



CEDIA 2013: A Few of My Favorite Things

By Darryl Wilkinson • Posted: Oct 8, 2013

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I was also very impressed with GoldenEar's risky demo of a home theater setup using in-ceiling speakers across the front. You don't find many in-ceiling speaker demos at CEDIA for two reasons. First of all, in-ceiling speakers aren't generally thought of as high-performance products; and, until recently, that was pretty much true across the board.



Secondly, it's a tremendously daunting task to set up an in-ceiling speaker demonstration at CEDIA. If the speakers don't use a sealed design, for instance, back boxes need to be built to provide the necessary enclosure. Then the flimsy ceiling of the demo room has to be reinforced to hold the weight of the installed speakers/back boxes so they don't come crashing down during the middle of a demo. (Causing head injuries is never a good way to close a sale.)

There's also the problem that the so-called "sound rooms" on a convention floor (be it at CEDIA or CES) are never great places to demonstrate speakers of any kind. So, in addition to potential bodily harm, the company doing the demo runs the risk of having it sound like crap through no fault of the speakers.

I spoke with Sandy Gross, GoldenEar's co-founder, a week or two before CEDIA about his plans to demonstrate three Invisa HTR-7000s (GoldenEar's flagship architectural speakers) mounted as LCRs in the ceiling of the GoldenEar demo room along with a pair of Invisa MPX in-wall/ceiling speakers installed in the rear wall. He sounded confident about the final outcome, but he admitted that his team had doubts as to whether they could pull it off – and have people leave the room impressed.

I certainly left the demo impressed, as did a lot of other people. I've reviewed several of GoldenEar's floorstanding speakers and have found them to be absolutely phenomenal across the board. As part of my review of the GoldenEar Triton Sevens, I installed a pair of Invisa 650s in the ceiling as the rear surround speakers. I liked the way the Invisa 650s performed; and I expected that the Invisa HTR 7000s and Invisa MPXs would sound great, too, since they all incorporate a version of GoldenEar's fabulously smooth High-Velocity Folded Ribbon Tweeter (HVFR).

What I didn't anticipate was how well the Invisa HTR 7000s were able to fool you into thinking that you were listening to a floorstanding arrangement of LCR speakers in front of you rather than a trio of architectural speakers installed in the ceiling above the TV. The magical effect wasn't 100-percent flawless, but it was certainly the best performance by a set of in-ceiling LCR speakers I've heard to date. Perhaps even more impressive was the spectacular way the HTR 7000s sounded with two-channel music, and the carefully detailed imaging they produced – despite the fact they were a good four feet above my head.