



California screaming

This Californian premier speaker brand's flagship A series model is its most advanced 'entry-level' floorstander yet

The last 18 months have seen the plans of many an ambitious company and entrepreneur at worst thwarted or at best thrown into utter disarray by the arrival and refusal to budge of the dreaded COVID. California's high-end Magico speaker brand is one such enterprise.

Back in 2019, they had planned a worldwide tour to showcase numerous new performance technologies in the very large and very expensive M9 flagship. That, of course, never happened thanks to the modern plague.

Not to be defeated, Magico took a long, hard look at their schedule and innovated, introducing instead the 'trickle-down' of tech to its A series so it ended up happening well in advance of the main event itself. This A5, deemed 'more affordable' at a mere £28k, is the 180lb/82kg gorilla of the A range, now unleashed.

Devilish detail

While the look and feel of the A5 is very much that of the company's A1 writ large, in practice the common ground diverges beyond the shared 28mm beryllium dome tweeter and use of 6061-T6 'aircraft grade' aluminium slabs for the cabinet, braced and reinforced by an internal matrix of square-section alloy tubing. Debuted in the A5, and surely the real star of the show here, is Magico's new 105mm midrange driver – the first 'pure mid' unit from the brand, working within its own sealed enclosure and isolated from the back pressure of the woofers.

It's smaller, lighter and more rigid than Magico's previous upper bass/mid units, boasting improved dispersion and a higher/wider 350Hz-2.2kHz bandwidth. The devil, as always, is in the detail and this diminutive 'Nano-Tec' driver, with its composite of modern materials is certainly most devilishly clever. Here

we find a cellular alloy honeycomb core that's skinned top and bottom with a reinforcing layer of carbon-fibre and graphene.

The increased stiffness is designed to push primary breakup resonances out beyond the cone's passband so there's less need for weighty damping countermeasures. Magico supports and terminates the cone with a very light and compliant foam surround that's simply less restrictive than a traditional rubber roll.

Sure enough, a more substantial rubber surround is deployed for the partnering 175mm woofers, but these are supporting a larger cone with a far longer throw. Otherwise these beefier drivers share the same cone

Combines a marathon runner's litheness with a sprinter's power

construction as the new mid, again with titanium for the voice-coil former but with a more powerful neodymium-doped magnet instead of the pure ferrite 'engine' of the mid.

Blackhole

We've already alluded to the Magico A5's substantial weight, the cabinet supported on equally hefty spikes, but there's much more to this brushed black anodised enclosure than its slab alloy sidewalls and internal scaffold of bracing.

Absolutely key to the cabinet's 'vibration management', is Magico's application of Blackhole 5 damping sheets to the inside surfaces of the alloy panels. This 25mm laminate of foam and glue is cut around the metal bracing matrix and applied to all the exposed internal surfaces.

Another upgrade which was due for roll-out in the M9, but issued first in the A5, are Mundorf's new 'M-Resist

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Magico A5
ORIGIN
USA
TYPE
Floorstanding loudspeaker
WEIGHT
82kg
DIMENSIONS
(HxWxD)
1137x267x378mm
FEATURES
• 28mm beryllium dome tweeter
• 105mm midrange and 3x 175mm sandwiched-coned bass drivers
• Quoted sensitivity: 88dB/1W/1m (8ohm)
DISTRIBUTOR
Absolutesounds.com
WEBSITE
magico.net

ultra foil' resistors, these boasting better power handling and thermal performance in Magico's otherwise familiar three-way 'Elliptical Symmetry' crossover network.

The passive components are heavy, so the crossover PCB is mounted flat on the base of the cabinet. True to form, it's a Linkwitz-Riley network offering fourth-order combined acoustical/electrical roll-offs, preserving positive phase across all drivers, while doing little to dent the high-ish rated 88dB/2.83V sensitivity.

Quick, deep & slick

Blessed with both Classé Delta pre/power amplifiers on hand together with a pair of Constellation Inspiration monoclones, we were rather spoiled for choice when time came to fire-up the A5s and hear what all that graphene, carbon-fibre, beryllium – and aluminium alloy – might deliver.

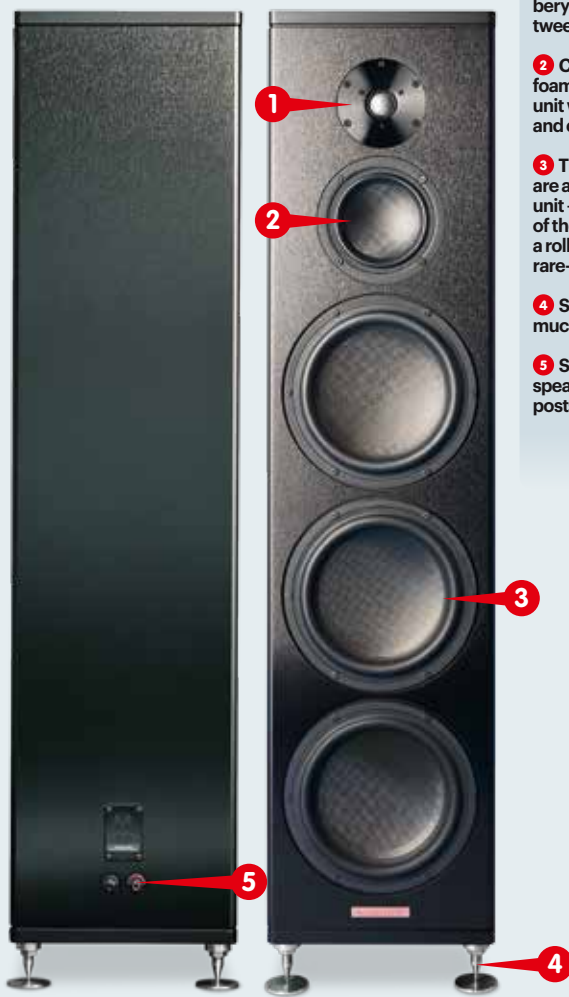
And deliver it did, not just 'in spades' but with a breathtaking lightness of touch that finds the midrange as fast and transparent as the treble, underpinned by a bass that's not only quick but as rib-ticklingly deep as it is slick.

