

# hi-fi news

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& Record Review

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REVIEWS  
SEPARATES,  
VINTAGE  
& MUSIC

# ULTIMATE HI-FI 2015

The year's finest products  
and essential music

PLUS

THE  
HI-FI SHOW

Preview of  
the UK's premier  
high-end event,  
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Over 60  
standout  
separates tested

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of yesteryear

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Our columnists!

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• TRANSISTOR & TUBE AMPS Audio Research to Rotel • HEADPHONE AMPS Auralic to Simaudio  
• LOUDSPEAKERS & HEADPHONES AKG to Wilson Audio • VINTAGE B&O, Meridian, Technics & more

HI FI NEWS YEARBOOK



0 74820 90111 3

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PRINTED IN UK

AUDIO  
FILE

Two-way standmount loudspeaker  
 Made by: International Audio Holding, The Netherlands  
 Supplied by: Absolute Sounds Ltd  
 Telephone: 0208 971 3909  
 Web: www.crystalcable.com; www.absolutesounds.com  
 Price: £9998



# Crystal Cable Arabesque Minissimo

Derived from the dearer Arabesque Mini, the £9998-per-pair Minissimo is Crystal Cable's most populist take yet on its highly original speaker shape. The price includes integral pedestals, which are fixed at the factory – making these small monitors for standmount use only.

The original idea was to create a speaker with 'continuously curved walls'. Unlike its dearer siblings' multi-part construction this charming little beauty is actually milled from a single piece of 'metal loaded polymer material'. The result

'The bongos were so vivid that we looked up in a moment of confusion'

is a true monocoque enclosure noteworthy for its sublime finish.

Yes, the Minissimo is a non-resonant, robust work of art that oozes luxury. Even the three-legged integral pedestal is a carefully-devised stand, with the cylindrical supports arranged to follow the profile in three diameters and create a further visual treat.

Add to that a choice of colours using automotive paint – the review pair was in Solar Orange, but you can opt for Aquamarine Blue or Pearl White – and you have aesthetics that are hard to fault.

Crystal Cable also found that, in addition to simplifying the construction, the new material and manufacturing methodology allowed it to exercise even greater control over the curvature of the walls as well as their thickness. This, in turn, allowed optimisation of the structure's resonant behaviour and

determining the internal volume with greater precision.

Crystal Cable fits this enclosure with the same 25mm tweeter and 150mm woofer used in the Arabesque Mini, addressed by a 'new topology' crossover. We measured a minimum 7.2ohm impedance and the speaker seemed easy to drive.

## WALL TO WALL ARRAY

We found the SACD of the Grateful Dead's *American Beauty* [Mobile Fidelity] inescapably involving. Stage width was almost deliriously broad, a wall-to-wall experience that placed the musicians across the room in an array free of 'holes' between the players.

The Minissimo's seamlessness was evident in airiness and textures of

unimpeachable uniformity. Listening to *Simon & Garfunkel: The Complete Albums Collection* [Columbia Legacy], we were struck by the sheer naturalness of the bass. The bongos stage-left on 'Patterns' were so vivid that we looked up more than once in a moment of confusion between reality and reproduction.

Then there was the exquisite detail retrieval. There was nothing hygienic about this abundance of information, with everything kept in proportion. But so clear and clean was the playback that subtleties were always easily discernible.

## VERDICT

The audiophile world is not short of sublime, small two-ways with big price tags. But the Minissimos combine so many virtues – sweet sound, ease of use, gorgeous looks – that it's impossible not to smile when you see and hear them. ☺

**RIGHT:** Machined-from-solid cabinet has seamless surfaces and a flawless finish. Its downward-firing port allows great siting options, irrespective of proximity to rear walls, while the superb WBT silver terminals accept spades, bananas or bare speaker cables



## HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Sensitivity (SPL/1m/2.83Vrms – Mean/EC/Music)	80,1dB/81.0dB/80.7dB
Impedance modulus min/max (20Hz–20kHz)	7.2ohm @ 47Hz 74ohm @ 86Hz
Impedance phase min/max (20Hz–20kHz)	-61° @ 96Hz 55° @ 23Hz
Pair matching (200Hz–20kHz)	±1.0dB
LF/HF extension (-6dB ref 200Hz/10kHz)	43Hz / >40kHz/>40kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL/1m)	1.4% / 0.2% / 0.2%
Dimensions (HWD, inc. stand)	960x300x250mm