



STEREO SPEAKERS
Monitor Audio
Platinum PL300
£5000



STEREO SPEAKERS
Wilson Benesch
Trinity
£4700 Page 78



STEREO SPEAKERS
ProAc
Response D Two
£1750 Page 79



CD PLAYER/AMPLIFIER
Plinius
CD101/9200
£3000 each Page 80



INTERCONNECT CABLE
Audioquest
Niagara XLR
£980/metre Page 81

Temptations

THE WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE KIT

STEREO SPEAKERS
MONITOR AUDIO
PLATINUM PL300
★★★★★
£ 5000

FOR

A transparent and articulate sound; seamless presentation; exceptional build and finish

AGAINST

Works best in a larger room

VERDICT

If you've got five grand to spend and want a pair of big floorstanders, these Monitor Audios should be right at the top of your list

Monitor Audio is exploring new ground and true high technology with its **Platinum PL300**. And, with ribbon tweeters and a ground-up design, they're real winners

MONITOR AUDIO MAKES some of the best budget to mid-priced speakers around. Yet nothing it's done in the past three decades or so prepares you for just how good these floorstanders are.

The Platinums have been a long time coming. They were first announced more than a year ago, but the company would not release them until every detail was spot-on. The wait was worth it.

The drive units are ground-up designs that owe little to those used on any of the brand's existing products. The highlight is the ribbon tweeter: it's an in-house unit rather than bought off-the-shelf from an OEM manufacturer - the route most other manufacturers take when they want to include this type of exotic design. The mid and bass drivers aren't simple variations of the metal drive units Monitor Audio normally uses, either. Their cones are made from aluminium and magnesium skins separated and damped by a nomex honeycomb resin. In theory, the light, rigid and well-behaved cone should result in a detailed and agile sound.

Low distortion, high-quality finish

The cabinets are all new, too: the plinth, front baffle and internal midrange enclosure are made from a mineral-loaded polymer said to be inert and optimally damped. The idea is to minimise cabinet-related distortion, and so deliver clearer results. Add low-key yet classy cosmetics, plus arguably the best-finished cabinet at anywhere near this price level and, on-paper at least, the PL300s would seem to have enough to get the competition worried.

"It's the way they handle subtleties, and the seamless integration that impress"

After all that it would be a shame if the sonics disappointed. They don't. In short, the PL300 are some of the best speakers we've heard. The sound is simple to sum up: it's transparent and massively detailed. That tweeter deserves some of the credit, but unless the partnering drivers, crossover and cabinets all do their jobs equally well, such a sound just isn't possible. There's none of the edgy quality that ribbon tweeters and metal drive units can suffer from. These are remarkably insightful speakers that reveal the production differences

between the compressed, hard-charging songs of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Diana Krall's immaculately recorded *All For You* with breathtaking ease.

These are big speakers with twinned bass drivers, so it'll come as no surprise that you get plenty of bottom end. The good news is that you get excellent definition and speed along with the quantity. Note that these Monitor Audios need a medium-to-large room plus plenty of space around them if you're to get the best results. However, unlike many rivals, the PL300s aren't overly fussy about their precise positioning or toe-in angle.

Transparent, detailed, beautiful sound

These floorstanders' other pleasing qualities include decent timing and strong dynamics, though we have to say it's the way they handle subtleties, and the seamless integration between the drivers that impress us the most.

The PL300s are far and away the best speakers we've heard from Monitor Audio - and we can't think of similarly priced rivals we prefer.

TECH SPECS



TYPE Floorstander
SENSITIVITY 90dB/w/m
IMPEDANCE 4 ohms
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 28Hz-30kHz
POWER HANDLING 300 watts
BIWIRE Yes
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 111 x 41 x 47cm
WEIGHT 44kg each
FINISH Ebony, Santos rosewood, Black piano gloss lacquer