

Adam F5 Speakers
words: LUKE PEPPER



ADAM'S BUDGET BANGERS!

ADAM Audio bring their legendary sound to the budget conscious with the all-new F5 speakers...

Speaker technology has improved in leaps and bounds in recent years, seeing quality improve and prices drop. Along with this change in technology has come a change in the brands considered to be top dogs in their field, with names such as Funktion One and Void Acoustics coming from humble beginnings to now dominate the club market. When it comes to the world of studio monitors, a similar story has played out with brands such as Barefoot and ADAM emerging as the leaders in their field. ADAM Audio was founded in 1999 and has quickly carved out a very impressive reputation for building top-quality studio monitors as well as bringing innovations to the industry, such as their X-ART ribbon tweeter design. But does this new ADAM F5 entry-level speaker live up to the family pedigree that has seen them gain such popularity in the production community, with many producers swearing by ADAM when it comes to producing and mixing their tracks?

The ADAM F5 is a two-way active monitor designed to get ADAM's unique sound into studios that previously could not stretch their budget to accommodate the more expensive speakers the company has to offer. The F5 is the budget model with two other siblings in its immediate family, namely the larger F7 and the SubF subwoofer for those who need more bass in the place. As the ADAM F5 is an active speaker (the amplifiers are

built into the cabinet), it eliminates the expense of additional amplification, and at £330 a pair, they are very reasonably priced. Of course, a cheaper price usually means cheaper components and an overall loss in sound quality. While this is an unavoidable fact of life, it remains important to strike the right balance. Thankfully this is a fact not lost on ADAM Audio, who have managed to use some clever manufacturing techniques to bring down the cost while keeping that same ADAM quality. To keep costs down, the F5 speaker cabinets are made off-shore, but the X-ART ribbon tweeter, which is found on all of ADAM's speakers, is hand-made in their Berlin factory. The X-ART ribbon tweeter is what made ADAM famous. By using folded ribbon technology rather than the standard dome tweeter (which uses a piston-style action), ADAM have created a high efficiency tweeter that has crystal-clear sound reproduction and is a major factor in creating the "ADAM sound".

The inclusion of the X-ART ribbon tweeter in the F5 means that this speaker shares the same detailed high-end response found across the ADAM range. While some critics raise questions about using ribbon technology to mix music that will be played through standard dome tweeters, there are at least as many producers happily using ADAM speakers to create hit records every day, but speakers are a very personal choice, so potential owners would be wise to

listen to as many possible speakers in their price range.

The ADAM F5s are perfect for smaller studio environments. Despite their diminutive size, they weigh in at a hefty 7kg each. In a clear cost-cutting measure the F5s do not have magnetic shielding, so they could potentially have adverse effects on hard drives and old-skool CRT monitors if they are placed next to them, but modern flat screens are not vulnerable to magnetic interference so most studios won't notice the difference. The build quality is very good and the styling of these monitors is slick and down to business, in-keeping with the rest of the ADAM range.

While build quality and styling are a major factor, the single most important feature of a studio monitor is the sound quality. Given the physical size and budget price, it is safe to say that we were a little bit cautious as to how the F5s would perform in a pro environment — that was until we fired them up and started using them. The sound is fantastic and definitely worthy of wearing the ADAM badge, the high-end frequencies are bright and clear without being hyped, stereo imaging is tight and the bass response is very good, considering the small size of these monitors.

One of the biggest secrets to getting great sound in a studio is acoustic treatment. A good set of monitors

VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	9.0
EASE OF USE	9.0
FEATURES	9.0
VALUE FOR MONEY	9.0
SOUND QUALITY	9.0

HYPE

Detailed and transparent sound reproduction thanks to the X-ART ribbon tweeter, and a very decent bass response for such a small-sized cabinet.

GRIPE

The lack of magnetic shielding is about the only fault we could find.

An ADAM speaker that is both affordable and offers high quality studio monitoring, perfect for smaller studios and those on a tight budget.

9/10

PRICE

£330

CONTACT

adam-audio.com

will be ruined by an acoustically bad room, so ensuring that the studio is treated properly should be the first step for anyone looking to improve their monitoring. If the studio is not acoustically treated, it is important to budget for this in addition to the cost of the monitors. Given the very reasonable price of the ADAM F5s, these speakers are serious contenders for smaller studios on a budget, without compromising on sound quality.