



LOUDSPEAKERS & SPEAKER PACKAGES

STEREO LOUDSPEAKERS

WHATMOUGH P28-SE

Whatmough's relatively new Performance Series P28-SE floorstanding speakers feature a level of high quality drivers — built specifically for Whatmough — that truly earn it its Special Edition (SE) title.

EQUIPMENT

The floorstanding P28-SE is a three-driver, two-way design which has the two bass/midrange drivers arrayed vertically, above and below a Vifa XT25T ring radiator tweeter, 'MTM' fashion. The speakers stand 1032mm high, 265mm wide and 330mm deep. As with most Whatmough models, the cabinet alignment is bass reflex with the port located low on the front baffle.

One of impetuses behind Whatmough's decision to develop and implement a new bass/midrange driver was research by the company during 2010 which indicated that cones that were based on cellulose fibre (wood pulp) sounded 'more natural' to the human ear than any other type of cone material, so long as the cone was moulded using a specific process and its surface coated to prevent 'slippage' of air molecules during cone movement.

The same research also confirmed Whatmough's long-held belief that drivers which use phase plugs are not simply technically superior to models that use old-fashioned 'dust caps'; they also sound better.

In a conversation we had with the late Colin Whatmough some time ago, he briefly spoke about the drivers he was designing back then which would then appear in the P28-SE.

"When I was in the design process for the current Performance Series, it took me nearly two years to find the right drivers." And about the crossover design, Colin said, "...the most rewarding is crossover design where you spend 80 percent of the time. In pretty much all our speakers, the most expensive component is the crossover, much more so than any drivers we use, and it's by far the most important component. Doesn't matter how good the drivers are, if the crossover network isn't right, then you've got

a pretty ordinary speaker. Whereas you can use drivers that are reasonably good but not exceptional, and if you design the crossover well, you've a pretty good speaker. To have an excellent speaker you have to have great drivers and everything else with it."

The driver that resulted from Whatmough's research is superbly built, using an immense black anodised, cast-alloy chassis, a huge centre-vented magnet assembly and a conventional 'spider' suspension. The overall diameter of the driver is 180mm, but the Thiele/Small diameter that's used to calculate the physics of the drivers' interaction with the enclosure is 130mm.

The two bass/midrange drivers cross to the Vifa tweeter mentioned earlier. This model uses a standard, unshielded ferrite magnet and a black plastic faceplate.

A pair of the floor-standing P28-SEs in Bubinga real-wood veneer retails for \$2699, but costs \$2999 in Whatmough's sensational 'Piano Graphite' finish (the right speaker above).



PERFORMANCE

The P28-SEs dug quite deep in the bass, but what was really pleasing about their performance was the superb midrange and top-end clarity, resolution and extension.

The drivers have actually been seamlessly blended — thanks to Whatmough's expertise and long research into crossover design — into a coherent and tonally consistent presentation. And this stitched-from-the-same-cloth driver and crossover complement also creates a large and evenly spread soundfield with accurate instrument and vocal placement.

CONCLUSION

The P28-SE has a very similar sonic signature to Whatmough's range-topping and rather outstanding P33i speakers. These newer models have essentially the same driver 'DNA' as the P33i but are available at approximately one-third of the price. Helps make your choice easy, really... ■

Whatmough P28-SE stereo speakers

- Accuracy of tone
- Bass extension
- Purity of treble

- No grille inside ports

Price: \$2999 (Bubinga), \$3499 (Graphite)
Frequency response: 40Hz-40kHz +/-3dB
Nominal impedance: 4-ohms
Sensitivity: 92dB at 2.83V (1W into 8-ohms)
Dimensions (whd): 270 x 1140 x 330mm
Weight: 48kg each
Warranty: Five years