There's not one facet of the A5's sound that's out of step with the other, its performance combining the litheness of a marathon runner with the raw power of a 100m sprinter. A quick burst of improvised jazz with Nasheet Waits opening *Untitled*

The new midrange cone is terminated by a very light foam surround



IN SIGHT



- 1 Custom 28mm beryllium dome tweeter
- 2 Custom 105mm foamed-cored mid unit with graphene and carbon-fibre skin
- 3 Three bass units are another custom unit – larger versions of the mid driver with a roll surround and rare-earth magnet
- 4 Spikes do not come much sturdier!
- 5 Single set of 4mm speaker cable binding posts

HOW IT COMPARES

While the Magico A5s are part-and-parcel of its 'affordable' A series, this flagship floorstander nonetheless commands an exceeding high-end price tag. This puts it right up there in competition with established references including the £23,500 B&W 800 D3s and £29,000 Wilson Audio Yvettes. These are both gorgeous-sounding speakers with exceptional qualities, the B&W flagship arguably closer to the A5 in overall balance and extension. If you are looking to splash your cash on something completely different then the £25,000 Uno XD from German horn specialists Avantgarde could be just the ticket for a 'live' in-room experience!

World Of Hans Zimmer – A Symphonic Celebration, recorded with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra in the gloriously ambient setting of the Vienna Konzerthaus.

The soundscape is truly massive, the scene set by the thundering score from *The Dark Knight* as the distant roar of tympani and bass roll out to the strain of strings, building an almost unbearable tension into what seems an improbably vast soundstage.

Switching scale entirely, the likes of *Madagascar: Best Friends* sounds positively breezy by way of

These are big speakers but they deal well with 'intimate'

comparison but, once again, Magico's A5s got right behind the uplifting mood of the music with high winds, piano, strings and bells combining in perfect harmony to deliver a truly joyous, happy sound. I defy you not to crack a smile...

Nooks and crannies

The A5s will soar stupendously high, descend into the black depths and expand to encompass the ambience of the grandest venue. This is a trick they pulled off yet again with the monumental *Time* from the blockbuster movie *Inception*, the sound swelling without a hint of compression or boundary only to reveal yet another layer of 'performance' as the audience breaks into unexpected applause.

We spent a full day exploring this set with Magico's A5, discovering and delighting in the finesse of musical detail that had otherwise lain hidden in the nooks and crannies of Zimmer's tour de force. Perhaps it truly takes a masterpiece of engineering to realise a masterwork of composition. ●

perfectly illustrates the A5's ability to deliver the punchy rhythm of a firmly-struck drum while maintaining the delicacy and air of accompanying cymbal strikes.

Described as a 'dream band', this headline pairing of saxophonist/composer Logan Richardson with the legendary jazz guitarist Pat Metheny does not disappoint here, especially with the atmospheric *Locked Out Of Heaven* where that gorgeously brassy sax sound just spills into the room illuminated by flashes of percussion. The speed and precision of the attack and poise of the decay is fabulous and just so... believable.

Neither does the A5 lose its composure as Richardson and Metheny start trading blows in the deceptively unassuming *Slow*, building in a crescendo of strings, piano and brass that would challenge the most confident of amplifier/loudspeaker combinations. Quite frankly, the Constellation Inspiration/Magico duo simply breezed it.

Weightless

These are big speakers, but they'll take on diddy LS3/5As and even the better electrostatics when it comes to creating 'intimate'. The exquisitely close-mic'd soprano Barbara Hannigan, joined here by a more distant Reinbert de Leeuw on piano, brings a hushed immediacy to Erik Satie's three-part avant-garde symphonic drama *Socrate*.

Again, there's that sense of weightless drivers imprinting every lisp, sibilant and vocal inflection on the air, whispering in your ear while the firm tone of piano retains a stoic but undemanding presence, both participant in and voyeur to the sensuality of the piece. The music is simple, elegant, ravishing and the A5s reveal every lyrical note and breath of air without artifice. They are confident but invisible.

These speakers are capable of so much more, of course, and there's no bigger stage upon which the A5s might stretch their legs than with *The*

Hi-FiChoice

OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY**
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Lightness, transparency, bass kick
- VALUE FOR MONEY**
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Nothing at all of note
- BUILD QUALITY**
★★★★★ **WE SAY:** The A5 is something very special indeed
- EASE OF DRIVE**
★★★★★

OVERALL

