AND KRONOS

Coming from Taiwan Lawrence Audio partnered with TLA for their amps and used a Kronos turntable. As well as their flagship Dragon speakers they unveiled their new Harp loudspeakers. The Kronos turntable is a thing of wonderment as I've stated in previous show reports and in this room the whole came together really well, though I'd love to hear the system playing something a little "heavier".

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LAMPIZATOR, NODAL, AUDIONEC & JADIS

Audionec were showing off their brand-new speaker range, EVO which was paired with Nodal Audio's power distributor, the LMP-1 Opera, and their power and speaker cables called "Rhapsody".

The new AudioNec Evo Speaker line uses their new wide-band driver "Duopole DS". The Audionec Evo range is a modular speaker system and they offer four levels, ranging from less than 20,000€. In essence users can start off by buying the basic system and add to it later. The entry level kit uses passive crossovers that allow for bi-amping whereas the AS iteration offer active subs (AS) that use active crossovers and amps to power them and, if desired the woofers in the main speakers.

The Signature versions implement the AudioNec DSPV4 which offers system optimisation, acoustic room correction, digital crossovers and low amplification needs. The listening system used French brand Jadis' JA 80 MKII Amplifiers and the wonderful Lampizator Pacific DAC.

I've often said that systems using Lampizator DACs at shows have been the best of show, or up there with the best of show and so this room had a lot to live up to. I needn't have worried as it sounded fab on the day. The speakers I had particular concern about given their unusual design, but again I needn't have worried!

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AUDION, GRAHAM SLEE AND SONIC VOICE

Graeme from Audion was keen to show off his new amplifier based on the EL34 tube and which whose prototype was still being finished only hours before the start of the High End Munich show. The new integrated power amps are the AUDION LIGNUM OCTO & QUADDRA.

The all new Lignum (latin for wood) range of Audion Power Amplifiers includes the 8 valved Single Ended EL34 OCTO and the 4 valved Single Ended Quaddra integrated full width power amplifier. The Lignum range includes a 5 Channel passive pre-amplifier and are self auto biased.

Using a full internal aluminium chassis with an oak or walnut frame (made from sustainable wood), The Lignum range will feature a choice of black chrome top plate and knob or high gloss black crystal pearl top plate and knob. These amps are of hand built and hard wired using a newly designed single ended output transformer (wound in house).

Audion say they chose single ended topology purely for the quality of sound reproduction. The 4 valve Quaddra gives approx. 22 watts per channel and the Octo gives approx. 44 watts in pure class A.

They have 5 stereo line level inputs as well as a tape through port (unattenuated).

"Our greatest motivation producing the Lignum range was to make a range of Single Ended amplifiers with a completely different and more natural, organic look and feel as we did

with our Special Edition range, we again called in the help of Dutch designer Marko Schregardus who helped us perfect the natural organic wood look we had in mind." mentioned Graeme from Audion. These amps are due for official launch on 1st Sept. 2019

Graham Slee is based in the same town that I come from in Yorkshire, England and has a great reputation for producing well priced kit that performs well beyond its price-point - indeed for phono-stages you'd be hard pressed to do better at the relatively low prices he charges.

Sonic Voice had a new platter mat on show, one that is made of a combination of man-made and natural materials.

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COCKTAIL AUDIO

Cocktail Audio are distributed in the UK by SCV and make very good media servers and rippers – we use one of their older models in our mid-priced system, but expect a review of the updated versions very soon on Hifi Pig.

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ACOUSTIQUE QUALITY & KR AUDIO

This was an impressive sounding room with both company's hailing from the Czech Republic. The speakers are the top of the line AQ Passion, a three-way speaker with bass reflex enclosure. The baffle is an asymmetrical shell consisting of a proprietary sandwich laminated wood-fibre material with internal damping and uses Scan-Speak drivers; The tweeter is a 1" Illuminator high frequency driver with a field of six neodymium magnets, there is an SD-2 with its own acoustic chamber and it has an integrated aluminium phase plug. It has an SD-3, where the magnetic field is generated by neodymium magnet. The 3D sculpted baffle below the midrange features 10" Revelator bass driver that is a carbon fibre reinforced paper cone.

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FEZZ AUDIO & PYLON

Great sound need not cost a King's ransom and this pairing prove it. The red amp on the rack and which I heard is the Silver Luna Prestige from Fezz and costs a not unreasonable €1990 whilst the Polk speakers are their Ruby 20s costing €999. Sound was very good for this level of outlay I thought.

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JERN

If you do not know Jern then you are in for a real treat as they use cast iron for their cabinets and used High End Munich to introduce their all new sub-woofer, which is essential for many of their speakers which, whilst imaging superbly, are limited in their low frequency output. PrimaLuna from the US supplied the electronics to feed the speakers and the turntable is from SOTA – the one in the main room is the Cosmos Eclipse retailing at \$8500.

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AERON

The world needs more people like Lawrence from Aeron, he's a real character and is passionate about bringing great quality audio to the masses – we have his little pre and amp here for review at the moment. He chose High End Munich to show off a new and budget pair of two way loudspeakers but what he was really excited about sharing with us was the HDP-1 which Lawrence described as being "Magic!". It features a CSR8675 chipset with BT version 5 and supports aptX HD. Sample frequency support is up to 96kHz and it can pair with two Bluetooth receiving devices in TX mode and supports True Wireless Stereo on RX mode. It has optical ins and outs and supports USB audio on input mode. We will bring you more news and hopefully a review as and when we have more information.

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LIEDSON

Liedson are a new French brand and their products certainly look very interesting...I think the woman in the room was a little taken aback when I conversed in French with her. They produce DACs and streamers and the name comes from the combination of the word "Lied" (German piece of music) and the word "son" (means sound in French). The idea came to Gil Aguilera to create a small Streamer to listen to music downloaded from CDs which was of high quality, easy to connect, easy to use and compatible with most software. He commented "We started the company in May 2018 although the project commenced in 2014. Our first audio server was made in 2006." Gil Aguilera is passionate about audio acoustics and he creates all his own products. He has a background in electroacoustics and he worked as an acoustic engineer. Also, he is an artist and as a painter and sculptor, design and materials are very important in the design of his products and this shines through with the aesthetic.

The Liedsonoffer is based on audio server combining four functions with a synergy effect: audio server + DAC + streamer + CD ripper with the principles of design being:

Zéro "noise" (with the electric signal),

Robust power supplies,

Custom circuit board design,

Twin materials creating a beautiful chassis,

The importance of clock selection is a key issue to the overall performance of their DAC.

ORATORIO is composed of two materials with an organic concrete frame or aluminium for the chassis and a solid wood cover which gives it a very attractive and distinctive appearance and it can be combined, as here, with the Liedson "ODÉON" power amplifier.

The modular design of the PCB is upgradable and is part of Liedson's desire to combat obsolescence and gives it a lifespan of well over 8 years. Handily the company has also developed their own Liedson PLAY application to control their devices.

I'd have like to have had more time to sit and listen but what I heard was very good.

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YG ACOUSTICS

YG Acoustics unveiled a brand-new speaker named Vantage for the first time in Europe at the High End show, it's a compact three-way loudspeaker and is slotted between the American brand's Carmel 2 and Hailey 2. They are fully passive and have a sensitivity of 87 dB, weigh 72kg each and have a US MSRP of \$32,000. It's time to sit and listen but what I heard was very good.



THALES, EMT & TONARM

The turntable is the TTT-Compact II in Silver with a battery drive system, the tonearm is the Thales Statement and the cartridge is the EMT JSD VM with variable mass body.

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AVANTGARDE ACOUSTIC

This room is always a highlight of the show and regular readers will know that we use the company's Duo XDs in our main system. This room always draws a good crowd of people and is always uber-cool.

In previous years we've seen the German brand bring out the big guns in the form of the Trios and Bass Horns but today when we went in the room we were treated to the smaller Uno XDs which, despite their size, had no problems filling this large room with beautiful sound.

Whenever we think of Avantgarde we always immediately talk about their loudspeakers but they also make a full range of preamplifier and power amplifiers – and very good they are too. Pictured driving the Uno XDs are their XA Power amp offering up a healthy 150 Watts per channel and costing €12500 each.

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AVID HIFI

AVIDHifi always use Munich to bring out new products and this year was no exception.

First up we have the Ruby Reference, a low output MC cartridge using a solid and flawless solid ruby cantilever, a modified micro-ridge diamond stylus profile and an AVID designed and manufactured body.

Also launched at High End were AVID's EVO loudspeakers which are developed from their Reference models but using alternative materials. Conrad Mas says that they have been designed to be efficient and easy to drive and come with real wood veneers, low-Iron glass and military grade Aluminium finishes. All the designs use downward firing ports. There are three speakers in the range; Evo Two (a 3-way), Evo Three (A 2.5-way) and Evo Four a 2-way stand-mounter.

Finally AVID introduced Integra, their second integrated amplifier which joins the company's SIGSUM and shares many of its design philosophies. Output is 110w into 8Ohms and it has onboard phono-stage, four RCA line ins and an RCA line out. It weighs in at 25kg.

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GRYPHON

This was definitely one of the highlights of the show for me with the system on dem being effortlessly powerful, dynamic and ever so detailed in its presentation. Sadly we turned up late for the dem but thanks to the guys from this fab Danish company for allowing us to sneak in at the back and thanks to Rune for such a great demonstration. One track that played Rune mentioned was his favourite Jazz track – Voodoo something or other – and whilst not my cup of tea musically, certainly showed the system off to great effect.

Making its European debut was the Ethos CD Player – yes, a high-end company launching a new CD player. Like I've been banging on about for ages, CD still has plenty of life in it still. The Ethos has been designed by Gryphon Founder Mr. Flemming Erik Rasmussen and the inside has been configured by the Gryphon product development team, headed by Chief Engineer Tom Moller. Gryphon say that they created the Ethos integrated CD player to be a moving target in the rapid evolution of digital audio. In addition to handling standard 16-bit/44.1 kHz "Redbook" CD, the Ethos offers convenient playback and can be connected to external sources up to 32-bit/384 kHz PCM and up to DSD512. The Gryphon Ethos is fully balanced throughout the digital DAC domain as well, implementing eight DAC's in full dual differential mode. NICE!!!

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FALCON ACOUSTICS

Falcon Acoustics has been famous for loudspeakers for nearly 50 years, and are perhaps best known for producing faithful and licensed reproductions of the classic BBC LS3/5a loudspeaker that is beloved by many an audiophile.

At Munich High End Show Falcon Acoustics debuted their new V Series loudspeakers which we heard on demonstration in their sound cabin along with the Falcon Acoustics Active LS3/5a Reg D/TM. Falcon have been developing their Graphene Cone technology for speaker cones first seen the Falcon Reference (now in production), and the V Series which is scheduled for release in September uses an all-new Twaron® /Graphene composite cone exclusively developed and manufactured in-house by Falcon Acoustics.

