

The Summit at HiFi House

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On May 4th and 5th HiFi House sponsored an extraordinary event—a *tour de force* of three visionaries and founders of high-performance audio. The event marks the intellectual collaboration of these three companies and the beginning of a new age in audio where components with matching performance parameters and visual aesthetics combine to deliver the concert experience in the home to the discriminating buyer.

HiFi House staged day one of the Summit at its Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, location. The main event took place in a “great room”-like open setting that was inviting and sonically compelling. The system featured the Wilson Alexandra Series II, (\$158,000), the Momentum Amplifier (\$45,000 a pair), and Transparent MM2 Reference Series cables (speaker cable, \$19,995/pr.; interconnect, \$14,995/pr.; power cords, \$8000 apiece). Numerous top-level components completed the system and the music was computer-sourced through an Audio Research DAC8 (\$4995). Hundreds of area music lovers sat, listened, and chatted with the industry titans as food was sampled and glasses tinkled. At one point, Peter McGrath said, “Wow, it’s like being at the Village Vanguard listening to the Bill Evans Quartet with all the life and ambiance of the live audience.”

McGrath is a master at demystifying audio. His demonstrations capture the essence of the musical experience through short illustrative cuts and commentary. Whether it was Mahler or Keith Richards, McGrath pointed out subtleties within each recording that showcased the equipment. Dan D’Agostino and Karen Sumner had separate rooms that were packed to the gills but there was no denying the star of the event... the Momentum amplifier.

Dan D’Agostino, the founder of Krell Industries, has certainly rocked the audio world with the introduction of the Momentum amplifier under the D’Agostino name, an object-of-art amplifier that will take your breath away. (It’s the most beautiful component I’ve ever seen.) Part fine watch, part ultimate automobile, it seems to shine from within. The meter is backlit in a soft blue-green light, which reflects off the face and through the hand of the meter (based upon the design element found in the hand of a Breguet watch). The amplifier is only 5" x 12.5" x 21", a far cry from the behemoth Krells of the past. The Momentum amplifier is handbuilt in the USA—the cases in Massachusetts, the boards in Connecticut, and the transformers in New Jersey. There is a matching preamp underway that will visually complement the amplifier; it too will have a meter, one that shows volume and then switches over to show channel balance—quite

clever. And, of course, it will be remote-controlled. The Momentum’s 300Wpc (into 8 ohms) offers ample power for most loudspeakers, Wilsons included. In fact, the amplifier was tested and designed with a pair of Sasha W/Ps.

Team D’Agostino, Wilson, and Transparent have joined forces to deliver a lifestyle system designed for the sophisticated customer who doesn’t have the time or desire to seek out components that complement each other. Transparent builds cables for these systems based upon the impedance-matching of the length of the run and the speaker type. There are custom stands under design that include Transparent cable integrated into the stand itself. Wilson then offers a custom D’Agostino Momentum finish for the loudspeaker. It’s a top-level team approach for the top-level customer.

HiFi House continues to spearhead the joy of two-channel reproduction. It understands that two channel fits any environment and, if properly executed, can deliver a holographic image that beats multichannel. HiFi House “gets it.” You don’t need a dark room or a gazillion speakers and multiple amps and wires dangling all over the place. Your stereo can be as compact as a personal music system or as astonishing as a Wilson Alexandra Series II.

