

The Finn is their smallest speaker, introduced last year at the Consumer Electronics Show. A three-way design, it utilizes a six-inch woofer that crosses over to a five-inch midrange at 150hz and again to a one-inch soft-dome tweeter (the same unit used in the larger Rienzi) at 4000hz. A first order slope is used between the woofer and midrange driver, making for an extremely smooth transition. Combined with a rear port, they offer deeper LF response than you might expect from a small pair of cabinets. The midrange crosses over to the tweeter with a third order network.

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The cabinets on the Finn's are flawless, as they are with every Verity speaker I've had the chance to experience. The review pair came in a satin white finish, which was absolutely smashing in my living room with oak floors, black leather furniture and a Noguchi table. The other standard finishes include piano black and walnut. Alternate wood finishes are available at an additional charge. Check with your Verity dealer for charge and delivery details. Personally, I really like the white...

The Finn's have an MSRP of \$5,995 per pair in satin white. Part of the cost savings in this model is the one-piece cabinet design; by eliminating the labor necessary for separate woofer and mid/tweeter cabinets as well as the massive aluminum plate between the two allowed for substantial cost savings and a lighter speaker.

There is only one set of high-quality binding posts for connection at the bottom of the enclosure. These are the same binding posts that Verity uses with all of their speakers, with machined brass hexagonal nuts that are easy to tighten with the supplied wrench. It's a nice extra touch that Verity extends from their flagship speaker all the way down the line. Though this is their entry-level speaker system, there is never a sense that anything has been scrimped on to meet a price point. The Finn is as handsome as their top of the line Lohengrin II (with an MSRP of approximately \$90k per pair).



Setup

Thanks to their relatively small size, the Finn's are easy for one person to set up. Even in the relatively tight placement situation in my living room (11 x 17 feet), the rear-firing woofer never proved a problem to work around as do some side-firing designs. In a larger space, they were very easy to set up, especially since Verity speakers have always been in my reference room. Using the measurements from where the slightly larger Rienzi's were used two years ago, the Finn's ended up about six inches closer together and a few inches closer to the wall.

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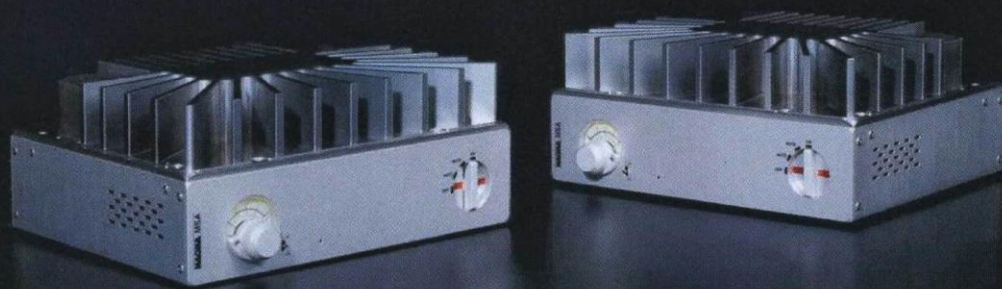
Either way, this is a speaker that is quite user friendly. They benefit from attention to fine tuning and placement, but if you are off by a few inches at first, they will not suffer dramatically. Once the speakers have spent a couple hundred hours breaking in, taking the time to optimize placement from the rear wall (and final spiking) will offer up the last bit of bass slam. Optimizing each speaker's distance to the rear wall on all three axes will benefit the image depth. As with any high-performance speaker, when you take the time to finesse the setup, you will hear the speaker really lock in to the room. The better the quality of your reference gear, the easier this process will be.

Larger Than Their Size Suggests

The Finn's do a fantastic job of offering "big speaker" sound in a compact package, and this is truly their strength. When my non-audiophile friends heard the Finn's playing from the other room, they all expected a much larger speaker. The speakers' above-average sensitivity means you probably won't need a big amplifier to make them create magic in your listening room either. We made it a point to use the Finn's with a wide range of amplifiers from the two-watt-per-channel Decware SET (which worked incredibly well at low volume levels) to the mighty McIntosh MC1.2kw monoblocks. Efficient crossover design made for high performance with low power, and the Finn's were equally at home with solid-state or vacuum-tube power amplifiers, so system compatibility will not be an issue with these speakers. FYI: the 30wpc Naim UnitiQUTE was a match made in Heaven with the Finn's. *(continued)*

