

Spendor D9.2

CHRIS FRANKLAND GETS TO GRIPS WITH THIS NEW SPENDOR FLOORSTANDER AND – AFTER FALLING UNDER ITS SPELL – HOPES THAT THIS BIG SPENDOR WILL INDEED SPEND A LITTLE TIME WITH HIM



As I pulled away from Spendor's Hailsham factory with its recently launched D-Line flagship D9.2 floorstanders in the back of my trusty old Vauxhall Corsa, the look of disbelief on the faces of those who had helped me load them, that a speaker so large could fit into a car so small, was priceless.

Although the word is much overused these days, I do not hesitate to describe Spendor as one of the UK's truly iconic brands, founded by ex-BBC man Spencer Hughes in the late Sixties. But Spendor has moved with the times, under the guidance of ex-Audiolab boss Philip Swift, who took over in 2000.

In its East Sussex factory, it vacuum forms its own bass/midrange cones, energises the magnet assemblies, wires up the crossovers, and carries out all final testing. Cabinets are made in its own 26,000sq ft plant in Sheffield, which it acquired five years ago from REL. It also produces cabinets for around 15 to 20 other UK loudspeaker brands.

The original D9, and its smaller brother the D7, was launched in 2016. Both have now been updated and it is the £7,700 D9.2 that I am reviewing here.

The D9.2 is a tall, slim three-way four-driver design with Spendor's own 22mm LPZ polyamide domed tweeter, crossing over at 4.2kHz to a 180mm EP77 polymer cone midrange driver, with two 180mm Kevlar composite bass drivers handling everything below 500Hz. A tapered, twin-venturi reflex port exits at the bottom of the back panel.

So what has changed in the .2 variant? First, Spendor says there have been dramatic improvements to the cabinet's dynamic damping materials and how they are configured. It has rejected the idea of simply mass-damping the walls to control 'cabinet talk'. Instead, as it did in the D9 and has now refined in the D9.2, it uses small, low-mass polymer dampers at key energy interface points to control unwanted vibrations by turning them into heat. It also uses asymmetric cabinet bracing to help eliminate internal standing waves.

A 'silent' cabinet

Philip tells me that he hates the approach of simply stuffing a cabinet full of foam or wool as this slows the sound down. Spendor's approach, he says, ensures a 'silent' cabinet with a fast, engaging sound.

In the D9.2, Spendor has also refined its 180mm D-Line drivers. The midrange driver is an EP77 polymer cone and the LF drivers are a Kevlar® composite. Both use cast magnesium chassis and a high-efficiency motor system. The D9.2 drivers have new polymer surrounds with a 'very stable molecular composition' that are said to reduce driver break-in time significantly. During my chat with Philip, he emphasises how critical all of the interface points are in a driver design: surround to cone; cone to voice coil former; and voice coil former to suspension spider. All these areas have been critically refined by Spendor.

