

Prime spot

The smallest member of the Morel SoundSpot family is a 2.1 package that has **Ed Selley** sitting comfortably

Last issue I tested the Morel SoundSpot 2.1 Ultra system and was impressed by the way this trio of speakers made music. While £699 is far from unreasonable in light of the excellent build and impressive performance, there is no getting away from the competition in the form of conventional stereo loudspeakers at the price.

In the case of the Primo system seen here – Morel’s smallest and most affordable 2.1 setup and most affordable speakers full stop – the competition this faces is still plentiful, but this is perhaps a happier stomping ground for such a system. There’s little arguing that you get a fair bit for your cash too. The SoundSpot SP-1 is smaller than the SP-2 and only mounts an 85mm driver, which raises the low-frequency cut off to a not desperately low 180Hz, but like the larger speaker it mounts its tweeter (12mm soft dome) concentrically to aid the focus and time alignment of the two drivers. The casework is metal like the SP-1 and in keeping with other speakers from the brand is effectively undamped except for the casework itself.

Slightly awkwardly for Morel, in some ways the SP-1 is a more convincing small speaker than its big brother. The foot can be used to mount the speaker both horizontally and vertically and as it is placed on the end of a hinged metal leg rather

than simply grinding up and down a fixed mount on the chassis, feels rather slicker in use than the SP-2. The SP-1 also boasts a proper pair of speaker terminals as opposed to the near useless holes on the SP-2. They won’t accept banana plugs and neither can you use hosepipe thicknesses of cable with it, but they are easy enough to use.

The Primo subwoofer partners the SP-1 and is a simpler affair than the swoopy-shaped PSW subs. The square cabinet is MDF and mounts a 203mm doped paper driver that is powered by a 100W (claimed) internal amplifier. Like the relationship of the SP-1 to the SP-2, the Primo sub is equipped with more input choices than the larger subs, but equally it doesn’t feel anything like as solid as the fibreglass models. The eagle eyed will notice when they look over the specs that the 150Hz upper register of the Primo sub doesn’t gel particularly well with the 180Hz cut off of the SP-1.

Sound quality

Connected to a Cambridge Audio 851A and Naim ND5 XS, and with the crossover of the Primo sub wound up as far as it will go, the good news is that there is no immediately obvious hole in the frequency response. Like the larger SP-2 system, the Primo manages to spend most of the time sounding like two speakers rather than three. With the higher crossover used in the Primo, it is important to

keep the sub on axis with the front speakers, but if you do the result is convincing enough to not be at the forefront of your mind.

With material that is not overly fast like Oli Brown’s *Heads I Win, Tails You Lose*, the Morel is well integrated, capable of impressive scale for speakers so small and has a sense of fun that can sometimes be missing when a large powered sub is part of the picture. In fact, a partial weakness of the Primo sub is something of a blessing in disguise for it. As it never feels hugely powerful it tends to produce pleasantly refined bass rather than the slightly overboosted output that can plague so many more powerful designs. It lacks the last helping of pace, though, and more up tempo material can lead to it sounding fractionally behind the satellites. It is worth pointing out that at the £299 price point, there are few stereo pairs of speakers that can match the bass extension provided by the Primo.

The small size of the SP-1 satellites is less of an impediment to convincing stereo than might be expected providing you aren’t asking them to fill a hanger. They are fairly directional and that high crossover means they never sound especially full bodied, but they demonstrate good detail retrieval and a relaxed but reasonably faithful tonal balance. Pushed to high volume levels they can start to harden up a little, but the Primo is more than capable of a room-filling sound.

Conclusion

The great strength of the Primo is that it manages to rival similarly priced conventional stereo designs, but takes up an impressively small amount of space while it does so. The effective mounting options mean that anyone looking for a compact desktop system would be wise to audition this well thought out little system ●

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Morel SoundSpot Primo 2.1

ORIGIN
Israel

TYPE
2.1 satellite/
subwoofer speakers

WEIGHT
Satellite: 1kg
Sub: 7kg

DIMENSIONS
100mm diameter
satellite enclosure
Sub: 300 x 300 x
300mm (WxHxD)

FEATURES

- Satellite: 12mm tweeter, 85mm mid driver
- Sub: 203mm bass driver
- Quoted power: 60W RMS
- Available in gloss black, white and champagne finishes

DISTRIBUTOR
LEARS International

TELEPHONE
0208 4204333

WEBSITE
morelspeakers.co.uk

Build is decent and comes in gloss black, white and champagne finishes



Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★

LIKE: Smooth, well integrated sound; flexible placement and solid build

DISLIKE: Small soundstage; notional hole in the frequency response

WE SAY: A keenly priced and capable 2.1 system

OVERALL

