

A True Plus?



A recent development is that the black grilles shown here are now also available in white.

Audio Physic has used select materials and clever ideas to upgrade its successful Virgo 25 loudspeaker by producing a “plus+” model. STEREO compared this new model with both the basic Virgo loudspeaker and the larger Avantera.

When Audio Physic introduced the sixth version of its Virgo loudspeaker, which was first presented in 1990, in mid-2010 on the occasion of the company's 25th anniversary, this model, like most of its predecessors, set somewhat of a standard in the class of audiophile loudspeakers. Thanks to features such as its “Hyper Holographic Cone” tweeter and midrange driver with double basket technology and the “Clarity Cap” capacitors that were specially produced for it, the Virgo 25 kept up the high standards that the Virgo loudspeaker has been setting ever since it was introduced in an even more impressive manner when tested in the June 2010 issue of STEREO magazine, showing off its explosive openness and resolution, streamlined agility and three-dimensional spatial image.

So far so good. Nevertheless, as Audio Physic's Chief Designer Manfred Diestertich has known for quite some time, even more can be achieved. The technical engineer, who boasts impressive skills in a multitude of different areas, therefore discovered new materials and made use of the WBT “nextgen” silver connectors to create the Virgo 25plus+, for which prices start at 9900 Euros per pair. The aim of this new Virgo model is not only to outperform the ambitious basic model (for which prices start at 7500 Euros), but also to close the gap on the larger Avantera model, which costs as much as close to 13,000 Euros.

The Avantera also played a role in the development of the 25plus+ by sharing its footed stands, which are more solid than those of the normal Virgo in every respect. These stands either sit on the spikes that are supplied with the loudspeaker or on the company's VCFII Double “Vibration Control Feet” (available at an extra charge of 340 Euros for eight feet), which convert all movements into traction and are now available with an optimised design that provides an even more ‘stringent’ connection.

The single-wire terminal additionally features the aforementioned silver connectors produced by the specialist contact manufacturer WBT from the German city of Essen, which, according to Diestertich, boast truly magical properties. We have also already tested these inconspicuous components, which are fitted with decoupling impact sound interrupters in the “plus+” model, and are therefore able to share

his enthusiasm. - The main differences between the normal Virgo model and the Virgo 25plus+, however, are actually invisible, for example the extra-stable open-pored ceramic foam boards that are used as sheeting and bars to give the woofer chamber, which is located above and ventilated by a bass reflex port in the base of the loudspeaker, more rigidity without sustainably reducing its inner volume. This enables the woofers, which are mounted opposite each other on the sides of the loudspeaker, to work in conditions that are even more controlled and are therefore able to promote the reproduction of clear and precise lower frequencies.

When put to the test, the Virgo 25plus+ really does produce plucked bass chords that are a bit crisper than those that can be heard with the basic Virgo model and provides an even more differentiated reproduction of the lowest frequency ranges, for example those used in the extremely wide-ranging orchestral pieces in the STEREO Review CD, meaning that they offer more acoustic transparency. This positive effect even occurs at a low volume, when the woofers barely cause any resonations at all in the cabinet.

KEY WORD

Ceramic foam:

The ceramic foam used in this model is a silicon carbide material. Its pores provide a large surface area and its amorphous structure prevents resonance.

A "Plus" in Terms of Audiophile Magic

If you really want to find out how the Plus model is superior to the well-known Virgo 25, you need to listen to its mids and highs. While the Virgo 25 can already be considered to be top of the class with regard to its sound reproduction properties, the updated version breaks out of the class and reaches a much higher level. The sound images produced are graduated much further down into the lower frequencies, meaning that you can practically hear right around the voices in the forefront. On top of this, the plasticity is more 'real', as if you are experiencing it live and in person, and the bass range is more defined than in the initial model.

