

EXCLUSIVE!

Franco Serblin Accordo Unica floorstanding loudspeaker

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Franco Serblin (the company) has two priorities: honour the work of Franco Serblin (the man) and continue his legacy. We should think of Serblin like Ferrari; Enzo Ferrari died in 1988, yet his legacy persists in cars designed long after his passing. Franco Serblin died in 2013, but his designs such as the Ktêma, original Accordo, and Ligneas loudspeakers remain in production. However, recent models show the company isn't just preserved in a static state, and as the Accordo Unica floorstander clearly demonstrates, it is taking its future seriously.

The Accordo Unica is the most ambitious project the company has undertaken. Yes, the original Ktêma floorstander with its narrow front baffle and wide curved rear was an audacious, bold start for the company. But that launch was 16 years ago, and the audio world has changed significantly since then. The Accordo Unica may look more conventional—and shares the distinctive 'quotation mark' asymmetric—and solid wood—cabinet shape first seen on the original Accordo, but this is a more daring project. It is a three-way, four-driver ported floorstanding loudspeaker designed from the outset to maintain the qualities of a good two-way stand-mount. It retains all the grace and charm for which Franco Serblin's loudspeakers are renowned, but also offers a substantial bass performance. In appearance and size, it suits the home, while in performance, it is tailored for the studio. And during listening, it's crafted to make you want to listen for hours on end.

Remarkably beautiful

It's tempting to begin by describing the Accordo Unica's appearance because it is remarkably beautiful. The curved wooden enclosure, the subtly faceted surfaces, and the sense that nothing is quite parallel to anything else—this is a deliberate departure from the 'shoebox' tradition of loudspeaker design. However, aesthetics here are not merely decorative; they stem from the core objective: to minimise internal standing waves and manage panel resonances by avoiding large, uninterrupted, parallel surfaces.

Usually, describing a loudspeaker as 'remarkably beautiful' might attract some criticism. But, look at them. See them in person, and you realise no photograph can truly do justice to the Accordo Unica. The real-wood finish offers an organic elegance. Additionally, the subtle notches on the sides break up the height of the speaker, making it appear less like a 'loudspeaker' and more like 'fine furniture'. This is completed by a leather-topped front baffle, small yet well-crafted metallic details, and the signature elasticated 'strings' as a grille. These 'touches' are not merely decorative; the aluminium-magnesium components act as decouplers to reduce resonance between the already acoustically inert solid wood panels.

Many modern loudspeakers have increasingly adopted a more 'bling' style. This represents a different approach. It's form following function. It's as timeless as some of Franco Serblin's greatest creations.

The cabinet's profile is narrow at the front and tapers asymmetrically towards the rear, with a complex curvature that increases stiffness and breaks up resonance modes. That's the basic physics. This matters because cabinet talk is one of the great thieves of low-level information. You can have the finest drivers in the world, but if the enclosure stores energy and releases it late, you lose timing, smear transients, and reduce the believability of instruments in space. The Accordo Unica's cabinet is designed to store as little as possible. It does so while looking as elegant as a classic Riva Aquarama motor launch—albeit without a young Gina Lollobrigida in a bikini as an optional extra.

Accordo enhanced

The Accordo models are two-way ported stand-mount speakers featuring a 29mm silk dome, developed as part of a long-term project with legendary driver designer Ragnar Lian (1933-2008). This is complemented by a custom-made 150mm slit microsphere-treated paper cone mid-woofer. And, if you look at the Accordo Unica, you'll see the same two-way layout across the top third of the loudspeaker. This is joined at the lower end by a pair of 220mm microsphere-treated cones with aluminium dust caps.



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» It's easy to see this loudspeaker as a classic Franco Serblin Accordo two-way stand-mount, positioned on a well-integrated, large passive bass cabinet. It's easy because sonically that's how it behaves and sounds. Furthermore, it appears that Massimiliano Favella, Serblin's son-in-law, head of the company, and guardian of the brand, has designed a loudspeaker that adheres to traditional Franco Serblin priorities, such as phase behaviour and energy integration.

The aim is to avoid the typical hi-fi problem where the tweeter emphasises 'detail' while the midrange handles 'tone' and the bass struggles to remember what the drummer was doing. In a company that traditionally produces highly coherent two-way loudspeakers, switching to a three-way, four-driver design could disrupt that sonic unity. In the Accordo Unica, the speaker doesn't sound like separate drivers passing duties; it sounds like a single transducer covering a wide bandwidth.

Similarly, some floorstanders extend bass by tuning a port aggressively and then trying to conceal the effects. You get low notes, but they have a rhythm of their own. The Accordo Unica's low end is more controlled. It doesn't try to dominate; it seeks to integrate.

Not difficult, revealing

The Accordo Unica is not the kind of loudspeaker that requires exotic amplification like some low-sensitivity, difficult-impedance monitors. However, it is transparent enough to reveal the character of what drives it.

Perhaps most importantly, it's a loudspeaker that has reserves. The 'reserve' part means you would have to be unnecessarily aggressive with music choice, volume level, and partnering equipment to make it sound 'nasty'. The 'reserves' part indicates it will happily play with great gusto and powerful dynamic range if desired. That places it among the top contenders.

If you're of the "watts are watts" persuasion, the Accordo Unica will quietly dispel that notion. It prefers quality power: not necessarily large power, but consistent power. Its cabinet and driver integration are sufficient that upstream improvements become musical benefits rather than mere audiophile fireworks. That's a valuable trait in a speaker at this price point, because it means you can build a system around it without feeling that you've created a bottleneck.

Precise

The Accordo Unica is not fussy, but it is precise. It will play music when placed casually, but it will only reveal its full potential when you treat it like the instrument it is.

