

The art of deep thought

Rel is currently the accepted market leader in UK subwoofers – and with good reason if the £545 Strata II is anything to go by



Support this site and visit our sponsors.



Costing a significant chunk of cash less than the Polk reviewed elsewhere, which is itself a significant chunk of cash less than the Miller – Kreisel, the Rel Strata II nevertheless has some major-league surprises in store.

A similar size to the Polk PSW 300 but standing on end rather than lying on its side, the Rel Strata is in its second incarnation here. A nice looking piece of kit and a simple ported enclosure, it stands on stubby feet with the first set of spikes spied in this tested group. The inverted-dome speaker fires downwards alongside the port and has no grille. The suspension to this subwoofer is a massive rubbery item of great flexibility. The only ornamentation is the name Rel routed into the black upright surface low on the front.

The connections to the Strata are interesting. An XLR three-pin type female panel socket is used to input at speaker level (an XLR plug with speaker lead tail is supplied in the accessories pack along with the spikes) while a phono is used for signal input. Two sets of phono highpass signal output sockets are also provided.

There's a phase control and three knobs on the control panel too. As well as gain, the other two knobs are marked 'coarse' and 'fine'. These control the crossover and act to offer a very wide choice of turnover points from 120Hz all the way down to 30Hz.

'I'VE SEEN *THE EXORCIST* ABOUT 167 TIMES...'

This unit goes remarkably deep for all its simple design and moderate 60W of power. That it's very solidly well-made is obvious the moment you listen to its uncoloured and precise sound – all the more impressive when you consider the modest price tag on the thing.

Once more I scanned my laser disc to the scene where we see Keaton checking the obituaries to see who's died. The heavy bassline thumping under this scene is a treat. The Rel drops with amazing ease. It may not be the loudest here (that honour belongs to the quarter-kilowatt Velodyne coming up later) but it has an aptitude with the very lowest stuff that is just short of awesome. Where the -10 decibel specification is obfuscatory on the Yamaha box reviewed elsewhere, the spec offered up with the Rel product can be taken as absolute gospel.

The Strata II also beats some more expensive boxes for sheer clean accuracy of bass output. Overshoot is not something that this model is guilty of. When the note stops, so does the subwoofer. While the Strata may not have enormous power at its disposal and will not shake your world to death, it makes the cost of the Polk look hard to justify. It still seems that a port and a cone for output firing at the back is a better option than a ported output alone, even if the latter is 'High Velocity Compression Driven'.

We don't mark based on cost alone at HCC, but this is a horribly good way to spend £545.

Adam Rayner, Home Cinema Choice, September 1996

FOCUS

A quality option this, offering precision and power (the only limiting factor is the 60W of muscle). Pure class, and easy to match with most systems.

Slam ***
Depth *****
Precision *****
Overall *****

Model : Rel Strata II

Price : £545

Frequency Response : 20Hz-120Hz

Power : 60W

T 01656 768777



This review was part of the September 1996 subwoofer supertest which reviewed the following equipment :

Make and Model	Rating	Price	Issue
Miller & Kreisel V125THX	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	£800	SEPT 96
Polk PSW 300	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	£749	SEPT 96
REL Strata II	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	£545	SEPT 96
Velodyne VA1215X	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	£999	SEPT 96
Yamaha YST-SW80	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	£180	SEPT 96

The featured film was **Beetlejuice**.

Hardware review archive

Search for:

made by:

were reviewed:
-- or --
Search for:

sort results by:

[Home](#) [News](#) [Magazine](#) [Reviews](#) [Articles](#) [Competitions](#) [Community](#) [Links](#) [Contact Us](#) [Top](#)
Our suite of Home Cinema Magazines



Managed by  Powered by  ©1998-2006 