



Greg Weaver

The Absolute Sound's 2017 Golden Ear Awards



Audience adeptResponse aR12-TSSOX power conditioner

\$12,845

This iteration of the dozen-plus-year-old adeptResponse lineup of purely passive power conditioners ups Audience's previously standard-setting technology to an entirely new level. I feel that the aR12-TSSOX represents such a substantial improvement over its predecessors that it would be fair to say that it borders on an order of magnitude better. This new TSSOX line of conditioners incorporates several advances beyond all Audience's previous enhancements, starting with 6-nines-pure OCC (Ohno Continuous Casting) in the ver high-quality XLPE (cross-linked polyethylene) jacket implemented throughout, copper duplexes plated with rhodium, and gold-plated copper forks to connect the filter capacitors to each of the outlets. Finally, the new TSSOX is powered by the newer Au24 SE powerChord. Immediately apparent was darker and quieter background silence, which had the additional benefit of offering an enhanced sense of space. In addition, everything grew substantively more organic-sounding, less "granular," and more coherent and cohesive. The midrange was creamier in texture and more "fleshed" out, with greater body and bloom, while bass detail and definition were also notably improved. This is a world-class device. Give one a listen—perhaps the 6- or 2-socket variety—but GW warns, be prepared to buy it once you hear its effect. (Reviewed in Issue 268) tas

YG Acoustics Sonja XV loudspeaker

\$265,900

Though the speaker was never submitted for a more formal in-home review, I was granted an extended private audition of the Sonja XV in GTT Audio's 20' by 35' by 11' primary listening room in New Jersey last September. Developed in conjunction with YG Acoustics' 15th anniversary, the XV (representing both the Roman numeral for 15 and an initialization of eXtreme Version) is the ultimate manifestation of founder Yoav Geva's design goals in a cost-no-object statement loudspeaker. One of the first things that sets the four-tower, 20-driver Sonja XV apart from other YG products, and any of its competition as well, is the new BilletDome tweeter, which combines a stiff, light airframe machined from aluminum billet, covered by, and supporting, a resonance-free soft-dome material. The voices of all the XV drivers are extraordinarily effortless, wholly organic in texture, and exquisitely fluid-sounding, affording them an almost unique intelligibility. Yet they render dynamic scaling, explosive dynamic events, and macrodynamic expression like a good horn system. Soundstaging is astonishingly accurate in all three dimensions, with images precisely sized and located. Timbre is rich and full, with vivid, lifelike color and naturally rendered instrumental voices. The XV's constantly recreated music with disarming ease and clarity, seemingly boundless space, effortless air, and natural body and bloom. Their "of one voice" performance is the most convincing I have yet heard from any four-cabinet, complex-driver speaker system, with none of the discontinuity (most apparent with the external woofers) noted with other such multi-enclosure systems. (Not reviewed)