

Velodyne SPL1000

Velodyne goes big and small at the same time
By Max Christoffersen

Velodyne SPL1000 subwoofer. \$3499

Trust Velodyne to put a smile on my face. Once again, it's been a little while between subs at my place and I always forget what joy they can bring to a home theatre system when they do the important things right.

And this small Velodyne does do the important things right.

From the outset I enjoyed the fully rounded, deeply extended and all enveloping warm bass that typifies the sonic signature of this new subwoofer.

Sub enthusiasts have to be a little bit taken with the new Velodyne range; few other manufacturers would dare to designate their subs as an 'SPL' anything - but Velodyne can and does. And gets away with it.

Watch me work

I find that subs either work and show their character pretty quickly or they don't. If they don't, it can

be because the room position isn't to their liking or more simply their bass 'texture' isn't to mine.

And Velodyne make it clear that all rooms aren't created equal in the Owner's Manual: "Keep in mind that frequency response and output level can drastically influenced by placement depending on

the acoustic properties of the listening room..."

So experiment with room placement - Velodyne is right - mere inches can make the difference

between a sub really pushing the hot bass buttons or being a huge sonic disappointment.

When you've found that place, bass becomes almost transparent, it's not sound alone anymore, it becomes part of the room and part of the main body and soundstage of the music or soundtrack.

Combine that with the ability to move smoothly up and down the musical scale, really move some air when needed and put the frighteners on when required and well, you have a good sub.

Namby-Pamby Bass

I tried two totally different musical approaches: one with the new John Mayer album *Music for Squares* and with Eric Johnson's *Venus Isle*, plus the obligatory *U571* depth charge scene.

And the very different bass textures on each were a thrill to hear. Whether it was the genuine deep extension on Johnson's album or the mid bass of Mayer's or the true gut wrenching extension of *U571*, each was replayed with finesse and a bit of guilty sub-bass pleasure. It's a genuine audio thrill when sub-bass goes almost tactile and then suddenly has to go up the scale with attention to musical detail from a fretless bass or a tom drum sound. The Velodyne did both - it is musical and capable of depth charge bass.

But let me confess: typically I'm a big driver kind of guy. If I want bass I'll get big drivers in an even bigger box and do it the traditional way. None of this namby-pamby small-box-high-excursion driver digital trickery for me.

Your choice is simple. You either move a lot of air with a big driver working easy or move a lot of air with a small driver working hard.

The rubber surround on the SPL1000 gives the story away. It looks like an overblown inner bike tube that's about to blow! It screams "excursion, baby". And when this 250mm (10") driver

starts to move - it moves! That rubber surround isn't for show, assisting in providing a specified bass level of around 24Hz.

So the obvious question is: "Okay, how far does this 250mm impregnated paper cone driver move?"

So reading through the manual I tried to find the driver excursion specification and like all other subwoofer manuals and advertising, it's the one spec missing.

What the manual does tell the proud owner is that it comes equipped with a 75mm high temperature voice coil, Class D amp (1500 watts dynamic power), video shielding and an auto-on/off sensor. Phase control, low pass crossover and driver over excursion protection circuitry is also included as are quality five-way binding posts.

Cosmetically, it's a simple black box, (12.75x12.25x13.75" WxHxD) with a slip in front grill that slips tidily into the front feet. The only thing that looks out of place is the brand plate and blue power indicator located on the top left. It looks like an after-thought where the design team and the marketing team clashed and came to a committee decision that was the worst result for everyone.

While market forces may be dictating that small subs are the way of the future, that may not be a bad thing. Because while the box is small, the bass is big.

This one is going to be missed and like it's bigger brother before it (Velodyne CHT 150), it's left a very smug smile and lasting impression. Hear it!

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