The all new HP.80 is a 2-way floor vented system deploying twin Falcon Acoustics hand-moulded 180mm (7.0") Twaron®/Graphene Enhanced Nano-Platelet Composite Cone bass units, partnered with a 28mm dome Tweeter with profiled loading. The V Series takes its design cues from the British aircraft industry whilst the cabinets are hand-built in Italy. I managed a good listen in booth which I had all to my self and enjoyed the speed and accuracy of the speakers.

Falcon partnered with Balanced Audio Technology who were at Munich for the first time and used their 300 watts-per-channel, dual mono balanced design with Super Pak power supply.

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MARTIN LOGAN, VPI & PASS LABS

What a treat this room was, not only because of the fantastic kit on offer but mostly because of having the chance to catch up with Matt from VPI and to meet his legendary dad Harry. In fairness we didn't speak much about HiFi and spent the time taking snaps and talking family.

The new VPI turntable is the HW 40, named after Harry Weisfeld and was officially launched towards the end of 2018 and costs around \$15K with an arm and is directly driven. Speakers on the day were the awesome, I've heard them a few times now, Martin Logan Neolith driven by Pass Labs monos. Splendid!



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MELCO & CHORD COMPANY

Melco took the opportunity at High End to launch their new N10. The Melco N10 is housed in two units, each chassis 215mm wide, half the width of conventional Hifi components. The Head Unit contains all the processing electronics and the data connectivity. The Power Unit contains a low noise linear power supply and power management. Side by side the two units are the same size as conventional Hifi. The casing is the same size as the Melco D100 CD loader and the E100 Expansion drive. Internal storage is 3TB HDD. Easily expandable by either IT USB HDD or the Melco E100. Additional E100's increases capacity in steps of 3TB. A USB connected DAC allows the N10 to perform as a self-contained local HiRes Digital Music player. Data rates up to 32bit 384kHz and Octo DSD are supported. All Gapless and with Melco Markerless DSD fully supported. Price €7500 / £6750.

They also had the N100 at the show. The N100 has an internal storage is 2TB HDD which is again easily expandable by either IT USB HDD or the Melco E100 and again a USB connected DAC allows the N100 to perform as a self-contained local HiRes Digital Music player. Data rates up to 32bit 384kHz and Octo DSD are supported. All Gapless and with Melco Markerless DSD fully supported. Control of the USB-DAC player is from the new Melco App, from the front panel, or from approved third-party RF Remote handset N100 will operate with both USB DAC and also Ethernet connected player even without connection to a data network, in standalone Isolated Mode Price €2000 / £1800. The N100 was being powered by a separate power supply called Booster.

British cable manufacturer Chord Company were also well represented at the show with a great display of a wide range of their cables.



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KEF & HEGEL

KEF always put on a great show at Munich High End and today was no exception with their brand ambassador Johan Coorg doing a great job. Highlights in this great sounding room was Johan playing a recording made of a record (Ghost Riders In The Sky) that Harry Weisfeld had bought off Ebay for a couple of dollars and then transferred to an electronic file and popped onto a USB stick.

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FISCHER & FISCHER, ACCUSTIC ARTS & MUDRA AKUSTIK

This room was very well put together and sounded great to boot. The uber cool amps from Accustic Arts were feeding into a pair of Fischer and Fischer SN370 AMT loudspeakers. These are a bass-reflex design which the company say will go down to 36 Hz and use an Air Motion Transformer for the top end. If you haven't heard a speaker using the AMT driver then get yourself in front of a pair, it brings something very special to the party.

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AUDIO PHYSIC, LYNCDORF & ODXOS

Audio Physic used the show to showcase their new Midex loudspeakers

We reviewed the XO/One music server recently and gave it a Highly recommended gong with Dan Worth summing up the review with the following conclusion: "I can't inform you of what recipe of hardware components or software the team at xodos use to produce the xolone, all I can do is speculate that they are built and configured in such a way that it reflects the intentions of an individual or individuals that understand how music should sound.

The voicing within the xolone is simply moving! It's not a cheap product by any means coming in at £7500 but I have heard units costing more which just do not stack up in terms of tonal accuracy, soundstage shape, overall realism or form and function.

The app is an absolute joy to use and again is so thoughtfully presented that it just ties the entire package together, complimenting aural appeal with visual appeal. The physical unit isn't too shabby looking either! A very heavy for a streamer design, made from thick panels of aluminium, keeping everything rigid and vibration free. The single captive touch sensitive front button, cool looking led lit X branding and top-quality rear connectors from Furutech, Neutrik and WBT are sweet little cherries on top of a delicious cake.

I urge anybody with a system warranting a streamer of this ability to get some hours under their belt with one. If you have strongly considered streaming but are afraid of typical digital and pride your turntable as the one and only source, then give the xolone a try, you may be surprised!"

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PATHOS, EXPOSURE & MOFI

A lot going on in this busy room with Exposure showing off their XM CD CD player at €1499, XM3 phono at €799, XM 5 integrated at €1499, XM7 pre with DAC and MM phono, XM 9 mono amps at €1599 a pair and a headphone/pre amplifier XM HP at €1549. Exposure is a name I recall fondly from my youth but seem to remember them having pretty utilitarian looks – I like the look of the boxes now.

Mofi had a their new phonostage on show. It will handle MM and MC cartridges, operates pure class A, has a sub-sonic filter and a mono mode. Price is €549. They also were showing off their Studio Deck turntable which comes with a 10" tonearm and has a 19mm platter. Price is €1199. Moving up the scale a fraction their Studio Deck +U is pretty much the same but with 10" tonearm and costing €1499. Both are made in the USA.



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SILBATONE

The Silbatone room is always a real treat as they always have the same big room and always go out of their way to put on a show, which invariably involves massive horns. This year was no exception with them having huge Western Electric horns banging out the tunes. It was impressive, but I will never forget this room a few years ago when they played Kraftwerk – it was mind-blowing. In comparison this years Silbatone room seemed a little tame...great, but not mind-blowing

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NAGRA

I read a couple of comments on social media that the Nagra room was poor, with one pundit placing as one of the worst 6 rooms at the show, but when I went in there it was far from poor. Great styling, great sound was the order of the day, though the music choice whilst we were in the room was "a matter of taste", let's say.

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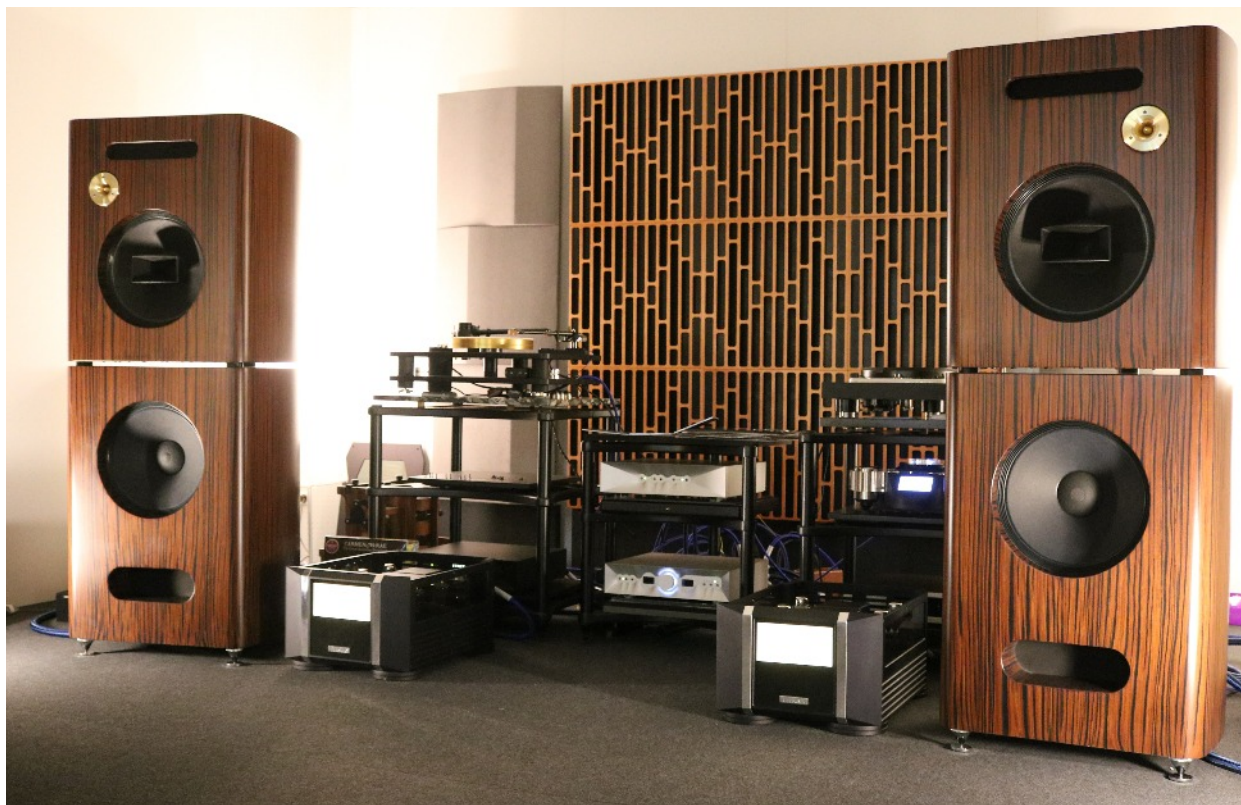
TRIANGLE ART & MURAUDIO

Wowzers, this was some room. Triangle Art were showing off their beautifully finished electronics including the Ultimate TA-350M tube amps. These amps use eight KT88 output tubes, three 6SN7 driver tubes and one 6SL7 rectifier tube (per channel) under Class A push-pull triode mode, the TA-350 is capable to deliver 350 watts of power. The power and output transformers are custom wound in the USA and each of the output and power transformer is potted with epoxy to further eliminate noise and vibration and with better heat dissipation. Biasing for the output tubes can be done using the bias trimmers and measuring points, all easily accessed from the top of the amplifier. The big turntable on the right is the Triangle Art Master Reference that uses a double solid 80mm platter. Construction.

The smaller Hathor turntable has the same design philosophy of its big brother with massive weight. It comes with a hefty solid composite alloy 1" Plinth thick and solid composite alloy 1" platter. Hathor comes with a Jelco TS-350L 12" tone arm pre-install for a customer just want to plug and play. The bearing is made out of aluminium and aluminium shaft with large ground radius which runs on a thrust washer.

Speakers from Muraudio were the SP1 which is an electrostatic design with each speaker having a continuous curve ESL panel with four six-inch cone drivers.

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TROY AUDIO

Troy Audio are an American brand out of Houston, Texas and were showing off their Helena MKII loudspeakers. It's a two-box system per side that is available in a range of natural veneers or special order RAL colours. Driver compliment is a 16" woofer, 16" midrange driver with Alnico magnet and high-frequency compression driver with a custom horn in a coaxial configuration. Overall sensitivity is over 100dB. Price is around the \$100k ballpark.

