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AdmiraVox AV 170

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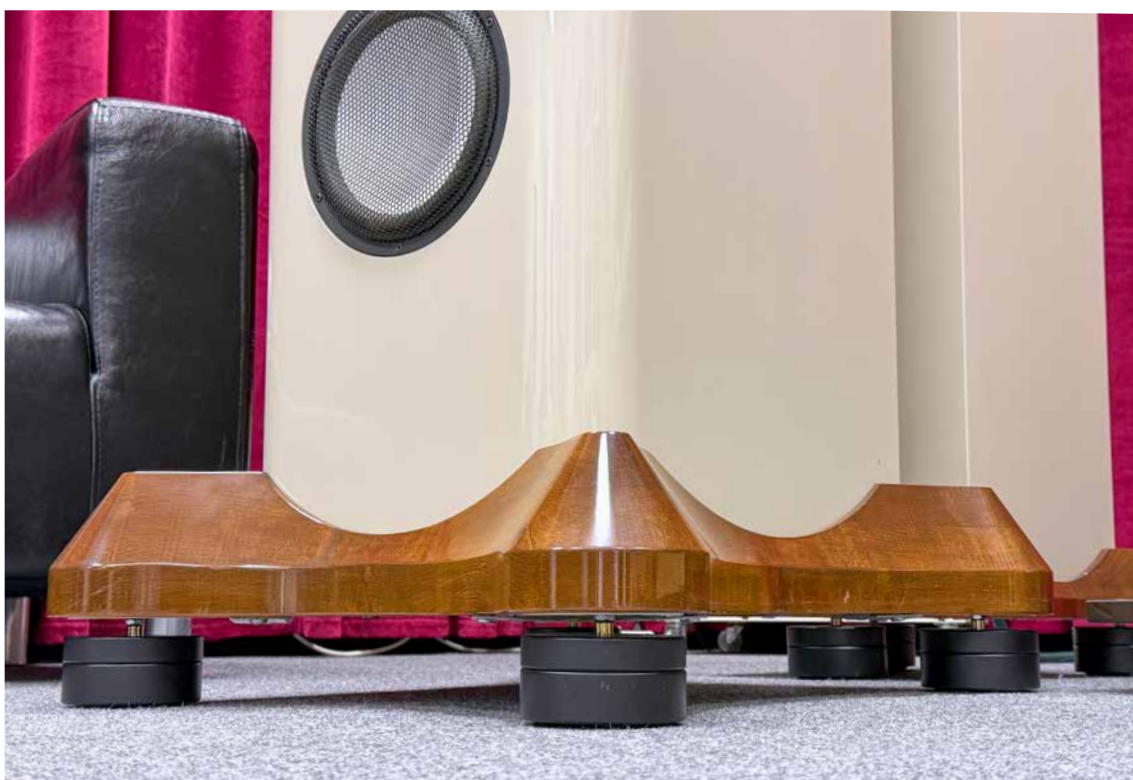
NO HALF MEASURES

By Maximilian Merk. Photography: Ingo Schulz, Manufacturer

Most reviews open with unboxing – this one opens with a masterclass in logistics. AdmiraVox from Hungary has sent us the AV 170, and to be frank, these are no ordinary pair of speakers – together, they are a manifesto of commitment.

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The AV 170 has an external crossover (above) for two reasons: first, it offers sonic advantages, because the components are not affected by the sound pressure inside the cabinet; second, the coils of the low-pass filters are so large that they would simply take up too much space in the main cabinet. Below is a view of the base construction, assembled before setup – or rather, installation. In addition to this version, the manufacturer is working on a variant in American walnut. However, the designer told us that this will take “at least until the end of the year.”



Like Oscar Wilde, Alpár Csendes is a man of simple tastes: he is always content with the best. The low-midrange drivers are all from Accuton, while the AMT tweeter and all crossover components, such as the foil coils and film capacitors, are from Mundorf's range-topping series.

— The two behemoths (delivered in five flight cases) were rolled into the editorial office by AdmiraVox founder Alpár Csendes and his team, and soon our listening room became one part high-end laboratory and one part car repair shop for the next few hours. Protective blankets were laid out, lifting devices put in position, and walkways cleared – you don't just casually set up these speakers. And once they are in place, you are effectively establishing a permanent fixtur. Weighing in at 125 kilograms per speaker – not including the stand – every move becomes a calculated action. The massive bases weigh an additional 25 kilograms each, and the external crossovers are nothing to sneeze at – 73 kilograms apiece. Every conceivable boundary has been deliberately pushed to the limit. Once the AV 170s are finally in place, they exude a presence far beyond their sheer mass. The name says it all: “170” stands for 170 centimeters in height, making the speakers anything but discreet even in large listening rooms. But regardless of this, they radiate an aura of astonishing elegance that belies their monumental dimensions. This elegance

comes courtesy of the uncompromisingly manufactured cabinet, constructed entirely of CNC-milled aluminum. They didn't use profiles or welded frames, instead assembling it from precisely cut and milled plates. The baffle and bottom plate measure 20 millimeters each, while all other cabinet walls are still 10 millimeters thick. This not only provides an unshakeable foundation, but also exudes an almost sculptural calm on the outside. The loudspeaker looks like a pure monolith – with perfect transitions, invisible joints, and no visible screws.

