

Image AVS200

Image AVS 200.2 subwoofer. \$1999
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With my speaker system dominated by several Image loudspeakers, I was keen to try out the AVS200.2 powered sub (the larger subwoofer, pictured). I had heard very little about Image subwoofers, as other models tend to dominate discussions on Image loudspeakers, so wasn't quite sure what to expect.

As with other Image products, the finish of the sub is first rate. The front of the sub is simple, with only a half-racetrack style speaker grill covering a 300mm driver and a small Image name badge.

Around the back is a little busier, with all the necessary controls, variable low pass filter from 50-100Hz, the on/off switch, a volume knob, a phase reverse switch, gold plated speaker terminals (binding posts for both high-level input and speaker out), RCA connectors for subwoofer-out from your amp and some rather chunky heatsinks.

Sealed enclosures in general are not as efficient as ported enclosures, and so need power, and lots of it. With no port to

help move air about, it is entirely up to the driver to accomplish this. A 200W amplifier using discrete high current

driver and output devices powers the AVS200.2.

What's immediately noticeable about the look of the sub is the sheer size of the thing. This is huge, particularly for a 300mm (12 inch) sub, standing some 510mm high, 570mm wide and 400mm deep, not too far off the dimensions of my own 380mm (15 inch) Velodyne. Although large, it may still earn that ever important significant other acceptance factor with its real wood veneer finish making it a not unattractive piece of kit to have parked up in your listening space.

Filling the space

My 3.7m wide by 9m long home theatre is a fair amount of space for any sub to fill, and few are up to the challenge. Using the auto-eq setup on my Denon 3805, the sub was quickly tuned into the rest of my system, for both volume and crossover.

For stereo and multi-channel audio, I thought the Image sub did a tremendous job in the mid and upper bass frequencies. Being a sealed enclosure, the movement of the cone is very tightly controlled, and with no "chuffing" port noises to detract from the sound. The bass was tight and controlled, with articulate sound. Some discs trialed such as the Eagles' *Hell Freezes Over* were quite agreeable with quick and punchy bass notes.

For movies I also found the sub's performance clean and tight, but when tuned to the rest of my system, a little lacking in the sheer volume, weight and yes, exaggerated nature that I and other home theatre enthusiasts crave. *Saving Private Ryan*, *Black Hawk Down* and even the pod race on *Star Wars Episode I* just weren't quite delivering that "kick in the gut" bass that some movie lovers demand. Although the volume could be



The Image AVS200 is the larger of the two Image subwoofers. At right is the massive 300mm driver used in the subwoofer

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adjusted to produce more sound (eventually I settled on about 12 o'clock on the volume knob), most of the volume seemed to be coming from the lower-mid frequencies rather than the "how whales communicate" bass regions.

Music or movies?

If you are after a rattle your teeth and jar your bones type of sub for the ultimate in home theatre, I couldn't recommend this sub to you. There are plenty of subs available that will do that job better. But it's a tradeoff - they wouldn't have the musical niceties of the Image sub.

But if you are after a sub that will give clean and tight bass for stereo or multi-channel music or movies, then the AVS200.2 represents good value for money, with an exceptional ability to integrate into a system and seem almost invisible—*Tony Davey*

