



Quad 12L

£500



FOR

Rock-hard bass; dynamics; detailed delivery; awesome depth of field; build and finish

AGAINST

Unforgiving, what you play is what you hear

VERDICT

Like the 11L, this Quad offers stunning value for money. Massively transparent but a joy with the right kit and recordings

YOU'RE HAVING AN impromptu footie match in the park and it turns out one of the opposition's related to a famous player – and he's a bit handy, too. Nothing worse. This is how the other speakers in this test must feel about the majestic-looking Quad 12L.

For those unfamiliar with the Quad's sibling, the £379 11L is our 2003 speaker Product of the Year. It's a stunner but if we are being hypercritical we could ask for a touch more bass weight. Well, a larger cabinet tends to mean greater bass weight and the 12L offers extra volume... so bring on the test.

The 12L's mid/bass driver features a resin-impregnated Kevlar diaphragm. The idea is the resin stiffens the cone, while the inherent self-damping properties of woven Kevlar keeps cone resonance to a minimum. This unit is 1.5in larger than the 11L's mid/bass driver, and the tweeter used is found in both versions.

But, as we know (see Monitor Audio's Bronze B6) one successful speaker doesn't guarantee a winning range. Not always, but in action, the 12L is awesome. Move the speakers away from the wall – this gives the twin rear port room to breathe – and the depth of field is such you can almost believe you are listening in surround sound. Excellent.

And remember our minor moan concerning the 11L's bass weight? Well, big bruv solves that one – the 12L dives

deeper and carries extra force. It falls just short of the depth of its stand-mounter rival, the Dynaudio Audience 52, but delivery is rock hard. Hakan Lidbo's Morricone remix belts out with precision timing and the monitors handle even the devilishly tricky beats from *Devdas's* soundtrack with skill.

Dynamics are wonderful and detail resolution is best in class – definitely a case of uncovering nuances other rivals miss. The midrange is rich and informative, though falls just short of the 11L's abilities. We reckon that's the trade off for the extra bass weight.

Our only word of warning concerns possible partners. The Quads are hugely transparent, unforgiving speakers – in other words a bad recording sounds bad – so try to avoid lean or similarly characterised electronics. Another Quad, another L of a speaker.



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