This is above all due to the increase in information in the sound reproduction of the Virgo 25plus+. The trans-

mission of the finest reverberation, subtle beats and gently changing tonal colours give this 'plus package' a certain nonchalance and audiophile magic that the previous Virgo was unable to provide to such an impressive extent. Even the more voluminous Avanteras has to go to great lengths to achieve comparable results because although its four woofers provide a more ample foundation, in particular in larger rooms, and its pair of midrange drivers produce a more brilliant root note and therefore develop more authority, its three-dimensionality and ability to precisely pinpoint the positions of singers and instruments are ultimately no more than that provided by the Virgo 25plus+, which sometimes seems to achieve an even more precise focus.

The impressive performance of the loudspeaker is provided by a number of measures, two of which are its special

acoustic panels, namely perforated boards that act as a diffuser, and the optimised damping in its midrange driver chamber, which is separated off from the woofer chamber. Audio Physic has also incorporated the silver contacts that are used to provide the connection in the aforementioned WBT pole terminals between the

connectors of the tweeter and the internal wiring. As can be expected, the new Virgo model still features a tweeter that is suspended in tautly stretched mesh netting and mounted using plastic screws in neoprene plugs. All of these features combine to provide the realistic sound image described above and the light and airy elegance of the upper and higher-frequency realms, which now connect to the bass frequencies in an even smoother manner.

This is yet another reason why the "plus+" is more than just a tune-up of the successful Virgo 25, which is, incidentally, also still available. The newer model is indeed a fair bit more expensive than the Virgo 25, but does represent clear progress in terms of quality, making a large step towards the high standards of the Avanteras. In small and medium-sized

rooms that do not give the larger model produced by the loudspeaker manufacturer from the Sauerland region of Germany enough 'space' to spread its musical wings, the "plus+" version of the Virgo 25 may well be the better choice, providing you with a revamped Virgo model that provides a real plus, in particular in such conditions.

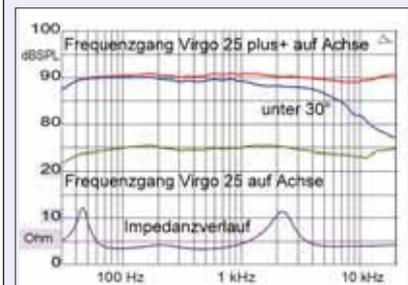
Matthias Böde

AUDIO PHYSIC VIRGO 25 plus+

from €9900 per pair (lacquer from €10,990)
 Measurements: 23 x 106 x 38cm (WxH-D)
 Warranty: 10 years, Contact: Audio Physic
 Tel: +49(0)2961/96170, www.audiophysic.de

With its "plus" design, which features upgrades in a number of areas, Audio Physic's Virgo 25 loudspeaker provides even more performance, in particular in terms of plasticity and its spacious soundstage. The model's bass reproduction has also benefited from these improvements.

MEASUREMENT RESULTS*



Nominal Impedance	3.6 Ω
Minimum Impedance	3.1 Ω at 480 Hertz
Maximum Impedance	13 Ω at 46 Hertz
Average Sensitivity (2.83 V/m)	87.5 db SPL
Efficiency at 94 db (1m)	6.5 W
Lower Crossover Frequency (-3 dB)	20 Hertz
Distortion factor at 63 / 3k / 10k H	1 / 0.1 / 0.2%

LABORATORY

Due to the fact that our measurement system has changed since the last report, we re-measured the normal Virgo 25 (brown line). We are able to confirm Audio Physic's prognosis that the curves of the two models would be virtually the same. The frequency response (red line) of the "plus" model is also extremely smooth and reaches astoundingly deep into the bass given the loudspeaker's size and the amount of sensitivity that it offers. It is important that the loudspeaker is quite strongly adjusted towards the listening position due to the fact that the high frequencies drop significantly when off-axis (blue line). This is easy to control by changing the angle of the speaker. The Virgo 25plus+ has an uncritical impedance curve and low distortion.

STEREO-TEST

Sound Performance 90%

PRICE/PERFORMANCE



EXCELLENT

* STEREO Club subscribers can access additional data and diagrams at www.stereo.de

The terminal is fitted with expensive WBT "nextgen" silver terminals (l.). Ceramic foam and perforated boards improve the acoustic conditions in the woofer and midrange driver chambers.

