



PRICE £750 TYPE SUBWOOFER ON SALE NOW

MJ Acoustics Reference 200

A compact subwoofer with flexibility and real power

Verdict ●●●●●

We say...

Small, mighty powerful and hugely flexible thanks to twin crossovers and four set-up memories, this is the perfect sub for small to medium rooms

MJ Acoustics has carved out quite a niche for itself in one of the most specialist areas of the hi-fi/home cinema market – subwoofers. And while the Reference 200 is small, it's a far cry from the company's debut product, the Pro 50 – not least because it's double the price.

In fact this little sub has taken on board all the technology of the company's flagship Reference I sub, and then improved on it with full remote control for set-up and adjustment, plus four memory presets to store parameters such as gain, roll-off and phase for various operating modes.

The basics of the Reference 200 are a downward-facing 25cm long-throw drive unit powered by an internal 200w amp, giving the sub claimed extension down to 13Hz in room. But those bare facts only tell part of the story: The driver uses twin magnets for extra power plus control, and the cone is bonded to the voice coil to form a single structure, then supported by

a heavy-duty rubber surround and a semi-rigid rear spider, which help it to maintain a more linear travel and stop and start with greater precision. The whole thing is housed in a hefty cast-alloy basket, this and the thick MDF enclosure playing no small part in the overall weight.

The amp, meanwhile, is a MOSFET design under the control of MJ's usual DAMP (Digitally Accurate MicroProcessor) system, and protected from overdriving by the company's Dynamic Intelligent Protection system. Separate crossovers are available for the high-level (speaker) and low-level (preamp/LFE) inputs, and there's a loop through on the LFE input so multiple subs could be used for even bigger bass. Other connections extend to a socket for the external remote control 'eye', a 12v trigger input to supplement the sub's built-in automatic power on/off, and even a MIDI input for use with studio gear.

Set-up is relatively simple: for instance, to store configurations you just press one of the four main controls for a few seconds – each corresponds to a memory position. The memorised settings can be recalled from the remote control, which also accesses all the adjustments via a menu system.

If you've had enough of subwoofers that take up too much room space this could be just the thing. This has all the wall-shaking ability needed for small and medium-sized

AT A GLANCE

MJ Acoustics Ref 200 £750

Value for money ●●●●●

A very serious little subwoofer for sensible – if not bargain-basement – money, the 200 upholds MJ's reputation for value.

Sound quality ●●●●●

Provided you don't want to fill a huge room with bass, it's tight and well-extended.

Build quality ●●●●●

Solidly constructed from thick MDF, the sub comes in a choice of real-wood finishes.

Features ●●●●●

One of the most flexible around, thanks to twin crossovers and remote control.

THE FACTS

- Drive unit** 25cm ultra long throw, twin magnets
- Amplifier** 200w MOSFET Enclosure Sealed box, 18mm/25mm MDF, finished in black or a range of real wood veneers
- Frequency response** 13-200Hz
- Inputs** Left/right line, LFE line (on phono sockets),
- Speaker level** (on Neutrik Speakon connector)
- Outputs** LFE (for second subwoofer)
- Other connections** 12v trigger, remote eye, MIDI control
- Controls** Separate phase, gain and roll-off for high-level and low-level inputs, four preset memories
- Accessories supplied** M8 spikes, plastic inserts for wood floors, 10m high-level lead, 5m stereo phono lead, remote-control
- Dimensions** (h/w/d) 30x30x35.5cm
- Weight** 20.85kg
- For more details** Tel: 01945 467770 www.mjacoustics.co.uk

rooms, plus a speed and deftness of touch that is just as remarkable as its prize and size. It would make a fine partner for small main speakers, but it's even more impressive when underpinning larger floorstanders. Once 'dialled in' beneath the big PMC OB1s – not exactly speakers lacking in bass – it still provides useful extension to the climactic closing section of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and boosts the impact of the relentless gunfire of the opening scenes of Hong Kong police action movie *Dai gein si* (Breaking News), which has a highly dynamic DTS-ES soundtrack.

But the little MJ sub racks up even more brownie points when music is on the menu, whether thundering out a spot of vintage *Underworld* or handling the challenging instrumentation of the Decca DVD of John Adams' opera *The Death of Klinghoffer*. Here the speed and control of the Reference 200 is shown to its best advantage, powering the bass rhythms of the music and adding drama to the action sequences.

In large rooms, MJ's bigger Reference 1 MkII subwoofer might deliver more of that structural thump that so many home cinema enthusiasts crave, but for smaller spaces, and where music is as important as movie action, the little Reference 200 is going to take a lot of beating.