





Avalon Acoustics Eidolon Diamond Loudspeaker

by Roy Gregory

Avalon Acoustics seem to have been around forever, quietly ploughing their own furrow, proof against the excesses and indiscretions of fashion and fame. Instead they've concentrated on producing discrete speakers that are beautifully crafted and as near sonically invisible as they can make them.

For what represents (for all practical purposes) the company's flagship speaker, the Diamond is neither particularly large nor, at £33000, particularly expensive. Bear in mind that the world of speakers is one where bigger is so often perceived as better that biggest is assumed to be best. It's clearly not a logic that appeals to Avalon. The Eidolon Diamond is visually, virtually identical to the two-thirds the price, standard Eidolon; there's a tiny faux "diamond" embedded in the badge – oh, and of course THAT tweeter. It's a presentational conceit that might lead people to assume that they're being asked to pay £10000 for a pair of diamond diaphragm tweeters. That's to misunderstand the speaker, both in content and in concept.

Whilst there's a natural tendency to fasten one's interest on the tweeter, do so and you'll be disappointed. No high frequency fireworks here. Instead, the clean, low-distortion extension can sound almost dull – until you appreciate the uncannily natural detail and air that the system's delivering. Instead, the really impressive thing about the Eidolon Diamond is the seamless way in which Avalon have integrated all its elements into a single, coherent whole that cleaves to the core of the music. Examine this speaker in detail and you soon realise that it shares virtually nothing in common with its near namesake. Apart from the ceramic midrange driver and the single set of input terminals it's all-change, with the tweeter, bass driver, crossover, cabinet construction



and bracing all being different. This is an entirely new design, as reflected in the measured performance.

It doesn't just go higher it goes lower too, in order to balance the extraordinary treble extension.

That carefully weighted bass is, in many ways, the key to this speaker.

Initially unimpressive the Eidolon Diamond is also the most unobtrusive speaker you're ever likely to have heard. So even is its performance from bottom to top and in every respect that it imposes less of itself on the signal than any other speaker I've used, as well as delivering more of that signal. The Avalon has that golden ability to make the most of recordings rather than pulling them apart. It isn't perfect, and its insatiable appetite for high-quality power makes it expensive to use as well as buy, but to achieve full-range performance of such quality from a cabinet this compact and beautifully

finished represents a new benchmark for high-end speaker performance. As so often in hi-fi, less is actually more. In this instance it applies to price too. The diamond is easily capable of musically embarrassing many a six-figure behemoth, making them sound like the dinosaurs they are.

Price: **£33000**

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