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ESD

How ESD get the big Dragon system into the booth I will never know but it certainly was impressive. The Dragon system is a five-way design with: Subwoofer S20 Driver+E20 Horn, Woofer S100 Driver+E100 Horn, Mid-range S500 Driver+E500 Horn, Tweeter S2000 Driver, Super Tweeter S8000 Driver, Field Coil Power Supply D08C-1B, and the Opera Frame. The system comes with all its own crossovers and electronics and if you need to ask the price you can't afford it.



However, ESD now make a range of loudspeakers that are somewhat more affordable and in the second of their booths they had playing the Phoenix system, which again is a five-way design with dedicated electronics and crossovers. "Phoenix inherits all the essence of our design philosophy say ESD" with field coil, beryllium diaphragms and horns. Its bass comes from 12" Titanium sandwich cone units that are powered by field coil circuits weighing 70 kilograms each. Driver compliment is SW-1 Subwoofer x3, Woofer T20 Woofer Unit, Mid-range J500 Driver+E500 Horn, Tweeter J2000 Driver, Super Tweeter J8000 Driver. In many ways I kind of enjoyed the Phoenix over and above the Dragon system, feeling that the Dragon was energizing the room just a little too much, but the Phoenix getting it just right and I stayed in this room longer than pretty much anywhere of the show...which is a good sign.

Outside the main booths were static displays of ESD's Crane and Panda systems – I'd love to hear the Cranes against our Avantgarde Duo XDs.

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THORESS, ACOUSTIC MANUFACTURE, ICTRA DESIGN, TEDESKA, UNA CABLES & MERRILL-WILLIAMS

We sat in this room for a good while and really enjoyed the Gentle Giant record that was played, the system allowing all the intricacies of the music to shine out. Add to this the fact that I think the Thorett is some of the best looking audio equipment out there and you are on to a winner.

Turntables were by Merrill-Williams in the shape of the R.E.A.L 101.3. "The most dramatic improvement in turntable design in 30 years!" claim the company adding "The patented R.ubber E.lastomer A.coustic L.aminated controls self-generation and external energies to a degree never before accomplished". Price is around \$9000. Cartridge was by Tedeska and the whole made a very nice noise!

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ROKSAN & MONITOR AUDIO

This was making nice noises in my opinion. We have from Roksan their Xerxes 20 Plus turntable fitted with a SARA tonearm and Shiraz cartridge. There's a Caspian VSC2, black CD player and black integrated amplifier. I remember a few years ago when we visited Roksan in London and the then owner of the company being very excited about the new black range of products and so very good to see them out there in the wild and ready for people to buy.

Speakers were the €5700 Monitor Audio Gold 300s, the top of the company's Gold range of speakers. It's a pretty large cabinet housing a 2½" (64 mm) C-CAM mid-range driver with a MPD high-frequency transducer above and a pair of 8" (203 mm) RDT II bass drivers below, in a true three-way arrangement. It has two rear firing ports and goes as low as 30Hz.

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THORENS

In the run up to High End Munich the Hifi world and the Facebook Reel2reel Tape group on Facebook I run were all atwitter about this new playback only machine from the iconic Swiss manufacturer. Now, unless you have had your head in the sand for the last couple of years, reel to reel is making something of a comeback in audiophile circles. The TM 1600 reel to reel comes in a plinth very similar to that of new TD 1600 series record players (see below) in black high gloss or walnut high gloss. It's designed as playback device for half-track quarter inch tape. It features a tape drive from Ballfinger. TM 1600 handles reels up to 10.5" with 19 and 38 cm/s. It offers CCIR equalisation for European recordings and NAB for America and Asia and both can be selected easily. There will be 100 produced initially and they will be available in the Summer for a euro less than €12000

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SOULINES

Soulines make some great looking and great sounding turntables – we reviewed their Kubrick DCX a few years ago (read it here) and for High End Munich this year they had all of their new products, including the U-base an aluminium made universal equipment platform. The E-base – Acrylic platform, tailor made for their Elgar DCX turntable model, tt clamp and the Loop MM/MC tube phono pre-amplifier. Great to finally meet Igor Gligorov who runs the company.

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HEDD

German company HEDD make studio monitors and for Munich they introduced their HEDDphone which I managed to get a listen to. Sonically the studio heritage is immediately evident and I thought they sounded great – accurate and speedy. They use a variant of the Air Motion Transformer (AMT) which I believe to be a first in the headphone world. HEDDphone® VVT® technology (pat. pending) is a new variable diaphragm geometry that replaces the fixed geometric structure of conventional AMT tweeters.

HEDDphone ONE will be available in late Q3 2019. The price will be well below 2000€.

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QUADRASPIRE

We use a Qudraspire rack in our main system, and very good it is too. The British rack manufacturer had a great display at Munich High End and were keen to show off one of their X-racks in a new colour scheme. I was also lucky enough to be given a pack of their pucks which are designed to go under equipment on conventional furniture and are claimed to give you a lot of what a rack can give you but without the need to have a dedicated Hifi rack. The turntable wall supports particularly caught my eye and plans are in place to get one to Hifi Pig Towers sooner rather than later.

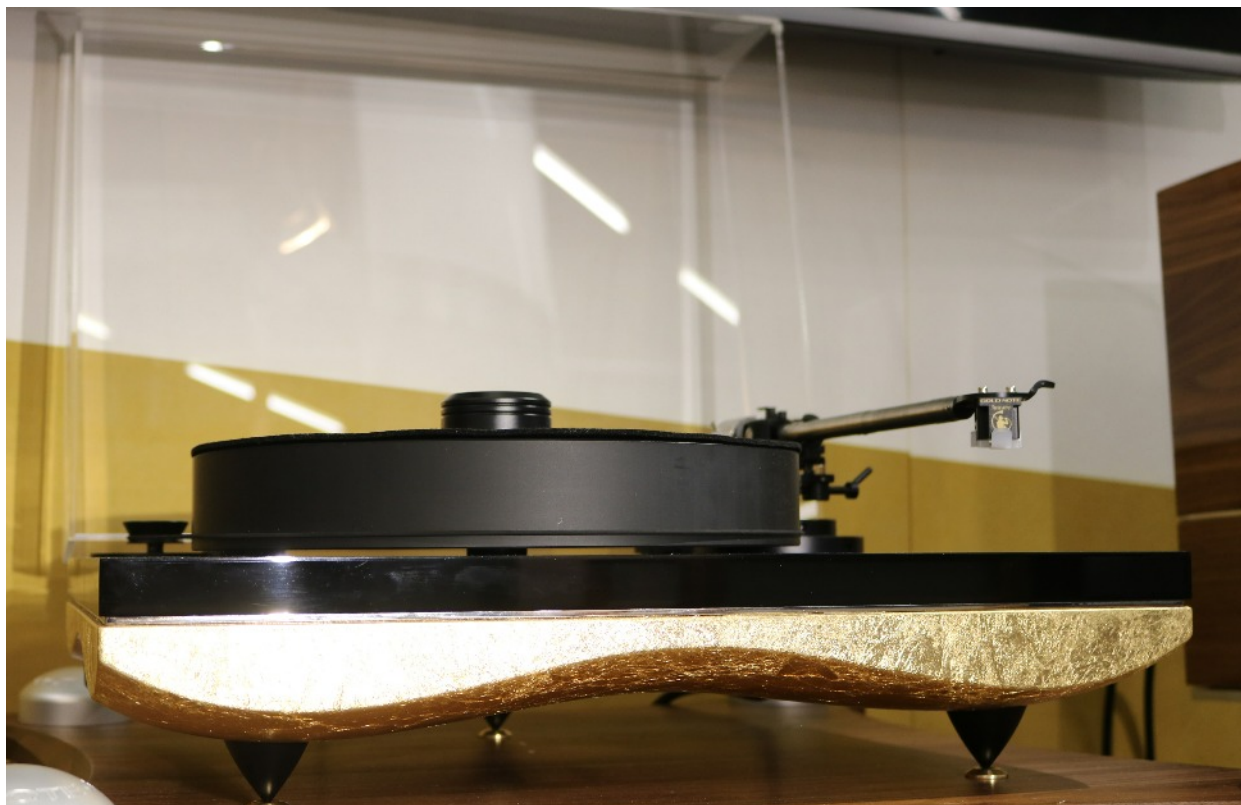
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WESTERN ELECTRIC

The Western Electric 300B is a thing of legendary status in the Hifi world and I'm saving up for a quad of them. The amp you see in this set up is the WE 91E which uses a new proprietary "Class A2 parallel feed current source topology" (patent pending), combined with toroidal output transformers, and microprocessor controlled automatic bias. It will achieve 20Watts a channel which is quite something given that only one pair of 300B tubes is used - the norm is around 8 Watts a channel with PSE configuration doubling this.

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GOLD NOTE

We use a Gold Note Tuscany Red cartridge in our main system, and very good it is too. Janine reviewed their highly flexible phonostage when she reviewed it. They had all of their turntables on show including a gold version of their range-topping Mediterraneo (review imminent on Hifi Pig) which looked fab. They also had there is-1000 one box system on show a review.

The big news from the Italian brand, however, was the launch of their new DS-10 DAC, streamer, preamp and headphone amp which provides a very compact all in one compact source and will be launched properly this Summer. Gold Note say that the DS-10 is designed to cover the needs of the contemporary audiophile completing any audio system offering almost all kind of Internet and Digital connectivity in a convenient elegant shape. DS-10 is an innovative D/A Converter inspired from their top model DS-1000 merging the extended features of IS-1000 All-In-One unit adding more. It's said to be quick to install and easy to use.

DS-10 is a new generation D/A Converter & UPnP, DLNA Streamer created to revolution any audio system being able to browse Web Streaming Players and Digital Sources.

DS-10 can be matched with traditional CD players, TV or Media Servers as well as being compatible with almost all internet services including Roon, Tidal, Qobuz, Airplay, Spotify, Deezer, V-Tuner, from which it can play DSD, PCM & MQA formats. You can connect your devices via Wifi/LAN but also via high definition digital Bluetooth 5.0.



It converts D/A audio via S/PDIF coaxial, TOS-optical, AES asynchronous PCM 24bit/192kHz inputs, one USB-B Host asynchronous for native and DoP DSD64/128 and PCM up to 32bit/384kHz. It also plays directly from HardDisk and USB sticks (FAT32/NTFS) via USB-A.

DS-10 features an On/Off switchable analogue preamp stage synchronized with all the remote control and including a computer App which let the unit always play via the analogue stage, even with web players.

DS-10 features a professional 6.3mm headphone output with a proprietary design which allows selecting the sensitivity to drive almost any kind of headphone on the market.

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APURNA

Luxury French brand Apurna used High End Munich to add a pair of very distinctive loudspeakers to their amplifier range. The speaker is called Carmina and certainly looks very different to any loudspeaker I've seen before. It incorporates the company's patented and disruptive technology: CARS™ - Composite Apurna Resonance System.

