

# Seven Heaven

Spendor Audio has updated its popular D Line series. Jon Myles listens in and comes away impressed.



Loudspeaker manufacturer Spendor take a reassuringly measured approach to launching new products. They are not one of those companies that rushes products to the market as soon as possible simply to boost sales.

Hence the new D Line floorstanders – the flagship D9.2 and the smaller £4500 D7.2 on review here – have been more than two years in development.

Talking to head man Philip Swift he explained this was mainly due to the upgraded mid-range driver which uses a revised polymer to better integrate with the proprietary tweeter and main bass cone.

That tweeter is the same as in the original D7 – built around a stainless steel front plate that forms a damped acoustic chamber in front of a lightweight woven polyamide diaphragm. This creates a balanced pressure environment to enable the high frequency unit to always operate in a linear mode.

The bass driver is a Kevlar composite assembly augmented at the rear by a slotted port to help boost low frequency response (more of which later). There's also a single pair of high-quality 'speaker binding posts above (so bi-wiring is not on the agenda).

As ever with Spendor construction of the D7.2s is top-notch – the company now has its own cabinet building facility based in the Yorkshire city of Sheffield – and a range of finishes are available including black ash, dark walnut, cherry, natural oak and the now, almost obligatory, satin white.

Another nice feature are the magnetically attached grilles – meaning there are no unsightly holes on view if you choose to leave them off, as I always do for reviews.

Size-wise the D7.2 measures 980mm x 192mm x 333mm (H/W/D) and sensitivity is quoted at 90dB (see our Measured Performance for the authoritative figures) meaning they will easily go loud on the end of even low-powered valve amplifiers.

## SOUND QUALITY

I've always had a soft-spot for Spendor loudspeakers. They tend to have an effortless, easy-





**The rear port features an aero-dynamically designed central baffle to smooth airflow and augment low frequency response in a controlled way.**

going nature yet don't lack for detail or drive when required.

These new D7.2s are no exception. That new mid-range unit is a significant upgrade from the original D7 and integrates seamlessly with the bass and tweeter so you never get the impression you are listening to three separate drivers.

Connected to a range of amplifiers, from a powerful Creek Audio Evolution 100A transistor to

an Icon Audio Stereo 30 SE single-ended valve model in triode mode, they had the ability to go loud without any strain.

So with The Clash's 'London Calling' Paul Simonon's bass flooded the room as it descended down the scales, but it was always tuneful, devoid of that one-note thump that some floorstanders suffer. Topper Headon's metronome-like drumming was also spot-on, driving the track along with pace and precision.

Switching to Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's much gentler 'Tabula Rasa' the quality of the piano playing was exceptionally lifelike. This is one of the harder instruments for any loudspeaker to reproduce but here if I closed my eyes it was as though the pianist was right there in front of me.

The twin violins were also well delineated, both having a lush, smooth sound while never sounding edgy – a problem of metal cones. This piece – while relatively simple – demands close listening to get its full effect and leaning forward the decay of the notes was beautifully rendered.

James Blake's 'Limit To Your Love' revealed just how well the rear port works. It is a floor-firing aperture with an aero-dynamic central baffle to smooth the airflow. One advantage is that the D7.2s can be used within sight of a rear wall without any problem.

So on the Blake track I could

hear rumbling sub-sonics. Admittedly, the absolute lower octaves were not there (you'll need 'speakers with 12" drivers to get that), but overall I never got the feeling that anything was missing in the presentation.

In terms of showroom appeal there's no getting away from the fact that on an initial listen other loudspeakers might sound rather more exciting. But watch out – that initial excitement can easily pale over extended listening. These Spondors, on the other hand, have a sophistication and smoothness that invites you back. In fact they are just the sort of loudspeakers I could live with for years while upgrading other elements in the system. And that is true value for money.

## CONCLUSION

Beautifully-made, relatively compact yet having a sound that boasts extended treble and a smooth mid-band allied to some real punch in the bass department. There's a room-filling sound on offer and they are not too fussy about positioning. As floorstanders go in this price range there's little to touch them. Listen in and enjoy.



**A new damped polymer mid-range driver allied to Spondor's proprietary tweeter, plus a potent bass driver, deliver smooth and detailed sound.**

## MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The updated Spondor D7, to D7.2 form, was even in output from 40Hz up to 20kHz our third-octave analysis of pink noise shows. This is similar to the original D7 reviewed in our July 2014 issue, if with slightly better treble extension and a little less bass lift to give a drier and more controlled sound in a medium sized (17ft long approx) room. The small amount of lift in our analysis is grille off; grille on shaves this to flatness.

