

# Spendor A4

Top of the 'A-Line', this compact and unassuming-looking floorstander boasts a deal of hidden refinements

Review: **David Price** Lab: **Keith Howard**

A generation or so ago, the British prided themselves on having subtle, understated good taste. But now, like the rest of the world it seems, many of us have developed a taste for all that is big, bright and shiny. Indeed, we have even adopted a new slang word for it – 'bling'. Hi-fi has not been immune to this new aesthetic, and loudspeakers – always a weathervane for the nation's cultural leanings – have played their part. The breed has become ever glossier and shinier, drawing our attention rather than blending harmoniously with domestic surroundings...

## BRITISH RESERVE

However, for those wishing to stop the world and get off, there is Spendor. This company does not produce loudspeakers in exotic, heavily radiused shapes, with gallons of gloss lacquer sprayed all over, and festooned with sparkly silvery trim rings.

The £2195 A4 floorstander under

review here is the epitome of traditional British reserve and its box-like cabinet comes in a choice of black ash, dark walnut and natural oak real wood finishes, while its plinth is finished in contrasting black satin.

Unobtrusively compact, and built in the UK, the A4 is a conventional reflex-ported two-way floorstander with Spendor's tried-and-trusted 'EP77' polymer used for the cone of its mid/bass unit. Alongside this, the 22mm polyamide dome tweeter is said to combine the extended frequency response of a small diaphragm, while its wide surround promises the low frequency characteristics of a larger diaphragm.

It sports a protective mesh grille to stop little fingers wreaking havoc, making it child – or grandchild – friendly. Both units are firmly bolted on to the speaker's baffle – again, no rebate, no rounded edges and all very reminiscent of designs from the UK speaker industry's golden years. Standing just over 83cm tall and weighing a mere

16kg, the speaker presents itself as short but sturdy. The asymmetrically braced cabinet is obviously well made, with dense sidewalls that sport Spendor's so-called Dynamic Damping inside. These are small, low mass constrained polymer dampers located at key 'energy points' within the cabinet while bonded viscoelastic damping panels are also used to dissipate vibration.

The base of the A4's cabinet accommodates four machined steel spikes that screw and secure directly into the main structure of the enclosure, keeping it very stable while also raising it another inch or so from the floor.

The company claims an 86dB sensitivity for the A4 [but see KH's Lab Report, p65] and while this isn't a stellar figure even for a smallish floorstander this loudspeaker

certainly took a fair amount of power for it to get really going. So it's not an ideal partner for a low-powered valve amp (to put it kindly), and hence you really need a sturdy solid-state design with

a ready 100W per side here. Spendor also says that the speaker can be used quite close to a rear wall, although we found that it was at its best at least 30cm away. Set much closer, and you're opening the door to room-boom!

## NATURAL CHARM

We used Devialet Expert 800s in editor PM's listening room, which was not the overkill you might imagine. Moreover – and considering the A4's limited cabinet volume – the loudspeaker sounds more than reasonably extended at the low end. There's no mistaking Spendor's new A4 for an equivalently priced KEF, Focal or B&W. It has its own distinct family sound

**RIGHT:** Spendor's A4 cabinet employs small 'constrained polymer dampers' at key points to control panel resonances. The 180mm mid/bass unit has an EP77 polymer cone and is matched to a 22mm polyamide dome tweeter

'In a world of glitzy and showy speakers, the A4 remains desirable'