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REVIEW

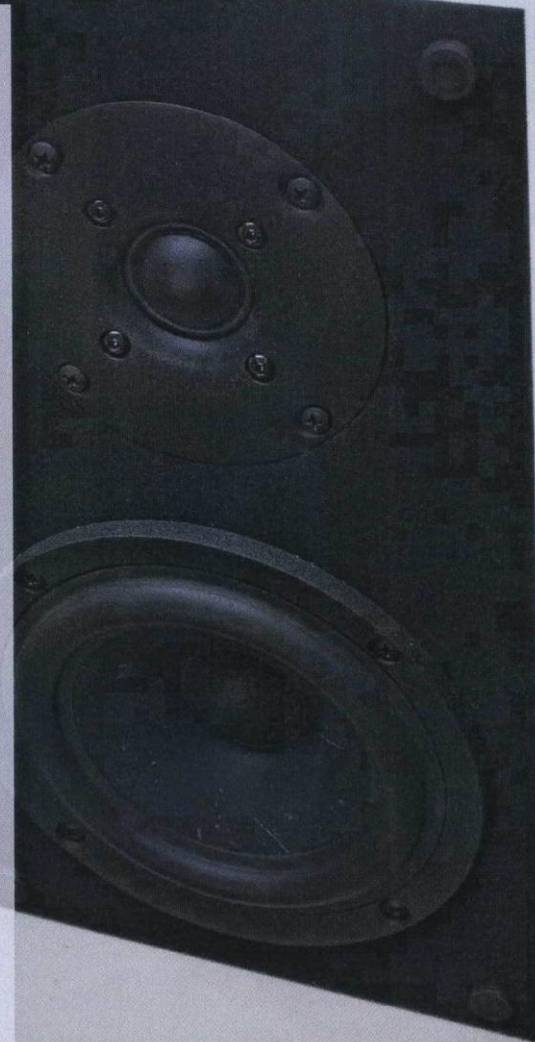
As I had some new Blue Note LPs from Music Matters to get in rotation, a lot of the initial listening was done with some straightforward jazz, a task in which the Finn's excelled. The second I cued up Grant Green's *Solid*, I was digging the way the Finn's handled this jazz classic. Being biased heavily towards panels for so many years, I'm a stickler for coherence and will usually overlook weakness in a speaker elsewhere if it can get the mids right and top-to-bottom balance correct.

This is a definite strength with the Finn's. Acoustic instruments sound as they should, with a healthy dose of air and space around them. Not always an easy task to accomplish. Because the Finn's were so enjoyable, I stayed in the land of Blue Note for quite some time, but man cannot live on Jazz alone. (although Joe Harley and Ron Rombach would probably disagree).

The trusty tone generator confirmed that indeed, these speakers go down solidly to 35hz in the room. They don't reproduce the super-low tones with the authority of my JLAudio Gotham, but the bass response is solid and had more weight than I would have expected out of a speaker this size. That was what grabbed me when I heard the Finn's earlier this year at the Consumer Electronics Show; they have a *big* sound and that's another one of my hot buttons.

Terribly Fun Speakers

Moving right along to the rest of my music collection, there was nothing that I felt couldn't be played on the Finn's. They did a fantastic job with rock, vocals, you name it. As with any compact speaker, the only limitations are at the extremes. (continued)





A bit of super-deep synth bass and pipe organ wasn't as convincing as it was with Verity's \$42k/pair Sarastro II's that we reviewed last year, nor did the Finn's play as loud as their larger brothers. But at all but ear-splitting level, the family resemblance comes through clearly.

That being noted, I was surprised at how far I *could* push the Finn's with the McIntosh MC 1.2KW monoblocks. I was able to play Led Zeppelin and Slayer awfully loud without bumping those six-inch woofer cones against their stops, so for 99 percent of the situations, the Verity will play as loud as you need it to, and this is what gives this speaker its ability to reveal dynamic

contrast as well as it does for its price point. The best attribute of these speakers is they let you fall out of "analysis" mode relatively quickly and get into "music enjoyment" mode. The sooner I stop dwelling on what a speaker does or doesn't do, the better.

Verity's two top speakers utilize a ribbon tweeter while the rest of the product line use a soft-dome tweeter. As in the Rienzi, the dome works perfectly in the Finn's, giving you a near perfect balance of tonality and dynamics that I've rarely heard at this price point.

A Brief Comparison

Comparing the Verity Finn to two of my other favorite speakers in this price category, the \$5,000/

pr. B&W 805D and the \$5,000 MartinLogan Vantage, the Finn is equally enjoyable, yet it offers up a different set of pluses and minuses. The Vantage, being a hybrid electrostatic, offers slightly more top-end transparency but is much more demanding of room placement and amplification. The B&W is also slightly more transparent with the diamond tweeter but has a definite LF restriction and requires \$750 worth of stands. Neither of these speakers has the level of top-to-bottom coherency of the Finn's, and that's what carries the day for me.

So the Finn's are in solid company. I could live happily ever after with any of the three, but I have to give the Finn's the nod in overall achievement; they

have the best balance and are the easiest to integrate into a system. It may be worth noting that in the "vote with your dollar" segment of this exercise, I owned a pair of Vantages for some time, currently own the 805's, and TONEAudio is purchasing the Finn's for duty in our reference fleet of speakers.

A Solid Foundation

Though many audiophiles will argue about which component is more important in your system, speakers are the ones that you will have to work around the most. If they don't work with your amplifier or room, it doesn't matter how cool they are.

Because the Finn's are so easy to work with and are so easy to drive, these are great speakers around which to build your system and grow with later, not having to replace the speakers as you upgrade your electronics later. You could enjoy these speakers with relatively modest amplification and achieve great results. Yet knowing that these speakers can still hold their own with five-figure electronics, you can upgrade the rest of your system as your finances and interest grow. ●

The Verity Audio Finn
MSRP: \$5,995 per pair
(satin white), \$7,495 for
satin wood and piano
black.

MANUFACTURER

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