As before the D7.2 is still "academically flat" with strong upper midband output that will throw out detail but also be revealing of poor source material – a critical but accurate loudspeaker.

Also as before, and to quote: "the low frequency drive unit is loaded by an interesting floor port with a wide mouth area and an internal flow regulator. Tapered ports are in truth horns, matching the internal air load to that of the room, albeit imperfectly. All the same, a broad mouth and tapered profile does a better job than a simple tube and measurement showed the benefits of Spondor's port".

This remains the case in the D7.2 where the red trace shows broad port output and commensurately broad damping of the bass unit. Port output reaches down to 20Hz so the D7.2 goes very low and will produce subsonics in a large room. The impedance curve confirms the extent of bass damping, being flat and resistive except for a narrow residual and reactive peak containing little energy. All this suggests bass control will be excellent, but this does not look like a bass heavy or boomy design. It will however "play a bass tune" properly.

The D7.2 produced a good 88dB sound pressure level from one nominal Watt (2.8V) of input, so it goes loud with little power and needs amplifiers of around 50 Watts or more for high volume. It is a relatively easy load for an amplifier, measuring 6.6 Ohms impedance overall, but has a 4 Ohm bass unit.

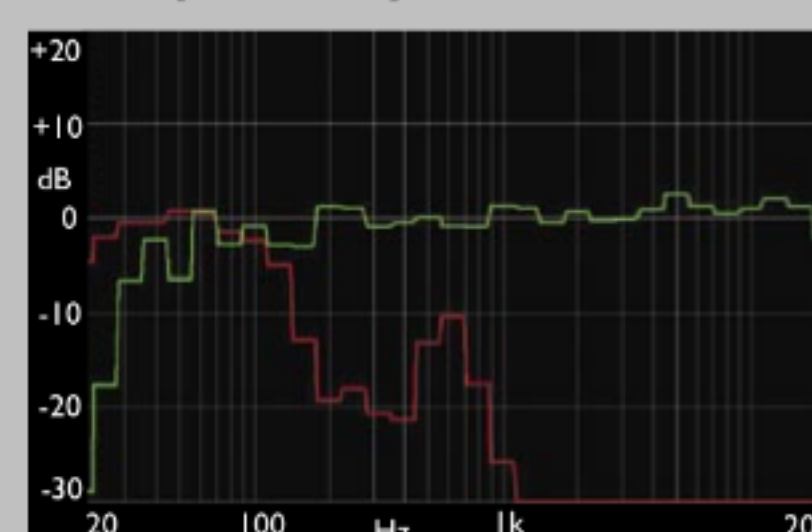
The new Spondor D7.2 retains the original's accuracy and loses 2dB sensitivity – likely through less

emphasised bass to give a more controlled sound in real rooms, counteracting room boom. This is a deeply controlled and honed design in measurement terms. **NK**

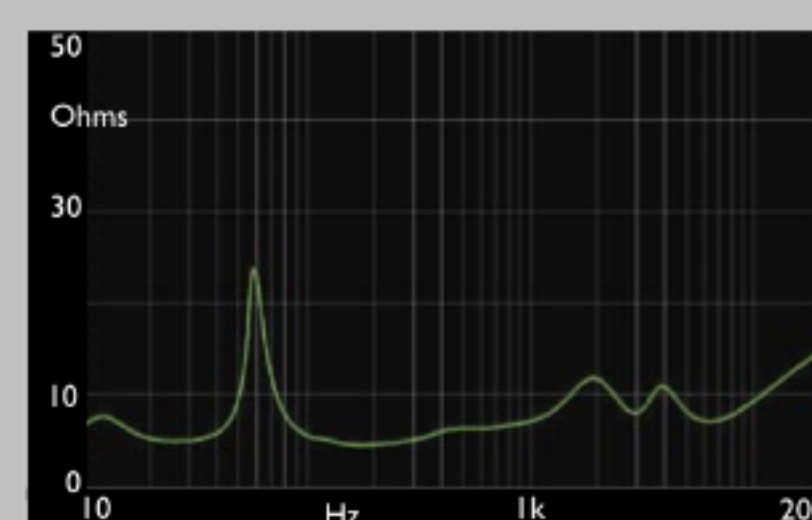
### FREQUENCY RESPONSE

**Green - driver output**

**Red - port output**



### IMPEDANCE



**SPENDOR D7.2**  
**£4500**



**OUTSTANDING - amongst the best.**

### VERDICT

A revised mid-range unit elevates the new D7.2 above its predecessor. If you are looking for a floorstander with punch yet a smooth and refined nature then they should be on the top of your wish list.

### FOR

- smooth sound
- detail
- build quality
- low-end punch
- ease of placement

### AGAINST

- nothing at the price

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