Their floor standing design offers endless, bespoke finishing possibilities say the company and the seemingly suspended MTM configuration, centred within a luminous halo is something that sets it apart from a visual perspective.

Apurna say that controlled elasticity of the multilayer composite shell construction coupled to the bass reflex ports and CARS™, allows the energy created by the movement of the bass membranes to be effectively absorbed. The main aim of the design say Apurna is to remove the harmful effects of standing waves inside the speaker with the hope that it makes the speaker cabinet less prone to sound coloration.

I only managed a very quick listen at the show but it sounded fine in the small room.

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DAVIS ACOUSTICS & ESPRIT CABLES

Davis Acoustics are a French loudspeaker manufacturer who have been producing 'Haut Parleurs' since 1986, with distinctive, yellow driver cones. Their motto is that their speakers are 'The sound of today' and they, as ever, were doing a great job. Had a chat with Thomas Grebert, the Commercial Director who thought that we really had visited their city of Troyes in our pink wheelbarrow...I felt bad explaining it had actually been "une blague pour le premier avril".

You may not know the name Esprit but they are making something of a name for themselves in their own country and we know they have their eyes on bigger prizes too.

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AQUA ACOUSTIC QUALITY, KR AUDIO & BLUMENHOFER ACOUSTICS

A cracking room this, a treat for both the eyes and ears with the stunning Blumenhofer horns and mahoosive KR audio tube monoblocks. Aqua were handling the digital side of things with their gear, including the new modular network interface, the LinQ , which launched at the show.

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HIGH END MUNICH 2019



AUDIOVECTOR

Audiovector are a Danish brand that you can count on for a great, clean, accurate sound.

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LYRAVOX

I particularly liked this room, thought the big Lyravox speakers, from Hamburg, made a real visual statement and loved their sound too...exceptionally fast, probably not surprising that they use Accuton drivers. They were demonstrating the new Karl Pure range, which are active.

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ZESTO AUDIO, PURIST AUDIO DESIGN & TRI-PLANAR

Zesto from the USA produces some very nicely designed valve electronics. George and Carolyn Counnas are a lovely pair, they brought their Zesto Leto 1.5 Preamp, EROS Monoblocks, Allasso Step Up Transformer and their new Andros Deluxe Phonostage.

The system featured Purist Audio Design Cables, a Tri-Planar Tonearm on a Merrill-Williams Turntable, Verity Audio Speakers and Stillpoints Racks. The room had a very pure sound, we listened to 'Toy' by Yello....sounded brilliant!

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KHARMA & DCS

Consistently Kharma has one of the best-designed and presented rooms at High End Munich, this year was no different. It felt and sounded opulent and delicious, featuring their huge Enigma Veyron EV 2D loudspeakers.

Electronics were provided by British brand dCS

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NEWTON & EINSTEIN

I didn't really find any info on these brands at the show, but the systems both looked very cool and sounded good, particularly the smaller system...the little standmounts were great!

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J. SIKORA & HORNS

A very cool Polish room. Always amazed how they manage to get such a great sound in this little room. The system consisted of the 100kg plus Bronze Edition of their J.Sikora Standard Max turntable armed with two J.Sikora KV12 tonearms. Albedo Silver cables and Egg Shell Audio electronics completed the line-up.

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AIR TIGHT, WOLF VON LANGA & PRIMARY CONTROL

Air Tight amplifiers were next door with Wolf Von Langa loudspeakers and Primary Control turntables, who were featuring their Field Coil Loaded Tonearm (yes I had to check). They were playing some kind of throat singing music that, whilst a little off the wall, sounded fantastic.

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PUREAUDIOPROJECT

PureAudioProject are known for their open baffle loudspeakers, they have a fantastic sound. The huge pair on show were the Quintet15 using Voxativ AC-4a drivers. This year at Munich they were partnering with a room full of brands. German Elrog tubes were on show in the Vinylsavor Thomas Mayer amplifiers. The EXD DAC looked really different.

The Hanss turntables were very nice indeed too. A great sound in, again, what could be a challenging room, with a very enthusiastic team led by Ze'ev of PureAudioProject.



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KEITH MONKS

Next door was another Air Tight system, but Keith Monks was also in there with his newly launched compact and home-friendly record cleaning machine, the sub £800, Prodigy Vinyl Revival. It fits on a shelf and has glowing lights built in...very cool!

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METRONOME KALISTA

I scooted back round to see Jean Marie from French High End brand Metronome. He had promised surprises, which indeed we got, with the prototype of their new turntable...quite a departure from a brand known for their digital gear. They also launched the cAQWO DAC and tAQWO SACD transport. The system also featured their own speakers. Classic French elegance with a twist.

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ESTELON

And speaking of elegance, Estonian High End speaker brand, Estelon, didn't disappoint either. Again, this brand works with Accuton to develop their drivers. The finish on their new Forza speakers is as beautiful as the sound. Gorgeous.

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CREDO

Credo of Switzerland brought their new speaker model, The Cinema LTM, to the High End Show. These huge speakers look like things might get a bit complicated with all of those drivers, but they were very enjoyable to listen to indeed. Also featured in this room were a VPI Industries Avenger plus turntable with a VPI Fatboy Tonearm, Van den Hul cartridges, phonostage, preamp, power amp and cables and EMM Labs DAC2X.

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LIVING VOICE

The new Vox Basso compact subwoofer design partnered with the Vox Palladian in the main system, along with vintage Kondo electronics, Grand Prix Audio Monaco 2.0 turntable with a Kuzma 4-point tonearm plus a second tonearm in the form of the Viv Labs RF7". The digital source was their LV CD30. 'Off grid' power was supplied by the Living Voice Pure Music battery power supply system.

Unfortunately, I didn't get chance to hear Living Voice's new R25A loudspeaker, which celebrates the 25th Anniversary of their Auditorium loudspeaker, but their most affordable model was apparently getting a lot of interest from dealers and the public alike.

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KONDO AND KAWERO

Kondo and Kawero (from Kaiser Acoustics) were in their usual spot and that pairing of Japanese valve electronics and German speakers was rather excellent. The sound was pretty perfect, controlled but with great bass. Taking a peek around the back of the Kawero Grande loudspeakers, which are the brand's new flagship that were launching at the show, it was obvious why. The copper clad beauties have a 15 inch sub in the back.

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GAUDER AKUSTIK

Gauder Akustik had a seriously cool room with the gorgeous aluminium loudspeakers of their new DARC series in combination with Westend Audio tube amplifiers. They sounded fantastic and the static displays also looked great. Very stylish.

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SOULUTION

Soulution presented a room of understated, Swiss style. Their new 525 Preamplifier was launched at the show.

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BRINKMANN, HRS & VANDERTSEEN

I do like Vandersteen loudspeakers, from the USA. These were their Model Seven paired with the Sub Nine subwoofers. Worked well with Brinkmann's electronics and turntable. HRS were responsible for the racks and isolation.

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HIGH END MUNICH 2019

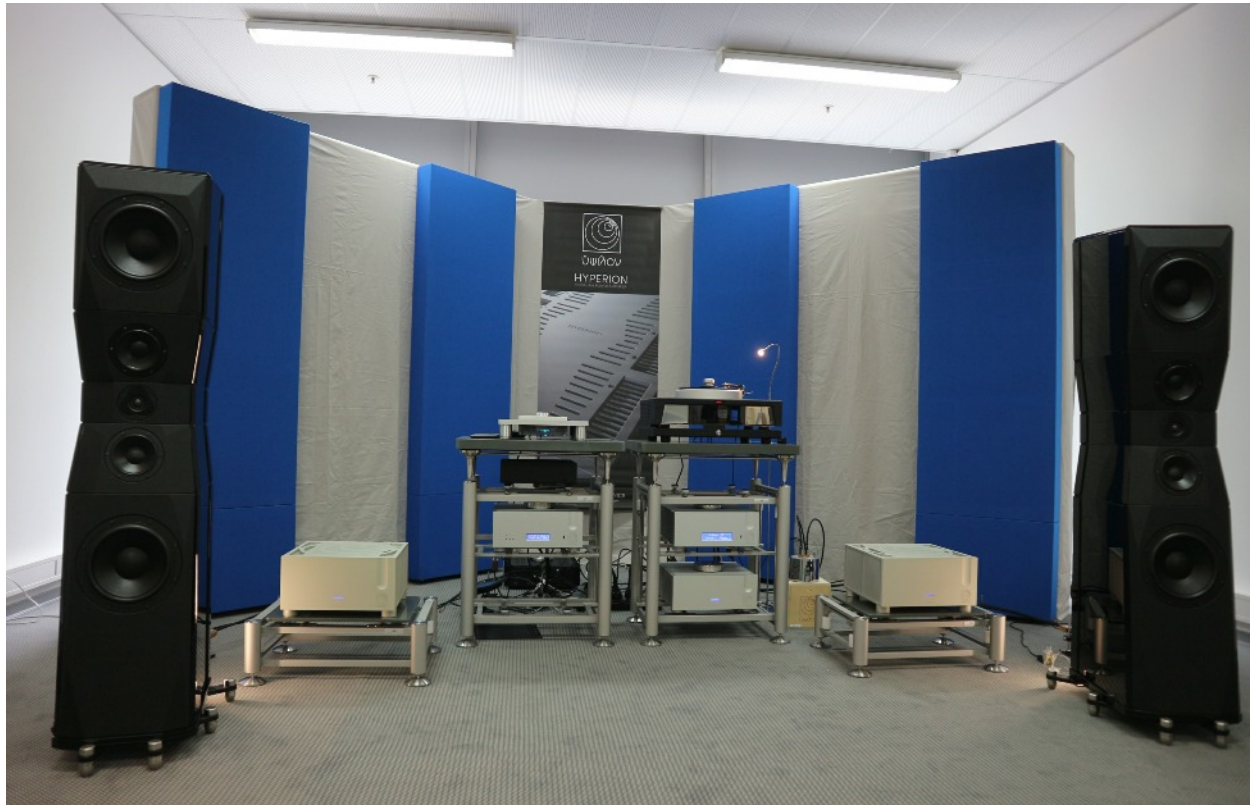


WOD AUDIO

WOD are a German High End Hifi Shop who sell some very impressive brands. My head was, of course, turned by the lovely Cessaro Alpha II horn loudspeakers. Ypsilon provided the amplification and there was a Bergmann Galder turntable and Odin tonearm for vinyl duties, with a Miyajima Destiny cartridge...it really sounded rather lovely. They also had the iFi Team in there with loads of gear, including the brand new Aurora all-in-one system that we went to the launch of on the Thursday night. It was proving very popular!

