



Posted by: Alan Taffel at 6:06 pm, January 18th, 2012

Extracts

By the third day I could walk into a room and, without asking a single question, know if the speakers on view were in my price category. Not because of their sound, but because of their appearance. Speakers in this price range are of a certain stature - substantial but not extravagant. They are narrow, because high-quality large woofers are expensive. To compensate, designers use multiple smaller woofers. If you spend this much you are entitled to a furniture - grade finish and to high - quality wood, but usually not to exotic cabinet materials. Put all these factors together and, with very few exceptions, speakers that rotate around the \$15k axis have a distinct "look."

But, as I soon discovered, they do not have a uniform sound. I heard new entrants that had almost no bass and some that had too much. Quite a few models were tipped up in the highs, like televisions with the picture control set to Vivid. But plenty of others sounded rolled off. Dynamically, there were both extroverts and wallflowers. And a handful sounded just right.

I'll start with one of those: the brand new Marten Django, out in February at a price of \$15,000 the pair. Of late Marten has been introducing higher-and-higher-priced models, all featuring expensive ceramic drivers. The Django does incorporate a ceramic tweeter and midrange, but ceramic woofers were out of the question. Marten says that if the Django's triple woofers were made of that material, its price would have





Posted by: Alan Taffel at 6:06 pm, January 18th, 2012

Extracts

soared to \$50k! That prospect was completely counter to Marten's determination to create a "world-class," full-range affordable speaker. So it made due with aluminum bass units. Frankly, I could not hear a down side.

How good is the Django? So good that my first listening note reads: "Nothing wrong with this sound". So good that importer Dan Meinwald and I both got goosebumps listening to Jackson Browne's bittersweet "I'm Alive" from Love is Strange. So good that right now your faithful TAS correspondents are in a pitched battle over who will have the privilege of reviewing them. Among the multitude of introductions at this year's CES, in my category the Marten Django was a standout.

Franco Serblin - Accordo

If brand new speakers are rare, new speaker companies are even rarer. Yet this CES heralded the arrival of a new Italian manufacturer called Franco Serblin. The firm is named after its founder, whose name you may not know but whose work you do, for he also founded Sonus faber. The firm's first out product is called Accordo.

The speaker runs \$12,995 with stands, and you really do need the latter since that is where the crossover resides. Another novel design element is the asymmetric cabinetry, meant to break up standing waves. As for the Accordo's sound - if you go for Sonus - Faber's lush tonality and exquisite finish, you just got a new option.