Using aluminum was a deliberate choice made not only for its mechanical traits, but also its thermal and acoustic properties. However, bare aluminum can make for a sterile or technical appearance, so AdmiraVox decided to apply a coat of paint. In the standard version, the AV 170 comes in glossy eggshell white, which lends lightness and elegance to the massive enclosures. And for those who prefer a more individual look, the cabinets can be painted in any color on request and always in the same high quality as the standard version. This detail reflects the general philosophy of

AdmiraVox: anything is possible if it helps deliver exactly what the customer wants. This uncompromising approach continues on the inside. Solid aluminum is not nearly enough to completely eliminate cabinet resonance. Therefore, the outer armor plating of the cabinets has been reinforced with strategically applied wooden bracing. The combination of metal and wood may seem surprising, but it makes perfect sense both acoustically and structurally. The aluminum provides maximum rigidity and precision, while the wood adds internal damping. The result is a cabinet that never develops a life of its own, not even at the highest volumes – this means not the slightest hum, no trace of resonance, and no sound-distorting vibrations. Even the base construction is worthy of attention. Each speaker stands on a solid aluminum plate that is firmly bolted to the cabinet, forming a rigid connection. The foundation is supported by four large cylindrical feet that distribute the high mass effectively. To ensure a living room-friendly appearance, the base is enclosed in a finely-crafted frame made of solid wood panels. In conversation, Alpár ►

ACCOMPANYING EQUIPMENT

CD players: Ayon CD-3sx, Audio Note CD 3.1x | **Network players/streamers:** Lumin P1, T+A PSD 3100 HV | **Preamplifiers:** Accuphase C-2300, Riviera APL-1 | **Integrated amplifiers:** Line Magnetic LM-881A, Aavik I-580 | **Power amplifiers:** Burmester 216, Riviera AFS-32 | **Loudspeakers:** Wilson Audio Sasha DAW, Marten Parker Quintet, Avantgarde Acoustic Colibri | **Racks:** Solidsteel, Finite Elemente, Beaudioful | **Cables:** AudioQuest, HMS, in-akustik, Vovox

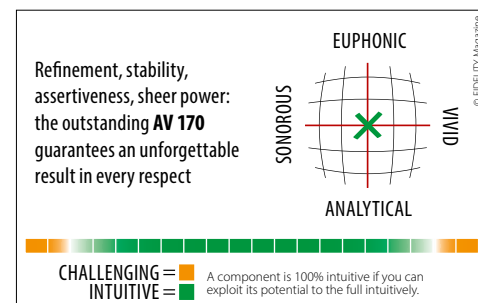


Csendes emphasized how important this combination of engineering and traditional craftsmanship is to him. To him, the AV 170s are not mere speakers: they are an expression of a commitment without shortcuts. This maxim is also reflected in the driver configuration. Four Accuton drivers are used as sound sources, grouped around a Mundorf Air Motion Transformer in a D'Appolito arrangement. The top and bottom units are responsible for the low end, while the two inner drivers cover the low-midrange. The AMT takes over at around two kilohertz – airy, fast, and with enormous resolution. Rather than

being housed in the cabinet, the crossover has (as already mentioned) its own wooden enclosure. And here we also find the cream of electrical engineering coming together: Mundorf components, quality internal wiring, and massive connection terminals. The crossover is designed to operate stably even at very high currents without introducing any kind of coloration. Furthermore, all of this is wrapped in a housing that dwarfs most mono power amplifiers and weighs just as much. Resonances won't survive here, and interference between electrical components and drivers is virtually impossible.

When asked how this project came about, Alpár Csenedes replied that he had tried many speakers over the years, but none had ever fully convinced him. He prefers to take things into his own hands, so he decided to build his own speaker. With a wink, he adds that his penchant for precision and attention to detail meant he could just as well have been German.