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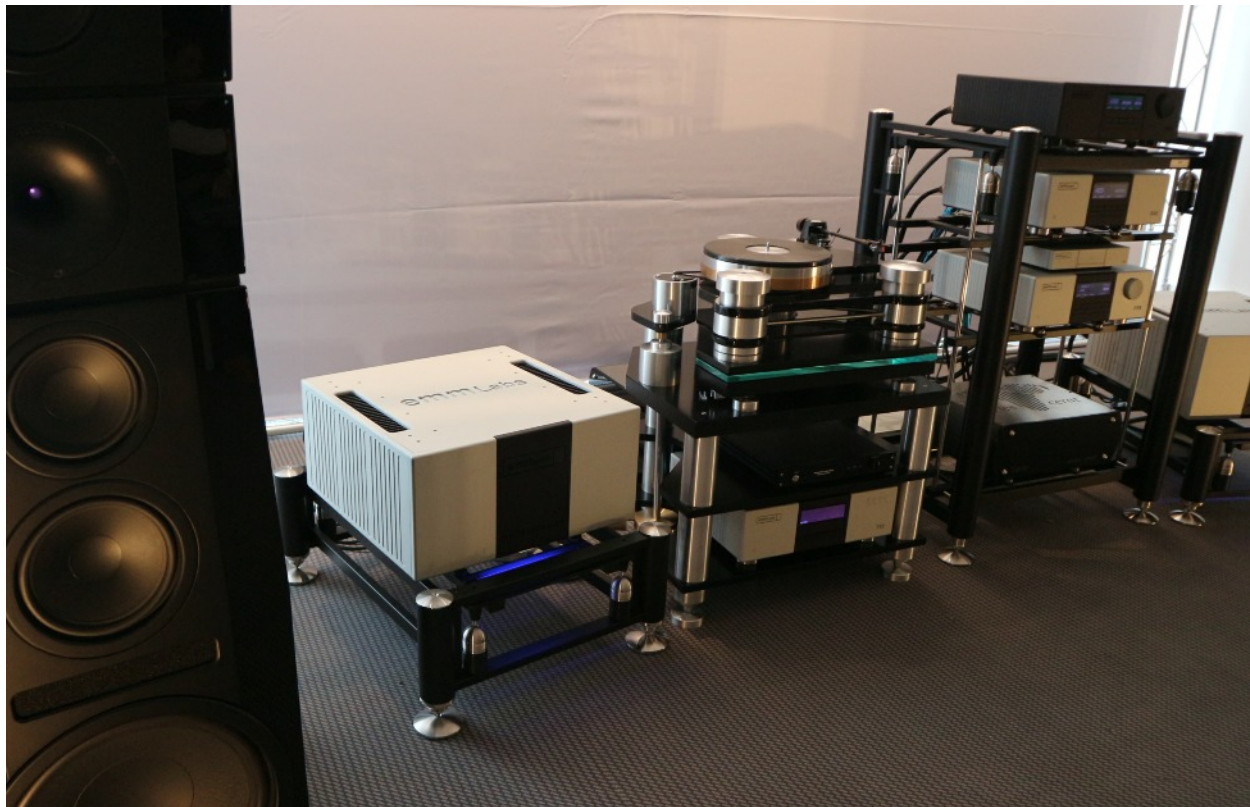
HIGH END MUNICH 2019



YPSILON

Greek brand Ypsilon also had their own room where they were launching their brand new cables.

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LANSCH & EMM LABS

Lansche loudspeakers with EMM Labs was another great sounding room. EMM Labs had a full set up of their gear including the new EMM NS1 Network Streamer.

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NORDOST

Nordost cables had a very popular room, YG provided the speakers.

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GOBEL HIGH END

Making a real impact was Gobel High End, lovely sound from a huge pair of speakers, their Divin Noblesse, and electronics from Engström (MONICA preamp and ERIC mono amps). Wadax were providing the digital end of things with their Atlantis DAC, Atlantis server and Atlantis transport. Vinyl duties were handled by Kronos.



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FINK TEAM

Karl-Heinz from Fink is a great guy who makes some rather nice loudspeakers, in fact, they were also the 'poster star' of the High End Show this year as they featured with Steve Wilson on the banners.

Borg sounded fantastic and the new finishes looked stunning too. Unusual in a good way and certainly distinctive. There was the perfect balance of power and detail to the sound, not least thanks to the AMT tweeter. Since it's launch at last year's High End, Borg has been appearing at shows all around the world and whenever we have heard them we have been very impressed. Definitely a speaker I could live with.

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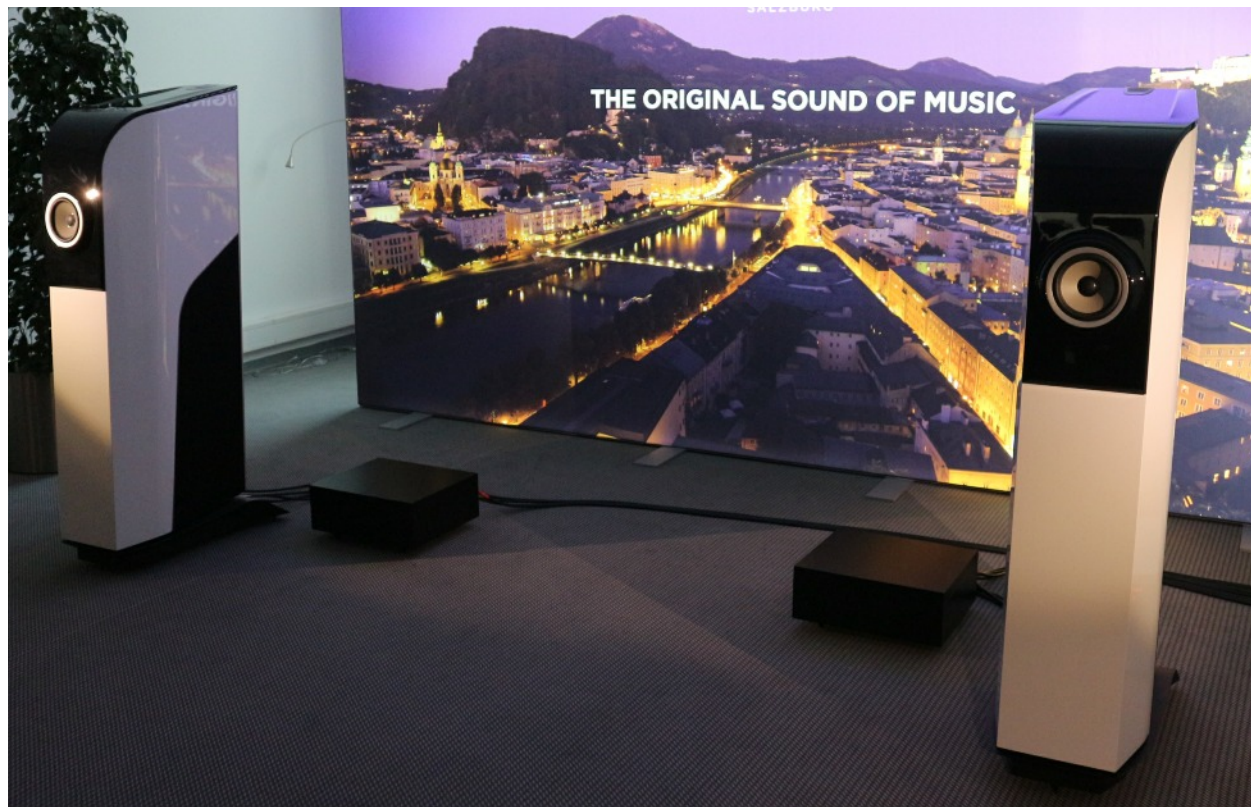


CLASSE

Montreal based brand, Classé, returned to the High End Show this year with a whole load of new gear. This was the European launch of their Delta series of pre, power and mono amplifiers. The big, black boxes had a distinctive look and the sound in the room was very enjoyable too. They range in price from £10k for the pre up to £12.5 for the stereo amp and will go into production this summer. The speakers were the FinkTeam WM4, the big brother of Borg.

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AUDIODATA

Saltzberg based Audiodata exhibited Soultion Audio's amplifiers and Toneart's turntable combined with their passive Master One loudspeakers. The Master One are a very elegant looking and sounding three-way speaker.

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WILSON AUDIO

A fitting tribute to Dave Wilson, who died last year, was the Wilson Sasha DAW. His son Daryl Wilson, redesigned the Sasha, which, with a starting price just under £40,000, features trickle down technologies from the WAMM Master Chronosonic flagship. Sounding great with Pass, Aurender, dCS and EMM Labs.

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MAGICO

Magico had the new A Series on static display and then their system was running the M2 floorstanders that launched at the end of last year. Coming in at just under £70k, they had a very understated look and a clean, well presented sound.

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CESSARO

Cessaro had one of the most striking rooms, this one featured their Beta II in a delicious, dark cherry-red, with huge bass horns. Everything was styled to match and, with their own electronics and a TW Acoustics turntable, this room was delightful.

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CONSTELLATION

Always a great sounding room and some of the friendliest people you could meet. Constellation were showing the Revelation Series Pictor, Andromeda, and Taurus Monos with a Continuum Audio Labs Obsidian turntable with Viper tonearm, Magico M2 loudspeakers, and wired with Nordost Odin 2 cables.

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LINN

Linn were back at the High End Show this year with the Selekt DSM, I caught them mid-dem in German, they were very busy and had been all show...Possibly a combination of Linn gear, Whisky and Tunnocks caramel wafers drawing the crowds! KEF Reference 3 loudspeakers were used with various combinations of the Selekt DSM, plus they had the Klimax LP12 turntable on display.

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VERITY AUDIO

Canadian brand Verity Audio were launching their new small Lakmé loudspeakers at the show. The featured system that I heard was their reference Lohengrin speakers playing with their own electronics, including a pair of their Monsalvat amps, in a system wired with Cardas Cable and sat on Quadraspire racks. A very nice sounding room.

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MOON BY SIMAUDIO

Moon were launching a brand new product, the 860A v2 Power Amplifier. It's a balanced differential dual-mono Power Amplifier which incorporates trickle-down technologies from the massive 888 Power Amplifier.

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INNUOS

Innuos of Portugal are a firm favourite of ours at shows, with their professional team and great products...they do a very good demo as well. The Zenith Statement was sounding great in their system using B&W 802 D3 loudspeakers, Gryphon Diabolo 300 Amp/DAC, IsoTek Evo 3 Genesis power regenerator and Chord Music cables... and, of course, we spotted several rooms using Innuos servers.

