

Adam F Series Monitors | from £339

Adam are no strangers to quality monitoring, but the F Series are their most affordable Pro Series monitors to date. *Jon Musgrave* listens in

WHAT IS IT?

Two new affordable near field models

CONTACT

Who: Adam UK
Web: www.adam-audio.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Excellent modern sound
- 2 Great value
- 3 Good bass extension in F7

PRICING

F5 £339 per pair
F7 £509 per pair
F-Sub £259

German monitor company Adam are one of the world's top speaker designers, best known for their bespoke 'ART' ribbon tweeters and bespoke price. However, they have always embraced the more affordable end of the market, initially with their P Series and then A and AX Series monitors. The new F Series offers their best value yet, combining many of the benefits of the AX in a new, cheaper package.

As you'll have guessed, the F5 and F7 use 5- and 7-inch woofers

respectively. These are a new design combining glass fibre and a paper backing. Meanwhile the tweeters use Adam's X-ART design, and at roughly 3-square inches are slightly smaller in size than the AX tweeters. The monitors are assembled in China but the tweeters are still made in Germany (see *Tweeter Talk*, right, for more on the tweeter design). Onboard amplification is Class AB, with twin amps delivering 25 Watts a piece for the F5 and 40 Watts plus 60 Watts for the F7 (tweeter and woofer respectively). By way of

comparison the AX uses one Class AB and one Class D amp.

Both models include the same rear panel controls, which are two +/- 6dB shelving EQs at 300Hz and 5kHz and a volume control (-inf to +6dB). There's also an 80Hz high pass filter designed primarily for using with the optional F-Sub. Inputs are via either a phono or combination jack/XLR, and there are no front panel controls, although you do get twin LEDs on the logo to indicate active (green) and standby (red). The F-Series enter a signal sensing standby mode when no input signal is present for 20 minutes or longer. As you may have spotted the Fs use a front-facing reflex port, aiding near wall use, and the port aperture is nice and broad to help reduce port noise. Finally the F series can be wall mounted using the bespoke Adam brackets and rear panel screw holes.

Eyes and ears

Out of the box these look and feel well made. Admittedly, there's nothing particularly groundbreaking in the cabinetry (MDF is the main material), and aside from some chamfering on the front panel things are pretty regular.

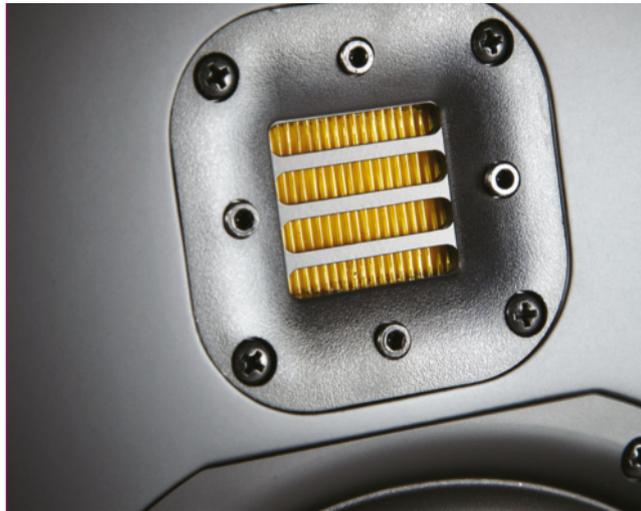


Even so, this means you can sit them on their sides if desired, which can come in handy if you're using a desk.

Hook up is pretty straightforward, although there's very little advice in the manual about how to use the EQ controls. This is in stark contrast to the newest Genelecs for example, where the options are both descriptive and prescriptive. However, maybe Adam already know this is a side show, as once you fire up these monitors, they immediately sound just as you would expect. Open in the top end with plenty of upper mid detail, solid in the low mid and mid range and reasonably well balanced at the bottom. In essence the out of the box sound is incredibly well tailored for both monitors.