Once the strenuous setup is completed, another strength of the AV 170 becomes apparent: despite their size and complexity, these colossal speakers are actually quite easy to accommodate in a room. We quickly found the



Can you spot it? The base construction has a slightly different color on each side. This is an intentional part of the development process, currently in its final phase. When we asked which of the two colors would make it into the series, the answer was: neither. Csendes is already experimenting with other variations. We look forward to seeing what's next.

optimal placement in the FIDELITY listening room, and after some fine-tuning and experimenting with toe-in, the speakers performed impeccably. This was certainly helped by the sealed box design, which generally tends to be easier to work with: right out of the gate, the bass came on dry, crisp, and controlled.

Which brings us to the most exciting part: from the very first moment, the AV 170s played with a light-footed agility that shocked us given the sheer physical might behind these speakers. They deliver musical details, dynamics, and spatial imaging so sublime and

effortless that they seem downright playful – as if no musical challenge, no matter how great, could even begin to make them nervous. They never sound like they are trying hard. Every note enters the room with confident naturalness, carried by an inner calm suggesting enormous power reserves. In particular, imaging was particularly impressive from the outset: the stage was deep, wide, and precisely defined in our listening room. Each musician had their strictly defined place, nothing drifted or blurred, and the instrument proportions were consistent and credible throughout. This isn't merely precise – it feels organic.

Listening to “Sky Blue” by Peter Gabriel revealed how sensitively the AV 170 handles voices. Gabriel's distinctive voice was razor-sharp and vivid in the room, as the deep percussion elements blended naturally into the low frequency range. The speakers managed to reproduce the rhythmic structure of with springy precision and warmth – never compressed, never pushed, everything flowing. Johann Pachelbel's Canon and Gigue P. 37 let the AV 170 demonstrate its full transparency and tonality. The famous canon was never monotonous in its repetitive structure, instead gaining an almost hypnotic aura through the ▶



Our first encounter with AdmiraVox took place at last year's FINEST AUDIO SHOW in Vienna. The man-sized colossi were one of the big topics among visitors and impressed with far more than their sheer presence.

differentiated presentation of the individual string groups. The violins sounded smooth, with a silky mellowness that never tipped into sharpness, while the cello provided a clear woody foundation. The speakers truly opened up the room as an acoustic volume. Meanwhile, “Take a Pebble” by Emerson Lake & Palmer demonstrated the dynamic range of the AV 170. The transition between quiet, intimate passages and orchestral outbursts was mastered with ease. The intro grand piano had real body, and the strings and touch were crystal clear. When the drum rolls kicked, enormous energy was unleashed – but it never became unpleasantly loud. It was present, room-filling, impressive – but always perfectly controlled. Gianna Nannini’s “Profumo” demonstrated the speakers’ ability to convey deep intimacy. Her smoky voice, accompanied by just a few instruments, was palpable in the room, with a hint of reverberation enhancing the song. It is often voices with character that separate the wheat from the chaff – and the

AV 170 did not disappoint. The fine preservation of structure in the vocal range and the perfect balance between directness and atmosphere were simply jaw dropping. Finally, we had “Summer” from Vivaldi’s Four Seasons, a piece that demands dynamics, precision, and tempo. Yet again, the AV 170 delivered flawlessly. The interplay of broad washes of sound and pointed attacks, of effervescent runs and lyrical moments, was an experience in itself. No detail was lost – nothing was overemphasized. The rapid changes between levels and tempos elucidated how precise and simultaneously effortless these speakers are. In summary, the AdmiraVox AV 170 speakers are as uncompromising in terms of sound as they are in their construction. They offer thoroughly confident reproduction that is neither gimmicky nor embellished, but simply reproduces everything at the highest level. They manage to be both musically captivating and analytically precise – without ever compromising each other. Once you’ve experienced

them, you won’t forget them anytime soon. This is a speaker for eternity. ■

Loudspeaker | AdmiraVox AV 170 | Concept: passive floorstanding speaker with sealed-box cabinet and external crossover | **Drivers:** 4 identical 22 cm ceramic drivers from Accuton (2 each for the low and low-midrange frequencies), 1 Air Motion Transformer (AMT) from Mundorf with neodymium magnets for the treble range | **Power handling:** 50 to 500 W | **Sensitivity:** 93 dB | **Frequency response:** 38 Hz to 32 kHz | **Crossover:** 2.5-way | **Crossover frequency:** 2000 Hz | **Special features:** Crossover in its own housing; use of exclusively high-quality Mundorf components: MCoil-CFC10 air coils (copper foil, low impedance), MCap SUPREME EVO Oil and MCap SUPREME EVO capacitors; no iron core coils, exclusively foil windings for the best possible signal integrity | **Dimensions (W/H/D):** 37/170/45 cm (speaker without base and crossover) | **Weight:** Speaker approx. 125 kg, crossover approx. 70 kg, base approx. 24 kg | **Warranty period:** 2 years (5 years upon registration) | **Price:** estimated at € 200,000

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