



Shaking the

Subwoofers are an essential component of any home theatre system. From relatively small boxes that produce more boom than actual bass, to massive cubic cabinet constructions that dominate rooms, subwoofers play a role that is often overlooked in the movie watching performance.

Of course audiophiles will up their noses at the thought of a subwoofer being able to contribute anything positive to the stereo listening experience, which is sad. The fact is that many of us have dual function systems that combine amplifiers, speakers and technology to suit our immediate demands, whether these be for definitive listening, or mindless movie watching entertainment (or critical movie watching entertainment for that matter).

Integrating a subwoofer into these varying roles is always a challenge. Try though they might, the formats of straight forward stereo are not compatible with the demands of high energy movies. Inevitably the sub is overdone in movie format, and underdone in stereo listening enjoyment.

How to reconcile these is then the challenge of the modern day man who has these difficulties layered into an already technologically complex lifestyle. Having two units at one time for review is about enough to blow one's mind...

Fortunately, the two units supplied are in fact easy to install. The larger, the FF12 is particularly easy and I found that it slotted into my system on the first attempt, and after a few hours' listening only minor positional changes were needed. The MK-IV10 though, funnily, worked best on the opposite end of the room – which goes to show that positioning of subs is actually slightly more important than perhaps is commonly believed.

I was switching between the two subs on and off to give each a fair hearing. Of course, running both at the same time proved to be too much to resist and despite the apparent mismatch between them I have to conclude that both subs running at the same time is in

fact super duper mega froody hip and happening uber cool! Wow! Very easy to cook ear drums, blast neighbours and shatter parked cars' windshields – it's almost too much fun!

These subs are explosive in terms of their sheer dynamism. I have to say that the FF12 does punch lower than the MKIV-10, but without having them in the same room at the same time the contextual difference would be extremely easy to miss. The FF12 thankfully doesn't have its performance hindered by port noise – it's so silent in operation in this regard I had to put my ear nice and close to detect

any vent noise at all. Being an Audio Video reviewer requires that one is often in the position of putting one's body on the line in the quest for our readers' benefit... and my shaken brain should recover in a few weeks, my doctor enthusiastically informed me.

But speed and pace and low end grunt are what these subs deliver in spades. It makes for exciting movies and the sudden impact of ultra low bass in those action scenes makes the movie dramatic and engaging.

Of course the question remains which of the two I would choose if it were up to me.



ground

The easy option is of course to say both, and being a stereo high tech audiophile junkie I would have to say that the MKIV-10 is probably a shade more persuasive in terms of outright musicality, purely because I perceived the sub to be a little smoother in its delivery. But the adrenaline fueled junkie petrol head in me says that that extra sliver of deep grunt in an exploding bomb has to take it – so the FF12 wins for me. For this week anyway.

Next week I would have to consider size and positioning. The MKIV 10 being a sealed unit with one of those uber cool passive

radiators deserves display for this alone – but in fact the unit can be located in a number of different positions with somewhat less of a performance compromise. I certainly found it less 'directional' if I may be forgiven for the abuse of this word when it comes to subwoofers.

Dammitall. That the choice is so difficult is further compounded by the remarkable value that these subs offer. The price is extremely competitive and at under R5k, there is little to touch them. Take a listen and hear what I mean. And then buy both!

William Kelly



VITAL STATS

MKIV-10

Enclosure type

.....Sealed with passive radiator.

Drive units

.....10-inch Long excursion driver; 2.5-inch voice coil and 1.5-inch, thermally pressed poly-ether foam surround, plus 10-inch long excursion SLAPS radiator

Bi-wiringNo

Frequency Response18 Hz – 160 Hz

Power Handling

.....400 watt / 200 watt
RMS Internal Amp Class A/B

FF12

Enclosure type

.....Front firing front ported bass reflex.

Drive units

.....12-inch Premium high powered extended excursion driver; 2.5-inch voice coil and 1.5-inch thermally pressed poly-ether foam surround.

Bi-wiringNo

Frequency Response25 Hz to 150 Hz

Power Handling

.....400 watt / 200 watt
RMS Internal Amp Class A/B

PRICE

FF12.....R4 499

MKIV10.....R4 499

VERDICT

Two knockout stunners, with the claim of being the most reliable and consistent on planet earth... Ambitious stuff borne out by performance with high bang for the buck value.

SUPPLIED BY

Audiotel SA
011-314-0565/6

WEBSITE

www.earthquakesound.com