



GoldenEar Technologies Triton 7

By now, regular readers of this magazine will be familiar with the GoldenEar Technology loudspeaker brand – the brainchild of industry veteran Sandy Gross, whose work with Definitive Technology, Polk Audio and many others is the stuff of audio legends.

Gross has a knack for designing speakers that look understated, yet overdeliver – and that in itself is a rare enough occurrence in audio terms. But while much of the attention has been on GoldenEar's flagship Triton One, it's by no means the only speaker in the range worth talking about.

The Triton Seven is a good case in point. It's not only the most affordable floorstander in the GoldenEar range, but also one of the most talented. And while it does without the active sub-bass module that is a feature of the larger Tritons, the Seven's ability to deliver a big, deep bottom end is startling.

But let me not get ahead of myself. The Triton Seven looks like a down-scaled version of the Two we reviewed a few months ago. In reality it's slim and compact, with a gloss-finished, rounded top 'cap' and a similarly finished plinth, which accepts adjustable coupling spikes, or rounded feet for those concerned about floor damage.

The enclosure features a tapered design that places the baffle at an angle, which not only benefits time alignment but also ensures that the baffle and rear panel are not perpendicular, thus combating standing waves.

The same goes for the side panels, which aren't parallel because the front panel is narrower than the rear. Substantial bracing, and carefully applied damping material, create an enclosure that is inert and resonance resistant – in other words, a perfect home for the drive units.

The speaker's main chassis is covered in an acoustically transparent cloth that can be removed (with some effort), to reveal a trio of drivers located high up on

the baffle. Two compact, 133 mm mid/bass drivers partner a Heil-type transducer – or what GoldenEar Technologies terms a High-Velocity Folder Ribbon.

This transducer works by squeezing air, rather than moving it pistonically and is known for its agile response, ultra-low distortion and smooth, linear tonal

delivery in the high frequency band.

The mid-bass drivers located above and below the HVFR in a typical D'Appolito configuration were specifically developed for this application, and combine a long-throw suspension with a bespoke polypropylene cone material in the interests of both power handling and midrange lucidity.



And that's the bottom line here: the Triton Sevens sound big and powerful, with an extended tonal range that reaches down lower than expected, while also doing full justice to the rest of the spectrum.



VITAL STATS

Located at the base of the enclosure, and positioned laterally, are a pair of 200 mm passive sub-bass radiators which interact with the energy of the mid/bass drivers inside the enclosure to boost low-frequency performance. The effect is similar to a transmission line design, GoldenEar claims, but with better transient performance and control.

I ran the Sevens with our usual Electrocompaniet PI-2D integrated amplifier for much of the review period, but also tried them in conjunction with a Primare PRE32 pre-amp and A34.2 power amp combo. Our Oppo acted as both a disc transport and a media player, reading music from an external hard drive, and delivering it to the PI-2D in the digital domain.

Diana Krall's latest release, *Wallflower* is a lavishly produced retrospective of mainly Seventies pop and soft rock ballads: 'California Dreamin' (The Mamas and the Papas), 'Desperado' (The Eagles), and 'I'm Not In Love' (10cc), to name a few.

Krall's vocals dominate the full-scored orchestral arrangements, which fill the soundstage to the brim, and can easily

Enclosure type	Sealed floorstander, dual bass radiators
Drive units	1x High-Velocity Folded Ribbon tweeter 2x 133 mm mid/bass drivers 2x 200 mm passive sub-bass radiators
Bi-wiring	No
Impedance	8 ohms compatible
Sensitivity	89 dB
Frequency response	29 Hz – 35 kHz
Power handling	10 – 300 watts
Dimensions (HxWxD)	1 022 x 184 x 279 mm
Weight	14,5 kg each

PRICE..... R22 990

VERDICT

Here's a speaker that boxes so far above its weight that you'll be convinced the price tag is a mistake. Near reference-quality openness and transparency, with more bass wallop than you'd expect.

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OUR RATING: 89 / 100





overwhelm lesser systems. But the Triton Sevens opened up the sound, using the full width and depth of the sonic space to extract and express every element of the performance.

The strings sounded majestic, presented in layers of sound that emphasised the scale and depth of the sonic image, but never to the detriment of Krall and her subtly presented piano, both of which remained firmly rooted at centre stage.

Much grittier, much ballsier and certainly more invigorating is Robert Plant's latest set. Drawing from styles and influences both familiar and exotic, the ex-Led Zeppelin veteran continues his decades-long quest for new musical frontiers, and pushes the listener to do likewise.

The Tritons managed the unthinkable (at least in floorstanding speaker terms) by becoming completely transparent, as if the music itself had swallowed them up. They projected the music with such vigour and detail that the sound seemed to transcend the constraints of the listening room.

I thoroughly enjoyed the way the

Sevens were able to make the most of the music's pace and attack, and how they were able to reflect the power of the percussion, the jagged guitars and Plant's almost melancholy vocals on 'Embrace Another Fall'.

Here too, the inherent lucidity of the speakers, and their ability to project their musical wares with air and space, ensured that all the individual elements of even the most saturated passages could be clearly heard and appreciated.

Tonal depth was astounding: the Sevens produced a bass deep and muscular enough to add vital foundation and substance to the music. On Steve Earl's latest set, *Terraplane*, the acoustic bass can often become overwhelming, but here, the big instrument sounded composed and articulate, while still delivering an almost tactile, bone-rattling bottom end.

Nor were the floorstanders in the least intimidated by the dynamic swings, the delicate details and the thrilling agility of Mozart's violin concertos, performed with verve and enthusiasm by Marianne Thorsen and the Trondheimsolistene. They revelled in the challenge of expressing the sheer joy of the playing, and always sounded bigger and more composed than their relatively compact dimensions would suggest.

And that's the bottom line here: the Triton Sevens sound big and powerful, with an extended tonal range that reaches down lower than expected, while also doing full justice to the rest of the spectrum.

Add transparency, detail retrieval and an overall sense of sonic cohesion, and the result is an exceptional speaker that should cost a lot more – and because it doesn't, it also earns kudos for value and affordability. I haven't heard the Triton One yet, but in bang for the buck terms, the Triton Seven represents a very tempting offering.

Deon Schoeman

Associated Equipment

Oppo BPD-95EU universal deck
Primare PRE32/A34.2 pre/power
Electrocompaniet PI-2D integrated amplifier
KEF R500 loudspeakers
13-inch MacBook Pro/i7 2,7 GHz/ 8 GB RAM /OSX Mavericks/
Audirvana Plus 1.5.12
Ayre QB-9 USB DAC

Software

Robert Plant – lullaby and ... The Ceaseless Roar
Annie Lennox – Nostalgia
Diana Krall – Wallflower
Steve Earl and the Dukes – Terraplane
Mozart – Violin Concertos 3,4, and 5 – Marianne Thorsen/
Trondheimsolistene