

Affordable\$\$Audio

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Aperion Audio S8-APR Powered Subwoofer By Mark Marcantonio

Specifications

Dimensions: 13" x 12.25" x 12.5"

Weight: 27.5 lbs.

Amp Power (Continuous): 150 Watts

Amp Power (Maximum): 240 Watts

Frequency Response: 35 Hz to 180 Hz

Low Pass Crossover: Variable from 40-180 Hz

Phase Adjustment: Switchable 0 or 180 degrees

Enclosure Type: Sealed with two passive radiators

Warranty: 10 Years/ 3Year on Subwoofer Amplifier

Price: \$399, Sold Direct from www.aperionaudio.com Includes 30 Day free in-home trial



No piece of audio equipment suffers from a love-hate relationship between owner and spouse more than a subwoofer. The ability to deliver a quality low end thrills the audio fan, yet the substantial box it comes in irritates the spouse's visual desire for appropriate décor. Various companies have tried to make the box less obtrusive, mostly to the detriment of sound quality. A few companies have tried to change the equation by looking at shrinking the size of the cabinet by first reducing the driver size. For small rooms, the smaller footprint worked, but some would argue that it limited the response characteristics. What to do, what to do....?

Aperion Audio, being a young company decided to take a fresh look at this conundrum. In designing the S8-APR, the first decision was that it would target apartment and condominium dwellers. Second, that performance was not to be sacrificed. The key was keeping an open mind towards possible solutions. Taking a page from some speaker manufacturers from the 1980's, Aperion went back to the usage of passive radiators. For those of you a bit on the youthful side, a passive radiator is a coned speaker without a magnet or wired connection. It takes the place of a tuned port, creating sound by the pushing of air against its cone. Today, ports are the rage, mainly due to cost savings, not to mention the reduction in cabinet size. A big concern in using ports is the issue of "chuffing", a turbulence caused by the expelling of air through a port. Various manufacturers have tried all sorts of ways to reducing, if not eliminating of this anomaly. By going with passive radiator, Aperion avoided fighting the chuffing war.

The advantage of passive radiators in the S8-APR is the recognition that chances are that the owner probably is using mini-monitors or satellites, leaving a wide frequency gap. In the upper bass, the sound can still be directionally recognized, therefore, by mounting the 8-inch passive radiators on the

side panels to the powered woofer the issue is negated. This gives the listener the benefits of full range bass dynamics.



Construction

Like all Aperiion speakers, the S8-APR uses one inch thick MDF (industry standard is $\frac{3}{4}$), this gives the unit an extremely solid to feel, not to mention a few added pounds. The sample I reviewed came in a very nice tannish cherry veneer with a perfectly smooth satin sheen. The built-in 150 wpc amplifier is a very simple, clean design. The left half of the back panel contains all the connections, knobs and switches. Across the top are five-way binding posts for first left channel output, then input, followed by the right channel posts. Below the posts are the RCA line in/line out plugs. Then comes the level output knob, followed by the adjustable crossover knob that ranges from 40hz to 180hz. The bottom section is reserved for the power cord, phase switch, power switch with auto sensor, and a 240/120 electrical switch.

The legs on the Aperiion are flush pieces of the same veneered MDF as the rest of the cabinet. At first this may seem rather cheap in comparison to the rubber/plastic feet of other manufacturers, however, instead it is used a base for the mounting of the provided brass spikes. Simplicity strikes again.

Listening

In order to enjoy the full effect on bass dynamics I paired the S8-APR with the Onix SP-3 integrated SET tube amplifier (38 wpc), Totem MITES speakers, Toshiba DVD player and the Apple 60 gig iPod (AIFF tracks). During the various listening sessions, I moved the subwoofer around the rooms in an attempt to simulate the many possible placements. I detected very little difference between one spot and another, which I attribute to the passive radiators. This was extremely true while playing *Gaia* by James Taylor. The thundering effect in the final third of the recording was eerily familiar to my years spent in Denver during the late afternoon monsoons. During a recent rainy September day in Portland (t-storms are rare here), I even proceeded to crank up the system. My wife came out of her office asking if I heard the thunder above the music!

On another occasion, I put in my dvd of *The Right Stuff*, with its opening sequence of Chuck Yeager breaking the sound barrier in the X-1. The audio in this scene is in my opinion, some of the best sound recording ever done. What impressed me was the control the S8-APR had. I heard many subs indiscriminately boom away, rather than recreate what was originally recorded. The Aperiion stayed faithful, allowing for this scene and others be appreciated for its overall multimedia impact.

Its shining moment, however, happened while replaying the late John Entwistle's classic bass playing from The Who song, *Eminence Front*. Rarely, do audio systems capture the force, and more impor-

tantly, the clarity of his chords. Instead of mush and rumble, the S8-APR's produce a rich thread weaving itself through the entire song.

I would be remiss not to express my appreciation for the clean pass-thru of the crossover network. Aperion sound engineers put forth the extra effort in creating a clean bypass of circuitry. There were times during my audition of the Onix SP-3 that I didn't want the S8-APR performing, but I didn't want to take the time to disconnect the sub. After A-Bing the difference between keeping the sub connected or not, I could not, hear any difference sonically.

Conclusion

The Aperion Audio S8-APR, is an excellent example of what happens when a young audio company, free from history, puts forth a new product. A fresh look and result that benefits not only the company, and the customer, but the industry as a whole. By going "Back to the Future" in using passive radiators, Aperion was able to overcome most subwoofer fanatics complaints about small cabinet/driver size limitations. The S8-APR has changed my view about subwoofers, they can add a much desired acoustic embellishment without the auditory fatigue of teenagers car stereo boomfest. By judiciously using the level control, even the most anti-boom listener can find a comfort zone. If you're at all curious about adding a subwoofer, take a chance and order the Aperion's for a thirty day test run, after all, even the return shipping is free!



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