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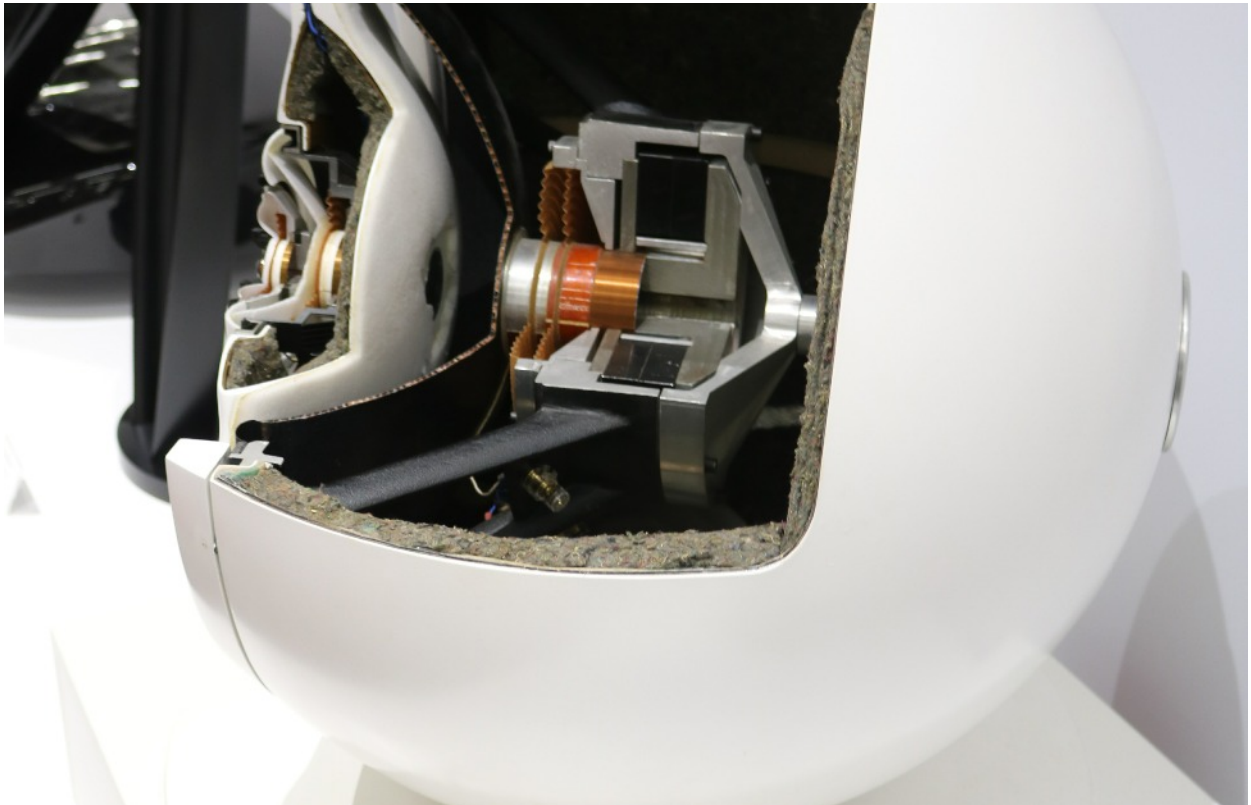
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GIK ACOUSTICS

You do see a lot of different room treatment at Munich, but GIK are a name that the industry depends on and you find them in use in many rooms. Their static stand is always a good place to go for room treatment advice and tips from Dave Shevyn and Lukas Rimbach, the stand looking great with examples of how you can have your own images printed on their panels...like these cheeky chappies, who are actually Dave's dogs.

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CABASSE

Cabasse are practically our neighbours from up the road, it was great to see how well received the new Pearl was, using a pair of these in stereo gave an excellent sound.

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TELLURIUM Q & DE VORE

Tellurium Q, unsurprisingly, had their cables used in several rooms at the show, but also had their own booth in partnership with Devore Fidelity of the USA. This was a fantastic sounding room featuring a range of the TQ cables and Devore Fidelity's Orangutan Reference four speaker system. The Tellurium Q cables used were Statement interconnects, speaker and power cables along with Silver Diamond power cables. Audiomat amplifier, phonostage and DAC were used along with a Frank Schroeder turntable and tonearm, Dynavector cartridge and Consolidated Audio SUT.



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BESPOKE AUDIO

British brand Bespoke had their usual, very classy looking stand. They really do have their branding and products just right. Lucy was demonstrating the care and attention to detail that goes into their preamplifier build.

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CARDAS AUDIO

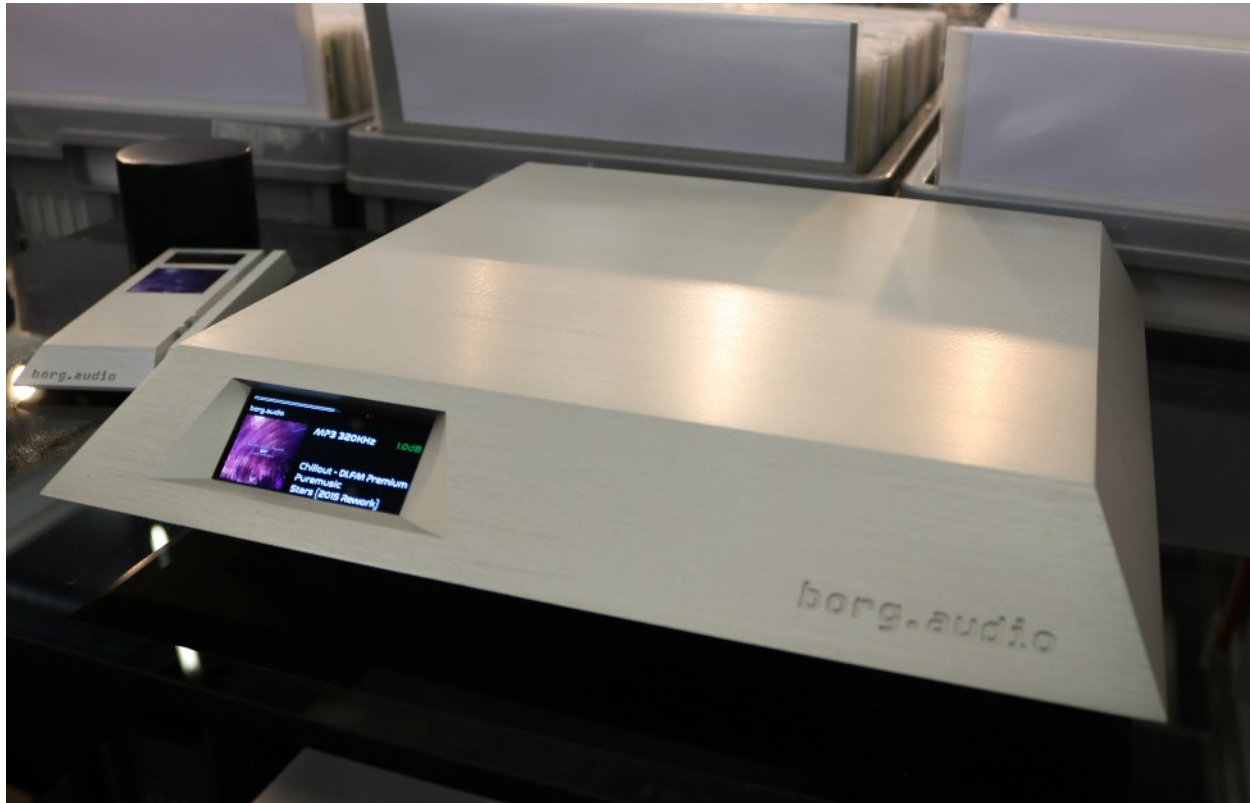
There were several systems that we heard that were wired with Cardas Cables, they also had their own stand as pictured here...some of the nicest people you could want to meet in the industry, Angela Cardas Meredith and her husband Josh were doing a sterling job promoting this long-standing American brand.



DIPTYQUE & O2A CABLES

This cabin sounded really rather wonderful, very impressed with the clean sound.

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BORG

Based in Nuremberg, Germany, borg.audio design and manufacture very interesting looking high-resolution audio players and devices. With names like zoom and warp and a very different look, they certainly caught our eye. The design is really cool in the flesh, we particularly liked the new 'float' portable music player/amplifier. It's good to see a company not afraid to go for a design that breaks the 'box' mold.

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B.AUDIO

We first found B.audio on the Newcomers stand at the High End Show, two years ago...so it is brilliant to see the French company growing and expanding their product range. Located near Strasbourg in the east of France, B.audio was founded by brothers Cédric and Sébastien Bermann, in 2016, after 10 years of research and development under the guidance of a simple philosophy: getting the best out of modern technologies by overcoming their usual drawbacks rather than trying to artificially mask them. Their B.dac makes use of the break-through in-house technology called SJR "Source Jitter Removal". They have now added the enhanced version of the B.dac, the B.dpr, which integrates an analogue pre-amplification stage, plus the B.amp class AB "bridgeable" power amplifier. Expect a review of their 'Made in France' gear on Hifi Pig very soon.

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HIGH END MUNICH 2019



LEHMANN AUDIO

Lehmann are a big name that make really lovely quality gear in Germany. Known for their headphones amps and phonostages, they always attract a crowd to their Munich stand.

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HIGH END MUNICH 2019



CUBE AUDIO

Polish full-range driver and loudspeaker manufacturer, Cube audio, had a fab sounding booth at the show this year.

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AUDIODINAMICA

Gianluca, Francesco and Angeleo are the trio of guys behind this Turin based Italian company. They have a really refreshing approach to audio design, with their solid and stylish BeCube range of electronics. Last year on the Newcomers stand we discovered their BeCube Power, the BeCube DAC, BeCube Line amp and BeCube Phono. This year they have added the BeCube Headphone amplifier and we chatted about other new products that they are developing, including loudspeakers, to complete the system. I really love these little cubes, they are stylish and practical in equal measure and definitely audio products for the future. I predict seeing a lot more of them in the coming months.

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TAYLOR ACOUSTIC

Hungarian brand, Taylor Acoustic, brought their hand-made loudspeakers to Munich which featured in a system with Chord Electronics and PS Audio in their demo booth. They launched two new models at the show to celebrate their 21st anniversary, Concert 120 and Classic 90 (standmount). I really enjoyed the sound in their room, in fact I am often amazed at how these booth's in the halls can get a better sound than in some of the bigger 'proper' rooms upstairs. Their beautiful wooden speakers looked and sounded very nice indeed.

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HIGH END MUNICH 2019



AUDIUM

Audium from Berlin had a great sound in their listening booth, nice and clean and not overblown. The Audium Comp 9 speakers were paired with Atoll electronics, just a pity we missed out on a longer listen later on with Klaus's special playlist!

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HIGH END MUNICH 2019



HIFI RACKS

Hifi Racks were showing a great range of their solid wood, British made racks and Hifi furniture. Always popular and such a nice team of people.

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NEWCOMERS



ROHRENSCHMIEDE

Röhrenschmiede means 'The Tube Forge' and is a small, valve amplifier manufacturer from Krefeld, Germany, who make a handmade and personalised, high end, all-tube stereo amplifier, called Rocket (3900€) and pre-amp called Comet (3500€).

