



Acoustic Energy AE1 40th Anniversary

HIGHLY COMMENDED
STAND-MOUNT LOUDSPEAKER UNDER £5K

The original Acoustic Energy AE1 marked a significant advancement in what compact loudspeakers could do when it launched in the mid-1980s. This Anniversary model is built on that 40-year-old template and stays true to the superb-looking aesthetic, but every single component is new.

While closely resembling the originals, the drive units are all new and slightly larger than before. The 12.5cm mid/bass retains the hard-anodised cone, as ever ceramic-backed and extremely rigid, with the surround remaining foam because none of the materials used in Acoustic Energy's more recent drivers are compatible with aluminium. The crossover still switches between it and the tweeter (now 29mm) at 3kHz, though there are notable differences in its operation. And the twin circular bass ports now feature an inner flare alongside an outer one to enhance flow characteristics.

Significantly, the Anniversary use bitumen damping for the cabinet lining, as seen in the company's flagship Corinium, though it has been applied to mimic the behaviour of the original's concrete lining rather than be as inert as technically possible.

Better in every way

Listening to the new speakers against the originals is captivating. They still maintain an exceptional sense of speed and engagement, but extend down marginally lower and are clearer and more detailed there, too. They're much more convincing clarity and control in the upper frequencies too. The AE1 have always sounded larger and more confident than their size would suggest, but the Anniversary elevate this trait further, and can also better handle harshness and poor recordings. Acoustic Energy's 40th birthday present is a gift to us all and extends beyond mere nostalgia.

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