

# Affordable\$\$Audio

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## **My Last Speaker Purchase (I'm serious): VMPS Tower II SE** By Brad Mitchell

Yep. I said it. And given my track record, I'll understand if you don't believe me. But these speakers are my last major HT speaker purchase for a loooonnnng time. There's absolutely no reason to upgrade anymore because this is perhaps as good as it gets (in my price range).

I suppose you're wondering what kind of speakers I recently acquired? Oh yeah, they are....

a fantastic pair of VMPS Tower II SE

First, let's talk aesthetics. These speakers are HUGE!!! They are 44" high, 16" wide and 16" deep. Quite frankly, they overwhelm my 13' x 20' room. Because of that, the WAF ain't very high on these. However, the finish is beautiful. I love the burgundy veneer and it goes well with the décor.

The speakers have 5 drivers each – a super-tweeter, tweeter, midrange, two 12" carbon fiber woofers, and a passive, downward firing 12" woofer. They also have three pots to tweak the treble, midrange, and super-tweeter. There are dual binding posts with internal jumpers. A switch on the back of each speaker controls whether the speakers are to run full range or bi-wired/bi-amped. These speakers are very efficient and dip down to 20 Hz. I'm guessing they weigh about 125 lbs. each.

So how do they sound? Well, the soundstage is exceptional – far better than the Polk SDA-CRS+ they replaced, and the Polk's were outstanding. Not surprisingly, the VMPS' sound much fuller and thicker than anything I've had before. In fact, these speakers make my entire system sound more like an actual movie theater.

The bass – awh man, the bass, exceptionally controlled and clean as a whistle. A few weeks ago I was using an Onix digital equalization system. The Onix works great and I said I would eventually buy it again, but these speakers sound just like I have the Onix hooked up because the bass is clean and is not localizable. My DIY 15" sub seems to sound more refined. For some reason, fewer things are rattling in the room, but all of the bass is still there.



For example, on one of these LOTR movies, there is a scene where mammoths are engaging the enemy in a battle sequence. With the VMPS', it sounds like the mammoths' footsteps are charging right at you because the fronts can convey all of the bass. And when Darla taps the glass, the entire room becomes the fish bowl, not just the area surrounding the seating position.

The most impressive aspect of these speakers is that I'm finally getting close to true surround sound. I didn't think it was possible in my room because the seating position is against the rear wall, but dammit, I feel like I'm in the middle of the action. The front speakers are somehow working in tandem with the surround speakers and my surrounds sound better than ever.

I've got bass all over the place – the fronts go down to 20 Hz, my sub goes well below 20 Hz, and my center channel goes down to 27 Hz. If anyone ever tells you that low bass is not necessary for your fronts because you have a subwoofer, they don't know what the hell they're talking about. As many of you know, I've tried a bunch of speakers, and the top three speakers I've had all had substantial bass (25 Hz or less).

Bottom line – this is the best sounding system I've had by a very wide margin. I don't know what else to say.

Lessons learned:

1. Bass all over the place – that's what I been preaching. Strive for it.
2. For HT, size matters. Buy the biggest, baddest speakers you can afford.
3. Sometimes you got to make an executive decision and ignore WAF. Buying big ass speakers is one of those times.
4. Stop settling. I've spent a lot of money over the years experimenting with speakers because I didn't pursue what I really wanted (the main reason – fear of WAF). Buy big and don't look back.
5. When a good deal comes along and it's an item you've been salivating for, jump on it. Don't even think twice.

In a few days I may be tempted to hook my tube amp and tube CDP up to the VMPS speakers and see what it sounds like. Hmmmm. I expect them to sound positively delicious in 2-channel mode.

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