Rocket is an ultralinear push-pull amplifier with 2 x 30 watts at 4/8 ohms. The valves are eight EL84 EH and two ECC82 EH. The valves have ceramic tube holders with gold-plated contacts. Other components include Mundorf and Cornell Duplicating Capacitors, Orange Drops and 14-fold nested high-end output transformers, made in Germany.

At the show, they had several finishes of Rocket and Comet on show, including in 24 ct gold plus their brand new monoblocks with the name "Solo" in a bicolour housing.

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WEEE Nr.: 14861739



Andreas Klug

Roehrenschmiede Valve Amplifier

Roehrenschmiede means 'The Tube Forge' and is a small valve amplifier manufacturer from Krefeld, Germany, who make a handmade and personalised, high end, all-tube stereo amplifier.

Your amplifier can be personalised with the choice between different finishes including chrome, high gloss copper, high gloss nickel or even a 24 carat gold plating. A coating (powder coating) in all RAL colours is also possible. Optional side panels can be made of fine wood, in either lacquered or natural finishes.

Rocket is an ultralinear push-pull amplifier with 2 x 30 watts at 4/8 ohms. The valves are eight EL84 EH and two ECC82 EH and 14-fold nested high-end output transformers.

Comet is an preamplifier with four ECC83 EH line/phono and two Russian 6N6P for the included headphone amplifier.

The valves have ceramic tube holders with gold-plated contacts. Other components include Mundorf and Cornell Dublier Capacitors, Orange Drops and Dale resistors.

Made in Germany. Prices start at 3500€.

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www.roehrenschmiede.de

NEWCOMERS



HARTLAB

HartLab is a new company in the high end audio industry, from Greece, though the three founders have been involved with high end audio for 20-25 years each, either professionally and/or as a serious hobby. Nikolaos Fanakis, Epaminondas Gaveras and Konstantinos Trovas all have engineering backgrounds and were hooked by high end audio when they were around 17 years old.

Nikolaos told us about the Hartlab philosophy: "The HartLab philosophy has emerged after many years of experimentation on pushing the boundaries of high end audio to the limits. We concluded that a high end audio system must have the best possible audio performance. But this is not the only thing that should be best. Enjoying music is a holistic experience and stimuli comes to all the senses of your body, not just your hearing. With this in mind we started our journey to make something we believe is unique. We make high end audio systems that have the best performance in audio to please your ears, magnificent modern looks to please your sight, simple and rock-solid controls to please your touch and integration of several connectivity options to let you enjoy your music from any medium you like to access it from".

Hartlab have invested a lot so that nearly everything is produced in house. They have CNC , painting facilities, custom assembly equipment and can even produce their prototype pcbs in house.

Hartlab had two products on display. The super integrated tube amplifier is a 2x35W EL34/ECC82/ECC83 based design with custom wound output transformers. It has 5

analogue inputs (4 line level and one phono) and two digital (coaxial & optical). The DAC is based on ES9038PRO chip from ESS in stereo configuration. The volume control is implemented via a relay switched resistor network. The amplifier also includes a fully featured media player unit that runs "moode audio player" so it gives the ability to play nearly any audio file that exists (including DSD256) as well as play from online media streaming services. There is also a dedicated headphone output.

Mechanically, the amplifier chassis is made out of MDF/HDF . The power transformers are detached from the main chassis to minimize vibration by being mechanically grounded to the feet of the amplifier while the chassis is floating onto springs. The amplifier control is via the two knobs in the front which are mounted on double ball bearings to provide an absolute feeling with no play/wiggle and also via Bluetooth, using the dedicated app in your smartphone.

The preamplifier mechanics are the same as with the super integrated amplifier. It also features the same 5 analogue inputs (4 line level and one phono). The volume control is using the same principle (relay switched resistor network) and the digital audio parts (the DAC and Media player) are offered as options.

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hRt



Form follows fidelity - a spiritual union

www.hartlab.gr

NEWCOMERS



MIND-POP REVOLUTION

This project is the first of a series of projects from Mind-Pop Revolution which are scheduled for release in the summer of 2019.

This French and Canadian team have produced a new product which combines record stabilisation with the ability to lift the tonearm at the end of the play. They didn't know exactly what to call it... so they came up with a new term, the presslift!

Mind-Pop Revolution told us "the presslift is the newest improvement instrument for manual turntables! The "press" is for the record, the "lift" is for your peace of mind".

Precision machined in solid brass, with 24 karat gold plating, the presslift is a complex mechanism using 19 components to stabilise vinyl records for improved tracking and playback quality, with the added bonus that the tonearm is lifted automatically at the end of the record to reduce wear on stylus and cartridge. Sixty percent of its total weight is free-spinning which reduces the starting torque burden on the turntable motor and belt. The free-spinning weight is computer balanced and is isolated on a high quality, ceramic ball bearing. The special suspension mechanism of the free-spinning weight will help absorb disturbances if transferred to the platter during play by external shock or vibration, resulting in a perceptibly more silent playback system.

The presslift features a unique automatic tonearm lifting system employing inertia transmitted from the platter coupled with a complex spiral design. The 1.6 gram lifter is engineered to adapt without any tools to virtually all tonearms, headshells and cartridge combinations.

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NEWCOMERS



DEEPTIME

We first encountered Deeptime at last year's Audio Show in Warsaw, they really impressed us and we suggested that they apply to be part of the Newcomers stand at High End Munich this year, we were really chuffed when they told us that they had been accepted!

coil former reduces mechanical losses resulting in better dynamic performance and low-level details. The system also features their own cables.

Having heard the system in Warsaw, we think that they will go on to have great success.

They are a team of three young guys from the Czech Republic who have created an all-in-one speaker system that looks different and stylish, feels very high quality and sounds a lot bigger than its tiny size. Their designs come from nature, the Spirula speakers are snail shell shaped and the Thunderstone sub is based on the sea urchin skeletons that you find on the beach. They are made using modern techniques and are 3D printed with sand. This makes the little speakers very heavy and solid for their size.

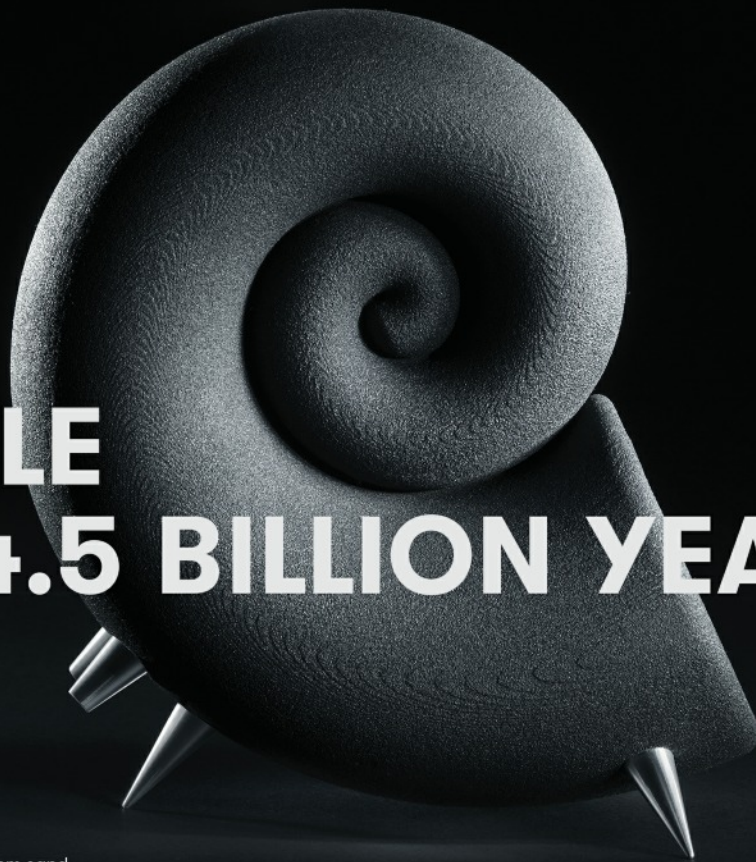
The design of the Spirula speakers uses drivers loaded by reverse-tapered horns, or exponentially diminishing tubes, to absorb the rear radiation. The 3" full range driver uses an under-hung voice coil, which places the entire coil inside the magnetic gap, they also feature a bamboo fibre paper cone and aluminium phase plug.

The Thunderstone subwoofer carries a 5.75" driver with a balanced drive motor structure for optimal drive force symmetry resulting in largely reduced even order harmonic distortion. The driver has a large linear stroke, ensuring low distortion at high output levels. Both rigid paper cones and steel chassis with extensive venting reduce audible distortion even at high levels. The Driver's heavy-duty fibreglass voice

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 **DEEPTIME**

**LIFESTYLE
SINCE 4.5 BILLION YEARS BC**



Premium limited edition speakers 3D printed from sand
www.deeptime.limited

NEWCOMERS



MODALAKUSTIK

ModalAkustik is a loudspeaker manufacturer based in Pulheim near Cologne, Germany. The aim of the company is to “enable the best possible sound quality in living environments. Because what is the benefit of having loudspeakers that only work well in perfect conditions?”

The name ModalAkustik derives from the modal resonances that every room has. That are peaks and dips at certain frequencies, depending on room size and constitution, which distort the sound and often lead to a “boomy” sound at low frequencies.

The ModalAkustik MusikBass, a subwoofer based on the RiPol principle by Axel Riddtähler, excites room resonances to a lesser extent than typical subwoofers, resulting, says Michael Wydra of ModalAkustik, “in taught, clear bass reproduction, that can upgrade every existing speaker”. Axel Riddtähler, the inventor of the RiPol principle, was heavily involved in the development of the MusikBass subwoofer.

The ModalAkustik MusikBass subwoofer has characteristics of very deep bass: 18 Hz (-6dB) and is made from customisable Aluminium Dibond with a cool, semi-transparent acrylic enclosure.

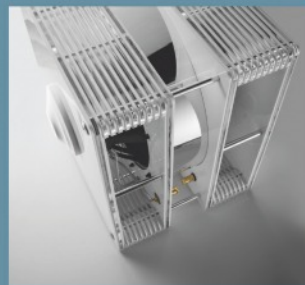
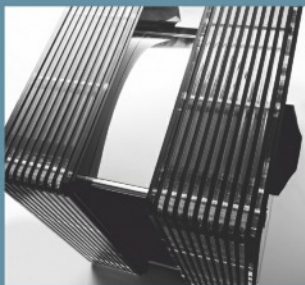
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ModalAkustik

MusikBass - The Musical Subwoofer

- RiPol principle excites room resonances to a lesser extent
- Very deep bass: 18 Hz [-6dB]
- Precise chassis movement due to open cabinet
- Open cabinet less susceptible to resonances
- Impulse compensation due to opposing chassis arrangement
- Two 12 inch chassis with 8 mm of linear excursion
- Semi-transparent acrylic enclosure
- Separating piece customizable (e.g. mirrored)



www.modalakustik.de
info@modalakustik.de

NEWCOMERS



LA MUSIKA

LaMusika are a German company who build “holistically developed music systems and accessories”.

