

GoldenEar Technology

TRITON TWO TOWER SPEAKERS

Reviewed by AL GRIFFIN

2010 **SOUNDVISION**
CERTIFIED & RECOMMENDED

Stealth Tower

1 The Triton Two's slender cabinet houses a separate subwoofer section with a 1,200-watt, DSP-controlled amp driving two "racetrack" woofers that are coupled to a pair of passive radiators.

2 The folded-ribbon tweeter's relatively large surface area allows for more sound to be generated with less motion.



KEY FEATURES

•Triton Two towers

(2) 5 x 9-in subwoofers,
(2) 7 x 10-in passive radiators,
(2) 4½-in mid/bass drivers,
folded-ribbon tweeter; 1,200-
watt, DSP-controlled amp;
LFE input and subwoofer-level
control;
48 x 7½ x 15 in; 60 lb

Price: \$2,500/pair

goldenear.com

The writer F. Scott Fitzgerald famously said there are no second acts in American lives. But what about third acts? Speaker impresario Sandy Gross is a cofounder of two of the best-known companies in the home theater/audio biz: Polk Audio and Definitive Technology. Ever since Gross and design partner/Def Tech cofounder Don Givogue exited the industry a few years back, we've wondered what they've been up to. Deep-sea fishing? Bird watching? Chess? Turns out the answer is none of the above. Predictably, the pair went back to what they know best: making speakers.

It's unusual for us to associate the names of specific individuals with the products we cover in **Sound+Vision**. Gross, however, is not your typical speaker-company president. Rather, he's a dedicated audiophile who likes to have a hand in all aspects of the biz, from design and production to packaging. There are even stories about him getting directly on the phone with customers! That sort of thing is fairly common in the high-end audio arena, but it's almost unheard of in the affordable-audio arena where Sandy and Don made their mark.

Taking past history into account, it should come as no surprise that the stated mission of the duo's new venture, GoldenEar Technology, is to deliver high-quality speakers at an affordable price. GoldenEar's inaugural product range includes the Triton Two towers, the SuperSat 50/50C LCR speakers, the SuperSat 3/3C LCR satellites, and the ForceField 3 and 4 subwoofers. The speakers can be bought individually or in pairs, and GoldenEar also offers 5.1 or more-channel packages for surround sound setups.

Confident that a stereo-only configuration would suffice to show off its stuff, GoldenEar sent us the Triton Two towers. The Triton Two's cabinet flares out gently from a slim 5 ¼-inch width in front to a 7½-inch width in back. The cabinet is fully enclosed in black mesh except for its top surface and base, both of which sport a piano black finish. A perforated steel element located on the front baffle (under the mesh) serves as an acoustic "lens" to optimize lateral dispersion. The resulting arched front helps to give the Triton Two a stealthy, disappearing look: When viewed straight on, the speakers appear slimmer than they actually are.

Other concerns that contributed to the Triton Two's unique cabinet design were a need to maximize internal volume and to create non-parallel walls for smoother response. Each speaker packs a good amount of hardware. A built-in subwoofer section contains a 1,200-watt, DSP-controlled amp driving two 5 x 9-inch "racetrack" woofers coupled to a pair of 7 x 10-inch passive radiators. The rest of the speaker's driver complement includes two 4½-inch mid/bass drivers arranged directly above and below a folded-ribbon tweeter. (GoldenEar calls this a High Velocity Folded Ribbon — HVFR for short.)

That HVFR tweeter, which is similar in design to the one

found in MartinLogan's Motion Series speakers (reviewed in the October 2010 issue), is worth a few words here. Derived from the Heil air-motion transformer — a technology birthed during hi-fi's heady experimental period in the 1970s — it consists of a pleated film positioned within a magnetic field that makes the pleats open and close in an accordion-like manner, thus squeezing air to create sound. A benefit to this design is that the tweeter's relatively large surface area (8 inches, as opposed to a 1-inch conventional dome tweeter) allows for more sound to be generated with less motion, which increases driver efficiency and minimizes distortion.

>SETUP

Setting up the Triton Two in my room turned out to be easier than expected — especially given that each speaker contains its own powered subwoofer. After placing the towers in my normal speaker position, about 2½ feet out from the back wall, I then plugged my cable's banana connectors into the multiway speaker binding posts. I next experimented with toe-in, playing a few tracks until the sonic image projected by the speakers struck a good balance between focus and expansiveness.

The Triton Two's rear panel also has both an LFE input jack and a subwoofer-level dial. Following GoldenEar's suggestion, I opted to make life easy by just connecting speaker cables and setting subwoofer level by ear using a few trusted reference music tracks. That said, taking the additional step of running a cable from your receiver/processor's LFE output to the speaker's LFE input (in most setups you'll need a Y-splitter adapter to route the signal to each tower) will let you tweak bass using a sub-level adjustment on your receiver/processor's remote — a convenient arrangement if you find yourself regularly adjusting LFE level when watching movies.

One thing I discovered during setup was that the Triton Two is capable of putting out serious, voluminous bass. My regular system consists of tower speakers aided and abetted by a 12-inch sub in a medium-size room — a setup that's capable of pretty dynamic performance. But after a few days of break-in, the Triton Two literally overwhelmed me with its low end, and that was with the respective sub-level dial of each tower at the middle position! Pushing both back a few notches to the 9 o'clock position made things just right: Bass was now powerful and present without sounding boomy or unbalanced.

>PERFORMANCE

Hearing the Triton Two in my home was actually the second time I had encountered the speaker. The first was at the 2010 CEDIA Expo in Atlanta, where I was deeply impressed by its ability to convey the brass-instrument crescendos in "Shiny Stockings," a track from the now out-of-print Reference Recordings CD *Big Band Basie*. Hearing that same track in my home, I remained equally in awe:



↑ Max Mid

GoldenEar's Phase Plug driver was designed to deliver smooth response to 20 kHz. It's crossed over well below that point, but the extra bandwidth helps to optimize midrange performance.

