

Epic performer



The new Epic 5 looks more than a little like Epos models of old and as **Ed Selley** discovers, it's a return to form for the much-admired brand

Back in the early 1990's Epos did rather well out of its ES range of loudspeakers. Well thought out and well designed, the ES models were distinctively finished with a wood cabinet and black front panel. Nearly twenty years later the Epic 5, tested here, has more than a little of the ES models in its aesthetic. Like other examples of the current trend for revisiting past designs, the Epic 5 is very much of the moment, internally.

The largest of the Epic range, it's a 2.5-way floorstander with a pair of 6.5-inch polypropylene mid/bass drivers mated to a one-inch tweeter. The latter is the more unusual of the drivers as it is the first-ever soft-dome produced by Epos and is designed to mate high sensitivity with high-frequency response, as well as completing an all-black front panel and driver arrangement.

The cabinets are fitted with a large rear port (which is not supplied with any form of bung or tuning aid) to taper bass response, but seemed benign in behaviour. Epos says to keep the 5 at least 10cm from a rear wall, but we otherwise found them unfussy about placement. Sensitivity is quoted at an impressive 92dB/w, albeit into a four-ohm load. The Epic's proved an easy drive in use and can generate impressively anti-social sound levels without any signs of strain.

Audiophile panel

The front panel is also unusual. The Epic 5 ships with an 'audiophile' panel that is flush-fronted and has no provision for a grille. In the carton is a tool for removing it and fitting a (supplied) front panel that features a protective grille. We did all of our listening with the shipped 'audiophile' grille in place.

The flush panel helps make the Epic 5 one of the most stylish-looking

speakers we have seen recently. Standing slightly under a metre tall with the plinth fitted, the Epic 5 is well proportioned and sufficiently unobtrusive to blend into most environments. The wood veneer of the old ES has had to give way to a vinyl wrap, but the effect is good and the overall fit and finish is extremely impressive for a sub-£1,000 product.

Full frequency

Placed clear of rear walls (we found that 15 to 20 centimetres was ideal) and with a few degrees of toe-in, the 5 is extremely impressive. The overriding impression it presents is one of cohesiveness across the full



DETAILS

PRODUCT:
Epic 5

ORIGIN:
UK/China

TYPE:
Floorstanding
loudspeaker

WEIGHT:
19.7kg

DIMENSIONS:
(WxHxD)
286x980x380mm

FEATURES:

- 2.5-way speaker
- Soft-dome tweeter
- 2x polypropylene mid/bass drivers
- Interchangeable front panels

DISTRIBUTOR:
Epos

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frequency spectrum with a very even response from top to bottom. The soft-dome tweeter works well and avoids any harshness or stridency even when pushed very hard. The Epic manages to flatter poor recordings without losing detail on better ones, too.

Fantastic tonality

The speaker also shows a fantastic tonality with vocals and instruments. Plucked strings and piano keys are tangible and entirely believable with excellent decay. Vocals are clean and easy to follow. The soundstaging is also very strong with the Epic able to present even very complex arrangements with a believable sense of the positioning of the artists and the space they are performing in.

Given the size of the Epic 5, the bass on offer is not as deep as some similarly priced competition. But where the speaker excels is in the detail and texture that it gives to low frequencies; subtle detail that many speakers lose in the lower registers is easy to discern and there is no obvious overhang to low notes even during very hectic pieces, which further aids the sense of coherence.

Timing is a deeply subjective area, which people place different emphasis on, but it is fair to say the Epic is extremely good at it.

Entertaining

Above all, the Epic 5 never fails to sound involving and entertaining. This is a very easy speaker to live with and enjoy sonically and one of the most enjoyable sub-£1,000 designs we have seen in a while.

When you combine this with its good looks, excellent build quality and unfussy placement, the Epic 5 has to be considered a worthy spiritual successor to the ES models of old and we have no hesitation in recommending it. ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY



LIKE: Excellent aesthetics and lively, involving sound

VALUE FOR MONEY



DISLIKE: Bass not as deep as some of the competition

BUILD QUALITY



WESAY: A superb-sounding and well built speaker with very few vices

EASE OF DRIVE



OVERALL

