

Klipsch Reference 25 system

Klipsch Reference 25 system. \$5696 complete. RF-25 floorstanders, \$1999. RC-25 center speaker, \$699. RS-35 surrounds, \$1499. RW-12 subwoofer, \$1499.

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I was going to start this review in my usual way by telling a little story and setting the scene. This time it was going to be how the ports on the floor standers were so big they were comparable in diameter to the penstocks on the Hoover Dam. But Michael, the Ed, told me to cut the crap and get straight into it, so here goes...

The floorstanders wouldn't be described as pretty but that's not to say that they are ugly, actually far from it. Striking and purposeful would be a better fit. My version came supplied in a cherry veneer, which goes very well with the black plastic fascia. The fascia runs the height of the speaker with openings for the horn tweeter and the two 165mm Cerametallic copper coloured drivers. Sitting in the corners of my darkened room absorbing the stray light from the projector, you can see the orange cones glowing ominously.

The first thing I noticed about the Klipsch system is how easy it is to drive. With the ultra high sensitivity rating of 97dB of the RF-25, I found myself with the volume knob only about half as high as with my own B&W 603s. The RF-25 displayed brilliantly clear treble. If anything, I was expecting the RF-25 to be a little top heavy but their bass response was actually quite strong.

I found when listening to rock and hip hop, the bass was nice and punchy. But on the softer stuff such as Norah Jones or Elton John the bass presence was a touch too much; only a touch, but still noticeable. This is probably due to the necessity of placing the speakers close to the corners of my room - other wise they would obscure part of my projection screen!

Centre of attention

The RC-25 centre speaker features nearly identical woofers (just slightly smaller) and tweeter unit as the floorstanders. It also exhibits the same almost radioactive glow when watching movies. Not surprisingly the RC-25 performs in the same outstanding way as its floor standing brothers.

The matching RS-25 surrounds were not available to test so I got the next model up: the RS-35. The surrounds are trapezium in shape, with each of the angled panes having a horn tweeter and the shorter of the two parallel sides has a Cerametallic driver. Using the excellent automated set-up from the Yamaha RX-V2500, the surrounds matched the treble noise of the front speakers identically. Strafing bullets from *Saving Private Ryan* and fizzing arrows in *LOTR - The Two Towers* highlighted the real benefits in having a complete set of speakers that all use the same components as front to back or vice versa effects were almost seamless.



Evil in residence

The biggest surprise and the speaker I liked best was the RW-12 subwoofer. While initially I didn't think it was all that great, over the past three weeks it has proved to be a real animal. *Resident Evil* has a LFE sound track like none I've come across before. The sub hammers away for 90 of its 97 minute length.

The sub itself is a 300mm front firing Cerametallic cone and is controlled by a 300w RMS amplifier. It has all the usual features such as 180° phase control and auto/standby mode. One great aspect of this sub is the volume control. An easy to adjust knob is countersunk high into the right side, near the front panel. Though, the best bit about this sub is its performance.

I have a B&W ASW 650 - a half-decent subwoofer - but I'd swap it for this one in a heartbeat. It sounds better and punches faster and harder.

Hobbit feet

The Klipsch gear is a quality product. You'll be able to tell this as soon as you open the box; the packaging is vacuum sealed, each speaker comes supplied with a nicely presented instruction manual, the centre speaker is provided with a height adjustable foot to change the projection angle, and the floorstanders are supplied with large spikes and outrigger feet for hard floors. This combo reinforces the old adage; you always get what you pay for. The Klipsch system at \$5,500 is not cheap but then again they doesn't sound or look cheap. They are well made, good looking and sound great—*Jamie Gemming*

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