



Component

SHOOTOUT

The High Side of High-End Component Sets

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IT'S SAFE TO SAY the retail prices of these speaker systems would likely dissuade most of us from purchasing them. However, just like the exotic cars, electronics, and movie stars that may never be a part of our lives, it's still fun to consider. For those of you who have a healthy six-figure income (and no spouse), think of this as a buyer's guide for expensive car audio gear. The rest of us can fantasize and look at what we might (or might not) be missing.

I find it difficult to write an article about four similar speakers in price ranges above and some well beyond the \$800 mark without making comparisons and drawing conclusions about which one was superior. Still, at the end of the objective section don't expect an announcement about which is best or even which one I prefer (see the subjective score chart for that). Honestly, every one of these component speakers could

be considered as the epitome of high-end components and would no doubt make a great addition to anyone's system.

So all that being said, this article begins a new chapter in speaker testing for *Car Audio and Electronics*. In the past we have looked at Frequency Response and Parameters to evaluate the measured performance. However, the signals we use for these measurements are really pretty small and don't completely reflect how the speakers might sound when they are used at real listening levels. This is one reason that we split the evaluation into measurements and listening tests. Listening tests are done at many signal levels and good ears can hear things like distortion that happen at higher levels.

A recently introduced piece of test equipment called a Klippel Distortion Analyzer (www.klippel.de) has changed this dynamic and narrowed the gap between measurements and

what we hear. It is revolutionizing the speaker industry and giving engineers a whole new way to look at speaker performance. For those of us who have been testing speakers for a really long time, it's like getting a new pair of glasses and realizing that there is a whole world of things that you have been missing.

The system gives a whole range of important data for all types of speakers. You will be seeing this information in the articles that Vance Dickason and I write. In many ways the system is even more of a revolution in the way we look at subwoofers. I will do my best to give layman descriptions of the tests and what they mean, but for those of you who are techno-junkies, check out the Klippel site. It's heady stuff but it represents the leading edge of technology in speaker design. On to the tests.



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US magazine Car Audio tested four High-End component sets. DLS Iridium 6.2 where among these four which we are proud of. DLS came out as number four in the test but be aware that it was also the cheapest. The Alpine kit has a price of \$3000, the Rainbow \$6000, the Morel system \$899, and the DLS system \$875.

CONCLUSION

Well, there you have it. Four top speaker systems that really broke down into two groups (according to price conventions). The Alpine and Rainbow speakers proved that there is a reason they are more expensive. The Morel and DLS speakers prove that they are at the top of their food chain with excellent performance too. Grab your favorite three or four songs and go listen to these. You'll thank me in the morning. — E.H.