Start by setting the distance from the rear wall. Allow some breathing room, and you'll notice the bass tighten and the stage deepen. Moving it closer will add warmth and weight but may reduce clarity. The distance from side walls also matters because the loudspeaker's imaging is one of its key features, and early reflections can soften that precision.

Toe-in is similarly important. Too little and you may lose some focus and high-frequency detail; too much and the centre image can become over-lit. There is an optimal point where the speaker's coherence aligns perfectly and the soundstage becomes a stable, convincing acoustic space rather than a left-right panorama.

And then there's levelling. Because the Accordo Unica's geometry and stance are part of its alignment, ensuring both speakers are precisely levelled is crucial. This isn't voodoo; it's simply making sure the drivers work in the correct vertical plane and that you don't introduce asymmetry that the speaker will accurately report back to you.

Surprising

With the usual high-end checks and balances out of the way, the Franco Serblin Accordo Unica surprised me in all

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» the right ways. That 'two-way stand-mount with a big friend' perception defines the performance of the loudspeaker. It's got that lithe, harmonically sublime, richly textured, and beautifully integrated sound of a truly excellent stand-mount. More specifically, a good Franco Serblin stand-mount — not just one bearing the Serblin name... but one of those classic loudspeakers from the 1980s and 1990s that audiophiles still cherish today. However, just at the point where a good stand-mount begins to run out of steam, the Accordo Unica gently but firmly presses its foot to the floor. That extra depth, dynamic range, volume headroom, and soundstage solidity all help establish a superbly crafted musical instrument.

A good loudspeaker isn't judged by how it handles spectacular recordings. It's judged by what it does with the music you actually listen to—often flawed, compressed, or tonally imperfect recordings. 'God Gave Me Feet For Dancing' by Ezra Collective [*Dance, No One's Watching, Partisan*] is a good example of this. Is it a good recording? Not really, but it's modern British jazz at its afro-beat/hip-hop/jazzy best. Often, great big loudspeakers are too revealing and miss the fun that makes the music enjoyable. The Accordo Unica is notably different in this regard (it doesn't smooth over the flatness of the recording, but neither does it turn that one-dimensionality into a problem), and it truly gets under the skin of the music. On the Accordo Unica, if this track doesn't make you want to move, there's something wrong with you.

For a loudspeaker with exceptionally powerful bass, the first thing you notice is the midrange. Vocals come with shape and body, making a singer feel like a real presence rather than a cardboard cut-out between the speakers. The Accordo Unica has a way of maintaining both chest and mouth at the same time: you get weight without thickness, articulation without spit.

On something intimate—the Jo Whiley BBC 1 Live Lounge session of Amy Winehouse singing 'You Know I'm No Good' is an obvious choice—her voice and phrasing are front and centre, naturally, but the minimalist band (especially that semi-acoustic guitar sound riffing with the Fender Rhodes player) is clearly defined but never exaggerated. The Accordo Unica's handling of decay is key. Notes don't just start crisply; they finish properly. That sounds like a small thing, but it's the difference between 'hi-fi detail' and 'musical phrasing.' When the decay tails off naturally, you hear timing and intent.

Scale versus honesty

Considering its size, the Accordo Unica's bass is notably extended, but the more significant trait is 'honest'. Naturally, when a loudspeaker achieves such elegance in midrange, treble, and soundstage, one must match it with something that has real impact at the bottom end. In hi-fi terms, that would be a drum solo.

Fortunately, Tool's 'Chocolate Chip Trip' [*Fear Innumerable*, Volcano] is a good modern take on this slice of classic

audiophilia. The combination of acoustic and electronic percussion sounds builds in dynamic intensity, has great bass depth, and its speed makes this something of a litmus test for a loudspeaker. In a way, it's why small stand-mounts shine; instead of doing it badly, they don't do it at all, paying lip service to deep bass. However, here you get the best of both worlds: the bass depth and dynamic heft of Unica coupled with Accordo's speed, space, and musical passion.

Everything here connects seamlessly. The soundstage is engaging, and the dynamic range feels expressive. The vocals are clear, and there is always a strong sense of musical purpose. That last point is where its neutrality lies; it's neutral like Switzerland (with all its watches, chocolates, and money), and less like 'beige'. If your idea of a neutral transducer is some dull, tiptoeing approach to your record collection, the Franco Serblin Accordo Unica's concept of 'neutrality' is not for you.

A generous conclusion

I struggled to pin this loudspeaker down and felt something was missing from my review of the Accordo Unica. Then it hit me: it is a loudspeaker that treats music with 'generosity'. That sounds quite abstract, but a few minutes sitting in front of these passionate loudspeakers and you'll understand. Music is - and should be - an exhilarating experience, and you will both be drawn to and enjoy those more spirited musical passages with this loudspeaker. Considering that the Franco Serblin Accordo Unica looks so good, it might be a surprise that it's the sound it produces that's the most beautiful aspect of this loudspeaker. +

Technical specifications

Type: Three-way floorstanding vented box loudspeaker

Drive units: 29mm silk-dome tweeter, 150mm microsphere cone mid-woofer, 220mm microsphere cone woofer with aluminium dust cap

Cabinet: Super-rigid, arch-shaped solid wood structure, decoupled with aluminium/magnesium parts to obtain resonance control.

Frequency response: 27Hz - 28KHz, in room

Nominal impedance: 4 ohm

Sensitivity: 89dB/2.83V/1m

Minimum power amplifier: 25W/channel

Finish: Solid walnut, Red High Gloss.

Dimensions (HxWxD): 133 x 30.5 x 54cm

Weight: 96 kg/pair

Price: £38,500 per pair (Walnut), £41,998 (Red High Gloss)

Manufacturer Franco Serblin

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