Alfred Rudolph has devoted his entire life to music and its reproduction since his youth. For over 40 years, as a shareholder of Acapella, he has been developing and building high-quality horn loudspeakers and was a co-founder of the High End Society in Germany in the 1980s. While Alfred Rudolph manages development and production at LaMusika, Ingo Beenen is responsible for the commercial areas.

The Prelude is a holistically designed music system that solves the complexity of coordination of electronics and loudspeakers, placement, power supply, cabling as well as resonance and vibration. You plug only one power plug into the socket and the music plays. The system features a compact pair of loudspeakers, and the source is the device of a well-known electronics manufacturer, which was revised and optimised by LaMusika. The design of the Prelude is inspired by the functionality and aesthetics of the Bauhaus.

LaMusika told us, “the Prelude allows the greatest possible freedom in the choice of the music carrier. Even the basic version plays CDs, streaming services, Internet radio and high-resolution file formats from an external hard drive. For friends of analogue music playback, we extend the prelude with a turntable”.

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LA ROSITA

French brand La Rosita make a range of digital products along with loudspeakers and their new Zardo range of valve electronics.

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KNIF RAUMAN

Knif Rauman are from Helsinki and were exhibiting their loudspeakers and interesting looking valve amps.

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VIVA AUDIO

Viva makes very distinctive audio gear in Italy, I have always liked them when I've heard them...they have a great look too. This system featured their Allegro loudspeakers with ribbon super tweeters and their valve electronics. Very pleasant indeed.

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JEFF ROWLAND

Jeff Rowland of Colorado, USA make stylish looking and great sounding electronics. The system sounded very good and was well adapted to the room.

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FYNE AUDIO AND CARY AUDIO

Great to see the Fyne Audio guys, they are some of the most talented and passionate people in the industry and it is heartwarming to see the brand growing so well. They had a couple of rooms featuring different models of their speakers, which sounded great and attracted a constant flow of interested visitors while we were there. Dave Waters was doing a fantastic job presenting the brand and, as always, they played great tunes...it's kind of becoming a fab tradition that we have to hear Infected Mushroom with Fyne Audio at a Hifi Show, wherever in the world the show is!

Partnering with American brand Cary Audio, Fyne used the Cary Audio SLP-05 preamplifier, CAD-120S MKII amplifier, and the new DMS-600 Network Audio Player/DAC/Streamer with their new flagship speakers, the F1-12, which start at 27,250€. The smaller system featured their F703 which sounded excellent too. We also got to see the new F502SP (Special Production), model.

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AUDIO EXKLUSIV, LUMIKS & AUDIO SIGNAL PROJECTS

This was both an interesting looking and sounding room, particularly liked the 'Made in Bavaria' Lumiks loudspeakers.

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ROHM SEMICONDUCTORS

Rohm Semiconductors of Japan were presenting a system featuring their new DAC, MBL speakers and Tellurium Q cable. The Rohm DAC IC "BD34301EKV" is from the company's MUS-IC audiophile brand which is shaped by the four key concepts of 'sound quality design technology'.

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RIKE AUDIO, MARTION & TONMECHANIK BERLIN

Very cool Bullfrog speakers in this room from Martion, Tonmechanik fettled Garrard 401 turntable and Rike Audio electronics.

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HOLTON AUDIO, TOTAL DAC & CAMERTON AUDIO

A very cool looking and sounding room this with Swiss brand, Holton's Invisio pure class A amplifier, a raft of Totaldac gear (Totaldac d1-reclocker, Totaldac d1-direct DAC, Totaldac the amp driver and USB GIGAFILTER) and Binom-1 loudspeaker with the new Binom-A1 driver from Camerton.

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Q-TRON AUDIO & HORN KULTUR

This room, with Q-Tron electronics from Sweden, and Horn-Kultur Corneo speakers from Germany, was lovely, really well presented, lovely looking gear and the sound was excellent.

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SOTTO VOCE

Sotto Voce from Spain, make fantastic loudspeakers, which we met for the first time last year. They brought their Stereo 3 active loudspeaker in a new and very exclusive finishing material: HI-MACS, a material mainly used in architecture.

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SEAWAVE ACOUSTICS

SeaWave, from South Korea, had some, very appropriately, blue horns called Plotinus.

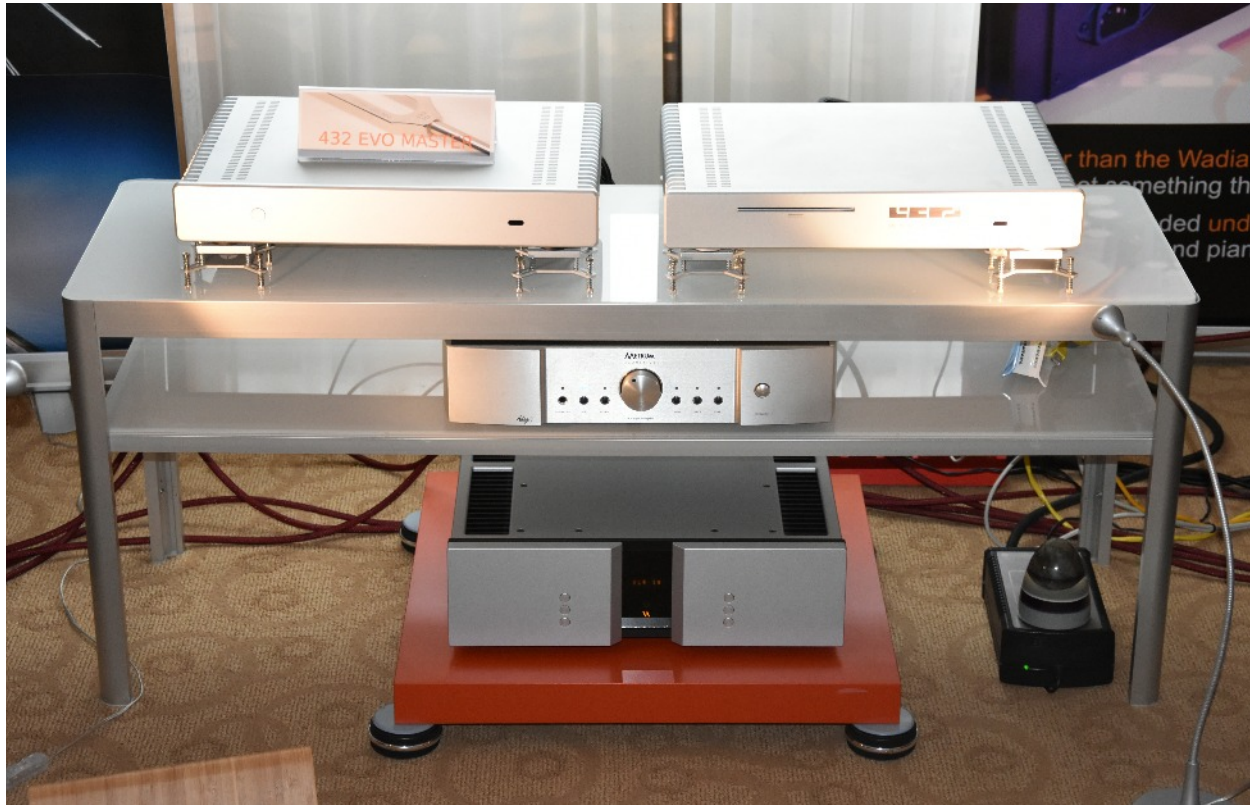
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AGD PRODUCTIONS & EXTREME AUDIO

Extreme Audio from Italy, sell a range of High End Hifi brands. They brought the Sigma Acoustics Orchestra loudspeakers and AGD Productions supplied the valve amplifiers.

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432 EVO

432 Evo are a Belgian brand who produce a High End Room / LMS music server.

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MALVALVE & MRSPEAKERS

Malvalve valve amplifiers and MrSpeakers headphones also had Audeze and Stax in their room. I was expecting a headphone room but there was also some very interesting loudspeakers playing in there...which was odd given the layout of the room had a dividing wall between the speakers...

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GRANDINOTE

Max from Grandinote of Italy is such a lovely chap. He was very proud to show us his new loudspeakers which were rather nice indeed. The MACH 9 carbon fibre speakers have crossover-less drivers. Grandinote have previously used aluminum to produce all their MACH chassis, but after testing they have switched to carbon fibre for the MACH 9. Grandinote exhibited with their partners Luna Cables, The Funk Firm Turntables and Modulum stands.

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SOUNDKAOS & BAKOON

A Hifi show favourite of ours, SoundKaos make wonderful loudspeakers in Switzerland and are some of the nicest people you will meet. This wasn't so much a room at a show, more a full-on, multi-sensory experience. Martin and his team had put together a great system, it was the small Vox 3f, in a stunning Walnut and bronze finish, that were playing and the Liberation was there along with a new prototype open-baffle speaker, (which Martin said had a lot more in the bass department).

SoundKaos also distribute the Korean brand Bakoön, whose compact amplifiers work so well with the SoundKaos speakers. A fab sounding and looking room, enhanced by Ursula's 'Essence of SoundKaos' aromatherapy scent, which gave a magical feel to the room...and they were very generous with the Swiss chocolate too.

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ARETAI

We almost didn't find the Aretai room, but I am very pleased that we did. They are a new, young loudspeaker manufacturer from Riga, Latvia and they were presenting their first speaker, the 45000€ 4-way floorstander, the Contra. They deserve to do very well, the sound was excellent and the styling of the speaker, room and the team was fresh and modern... very professional.

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KLIMO & BRODMANN

A lovely room this, showcasing the rather stunning Klipo turntable, Klipo performance line electronics and elegant Brodmann loudspeakers.

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TOTALDAC

Totaldac are a French brand well known for, unsurprisingly, their DACs. This year though they launched their brand new amplifier the Totaldac Amp-1. The system at the show featured their gear and Magico M6 loudspeakers. The development of the amp involved it being designed with the Magico M6 and Totaldac's own huge, sensitive horns, so it sounded very good indeed.

The full system was Totaldac d1-player server/NAS, Totaldac RoonReady d1-streamer and reclocker, Totaldac d1-twelve-mk2 DAC, Totaldac one-box "live-power" power supply, Totaldac d1-driver, a volume-free preamp, Totaldac/Bibacord AES-EBU cables, Totaldac USB GIGAFILTER and ethernet cable/filters and the new Totaldac Amp-1 power amplifier. Magico M6 speakers, Echore Limited Edition interconnect cables and speaker cable and Shunyata Hydra Triton V3 power distributor and Sigma NR power cords for the digital components. We were treated to a variety of music including Jacques Offenbach's "Galop Infernal" ...the 'Can Can' music, an appropriate final   for this French brand.

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AUDIONOTE UK

Unfortunately not playing Slayer this time, but the Audionote room was still sounding great and was packed with enthusiasts enjoying the sound.

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