



Acoustic Energy AE309²

WINNER
FLOORSTANDING LOUDSPEAKER UNDER £4K



Acoustic Energy has a notable pedigree with affordable floorstanders and is today one of the very few companies to have maintained a commitment to the market. Given the talents of the AE309, it makes sense that their successors, the AE309², are significant reworkings of the design as opposed to entirely new creations.

The mid-range 300 Series, in which the AE309² stand as the smaller of two floorstanding models, is the first to incorporate design thinking gained from the creation of the flagship Corinium, and that's initially evident in the tweeter. Their soft-dome unit uses a more conventional material than that found in the Corinium's unique tweeter, but the principles of reducing mass without compromising stiffness remain intact. The 12cm mid-bass drivers, meanwhile, are now reinforced with coconut fibres that improve stiffness and reduce break-up modes.

Enhancement pay off

These driver enhancements pay off. There is abundant treble energy, complemented by a fine degree of refinement and forgiveness, while the AE309²'s low-end is nuanced and, thanks to standout extension, can deliver a noticeable 10Hz of additional bass punch over comparably priced standmounts. They walk "a careful and well-judged line between bringing a level of accuracy and control without losing the slightly ballistic nature that encourages you to nudge the volume up and nod along to the music," says Ed Selley.

The six-ohm impedance and 89dB/w sensitivity mean they should pair well with £600 to £1,000 amplifiers, though Ed does find the pricier, more powerful models within that range are better matches. Capably driven, these are indeed excellent floorstanders.

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