Even so as you would expect, there are differences between the F5 and F7. In general terms, the F7 sounds more expansive and engrossing, while the F5 is a bit more precise, particularly in the mid range. At the bottom, the F7 extension is much better, and on club music maybe a bit too bouncy. I tamed this slightly with a tiny tweak to the low frequency EQ. Overall, the F5 feels lighter in the low end, and a small EQ boost can help here, but the overall balance of the speaker is great as it is, so I kept tweaks to a minimum. The F5 is surprisingly capable at higher levels, but runs out of steam way earlier than the F7, which can go very loud. As is

Tweeter Talk



One key aspect of the Adam sound is their ART (Applied Ribbon Technology) tweeter. Originally developed by Klaus Heinz (now Adam managing director), its latest incarnation (X-ART) was introduced in 2009. It uses a pleated foil diaphragm transducer that delivers pristine transients well beyond our hearing frequency limit (note

response figures are quoted up to 50kHz), and the open foil design also assists with cooling.

The folded diaphragm increases its effective area by a factor of more than 2.5, leading to higher dynamic output and wider dispersion. Adam quote their X-ART driver sizes in diaphragm area with an equivalent diameter for easier comparison. The

F Series uses a slightly smaller X-ART tweeter (3- rather than 4-square inches) than the rest of their Pro Series monitors. However, they've also upscaled the design into mid range units that you'll find in their very large S series monitors and also their larger Home Audio loudspeakers. All X-ART drivers are handmade in their Berlin factory.

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By shaving things here and there from their more expensive monitor designs, Adam have managed to deliver a genuinely budget

often the case, unless your room is exceptionally well treated acoustically, high levels reveal more limitations of the room than the monitor.

Any other gripes?

It's often said that ribbon tweeters result in a narrower horizontal sweet spot. This isn't massively obvious here, and if you're working on a DAW sat in the middle I really can't see it as a problem.

One other thing to note is they're not magnetically shielded, although neither are the AXs for that matter and this only comes as an option for the top end S Series. Next up, although the F Series finish is very good, they don't look or feel quite as lush as their more expensive models. Understandable I

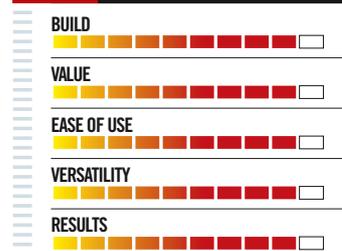
think, and certainly not something that would scare me away.

Verdict

Studio monitors vary considerably in their sound, and one learns to adapt accordingly. But to me the F Series sound exactly as a monitor should, straight out of the box. Obviously there are differences in the delivery between the F5 and F7, most noticeably in the bottom end, but careful design means both models still retain a very consistent colour. On balance I prefer the F7, mostly because the scale of the delivery is bigger and they sound more capable at high levels. Even so, the F5 would be great for smaller rooms, and although I didn't test the F-Sub, adding that to the set-up should work very well.

speaker with totally non budget sound. Don't be suspicious, these are truly excellent monitors for the money and without question should be on your audition list. **FM**

FutureMusic VERDICT



Serious performance at an affordable price – you'd be crazy not to give them a listen.

SPECS

F5
Tweeter: 3-square inch X-ART
Woofers: 5-inch glass fibre/paper
Frequency Response: 52Hz to 50kHz
Maximum Peak Output: ≥106dB SPL per pair
Amplifiers: 25W tweeter, 25W woofer
High Shelf: >5kHz ±6dB
Low Shelf: <300Hz ±6dB
High Pass Filter: 80Hz
Crossover: 2.9kHz
 Weight:
6.8kg
 Dimensions:
185 x 230 x 290mm

F7
Tweeter: 3-square inch X-ART
Woofers: 7-inch glass fibre/paper
Frequency Response: 44Hz to 50kHz
Maximum Peak Output: ≥109dB SPL per pair
Amplifiers: 40W tweeter, 60W woofer
High Shelf: >5kHz ±6dB
Low Shelf: <300Hz ±6dB
High Pass Filter: 80Hz
Crossover: 2.6kHz
 Weight:
9kg
 Dimensions:
225 x 266 x 321mm

ALTERNATIVES



Eve Audio SC series
 from **£576 per pair**
 With their own take on the ribbon tweeter and onboard DSP, a favourite at *FM*.
www.eve-audio.com



Yamaha HS Series
 from **£398 per pair**
 Affordable and offer their traditional NS sound with better bass extension.
www.uk.yamaha.com



Equator Audio Research D5
£399
 Equator's coaxial monitors scored very well in testing and would also make a good choice.
www.equatoraudio.com