Why should you buy Audio Physic’s Avantis when there are a multitude of better-known speakers from the likes of B&W, Focal and PMC? At first glance that’s not an easy question to answer. The Avantis look like just another premium two-way floorstander, and the world is hardly short of those. But those familiar with the brand will probably not so many in the UK, admitted – know that these towers are likely to have considerable substance. Over its 30-year history, Audio Physic has turned out more than its fair share of fine speakers, and this current Avanti can be counted among them.

Where’s woofer?

Despite appearances, these floorstanders are three-way designs. The tweeter and midrange drivers are obvious enough, but where’s the bass unit? Usually, it would be found on the front or one of the sides, but here it’s hidden inside the cabinet, mounted to the base, and ported through a slot below the front baffle. Here’s where things get really interesting. The woofer – a 28cm paper–cone unit that crosses over to the midrange at around 130Hz – fires into an all but unknown enclosure. The midrange’s chassis is unusual too. It uses a plastic basket inside the aluminium frame to define a structure that combines rigidity, low resonance and an element of decoupling. Clever.

Structural integrity

The same could be said of the cabinet. Inside it’s solidly braced, and lined using more of that ceramic foam, which not only adds to rigidity but also improves the vibration damping of the enclosure. We’re impressed by the lovely glossy finish too, and every panel lines up just so, giving the Avantis the air of quality designer furniture – an impression reinforced by slanted design.

There are several finishes available, from the usual walnut, black ash and cherry to the fetching ebony of our review sample. For an extra £100, there’s also a premium all-glass option, which looks stunning in the right surroundings.

No devils in this detail

Audio Physic’s company motto is ‘No Loss Of Fine Detail’. Not the catchiest tag line, but it describes the sound of the Avantis pretty well. Connected to our usual reference system – Naim’s NDS/555PS streamer, the Clearaudio Innovation Wood turntable, Cyrus’s Signature phono stage/FSX-R2 and the Gamut D3i/D200i pre/power combination – these speakers impress.

Our first impression is of a remarkably clean presentation. The Avantis deliver an up-front and detailed sound that positively brims with agility. Give them a dynamic passage and they shine, rendering the group’s leading edges superbly defined, but never over-emphasised. It’s an articulate sound too, right from the lowest bass notes upwards.

Tonaly, things are a touch brightly lit, but each note is defined with clarity, they deliver a sound packed with clarity and agility. Surprisingly muscular bass, too.

Powerful pros

We still like the Avantis, though. They’re smart, elegant and packed with clever engineering. Their sound brims with agility and clarity, and it’s all backed up with class-leading build and finish.

For

Crisp, articulate sound; fine build; clever engineering

Against

Sound appeals to the head more than the feet

VERDICT

The Avantis are an excellent investment. They deliver large-scale swings in dynamics, and it’s all backed up with class-leading build and finish. They’re worth a serious audition.

The Avantis are made of ceramic foam. This is unusual as most floorstanding speakers use a veneer-covered wooden board but with these towers, the base isn’t the midrange at around 130Hz – fires into an all but unknown enclosure. The midrange’s chassis is unusual too. It uses a plastic basket inside the aluminium frame to define a structure that combines rigidity, low resonance and an element of decoupling.

The unusual bass arrangement helps make the speakers less fussy about room placement. It works; the Avantis sounding balanced across a wide range of positions. We wouldn’t put them right up against a wall or in a corner, but given a little room to breathe they’re perfectly happy.

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