

Hi-ho silver lining

Monitor Audio improves its Silver line-up... but we won't make a fuss, though it's obvious!

PRODUCT Monitor Audio Silver RS8

TYPE Floorstanding loudspeaker

PRICE £800 per pair

KEY FEATURES Size (WxHxD): 18.5x90x27cm
Weight: 21kg • 150mm C-CAM (Ceramic Coated Aluminium Magnesium) mid and bass cones • 25mm C-CAM tweeter • Sensitivity/impedance: 91dB/6 ohms

CONTACT ☎ 01268 740580
🌐 www.monitoraudio.co.uk

“New drivers and new cabinet design mark a further leap in quality for Monitor Audio's Silver loudspeakers" is how the opening of the press release for the Silver RS range reads. Created to meet the needs of the most demanding music lovers and home cinema enthusiasts (well, it says so in the same release), the Silver RS range includes a number of improvements over previous models. In particular, the C-CAM (Ceramic Coated Aluminium Magnesium alloy) cone drivers – which were first specified in the previous Silver S series – have been radically improved. The other key claims are for cosmetic improvements, although changes in drive unit also usually entail improvements to the rest of the design in general.

The RS8 is ostensibly a straightforward floorstander, built into a strictly rectilinear, wood-veneered enclosure that stands 90cm tall. Its solidity is reinforced by the 21kg deadweight, and by the solid overhanging base that is supplied in the box. It is not exactly under-endowed with drive units either, though electrically it's only a two-and-a-half-way system, consisting of a 25mm tweeter and a 150mm midrange unit, supplemented at the lowest frequencies by two 150mm bass drivers rather than the usual one. Front and rear facing reflex ports are used to tune the bass, which has LF response extending to a claimed 33Hz, and although there is nothing to indicate whether this is at -3dB or any other figure, bass extension is subjectively impressive and of excellent quality too. Sensitivity is high at 91dB per watt (at one meter), which in practice is slightly enhanced by the six-ohm nominal impedance. The other notable factor that falls out of the figures is the high

175-watt power handling figure. Again, the precise meaning of power handling numbers is always open to interpretation, but the load sharing effect of the three bass and midrange drivers is a major factor.

The most interesting technology on display here is the Ceramic Coated Aluminium Magnesium alloy mid and bass driver cone construction which, says Monitor Audio, "has been further developed from the Silver S series equivalent to enhance its mechanical properties".

The cones also feature a cast polymer chassis that is said to help damp residual energy injected by reaction forces from the cone. Similarly, the C-CAM Gold (anodised) dome tweeter has been engineered for a 25kHz nominal bandwidth, though it would be surprising if the first break-up mode was not well under 20kHz. In fact, we think it's audible. There have also been improvements made to the cabinet, which is slim of line and "bolder and more architectural" than the old S-series boxes, with improved internal bracing and damping. There is something very muscular and utilitarian looking about the RS8, notwithstanding the good-quality wood veneer finish.

SOUND QUALITY

It is a curious, but irrefutable fact that hi-fi components often sound how they look. More correctly, their appearance may suggest how they sound, and this is as good an example of the anthropic principle that we have stumbled across for a while. Just consider: the front panel is plastered with acres of drive units, and the natural presumption is that it is a ballsy speaker, with plenty of bass and midband output, lots of drive, and perhaps a slight shortfall of the high-end virtues – sophistication, detail and sweetness.

Which is more or less how the Monitor Audio Silver RS8 pans out. This is a loudspeaker with real balls, which consistently goes louder, deeper and fuller than you would reasonably credit from a box this size. The tremendous opening drum entry at the start of Mahler's *Third Symphony* hits hard, and with a wonderfully characterful, resonant delivery that makes the most of the drums' character, as well as delivering real impact.

It's a *tour de force*, but so is the toe-curling slide guitar opening of

