

DLS Nobelium 6.2 Component Set

Reviewer: Marty Price



The best speakers DLS has ever made.

Swedish audio manufacturer, DLS was born back in 1979 and since conception has continually produced superior car and home audio components. DLS has been part of the Australian car audio market for just over ten years, and though it does not command an enormous market share, it does have its loyal followers. These people will need no convincing of the quality of DLS' Nobelium 6.2—they have already witnessed the DLS dedication to quality sound.

For everyone else, DLS concentrates on making products impressive enough to force audio enthusiasts to sit up and take notice. One area in which DLS especially excels, is the development and performance of its component speakers. The Iridium component sets were hugely popular when released a few years ago, and created a massive stir when they won the 'Mobile Loudspeaker of the Year 2004–2005' award in Europe. After that feat, the company wasn't going to be caught resting on its laurels but instead headed

back to the drawing board to design a component set to outdo the Iridiums. The result is what DLS claim as "the best speakers it has ever made"—the Nobelium 6.2 component set.

EQUIPMENT

The Nobelium 6.2 speakers are the new DLS flagships. Once they were unpacked, a couple of words sprang to mind regarding their looks alone: incredible and flawless. But this came as no surprise—these speakers represent an enormous amount of research, development and engineering, and when you sit down for your very first listen, it shows. There are two siblings to the 6.2 component set, too: the 5.2 (5.25 inch/13cm) and 8.2 (8 inch/20cm) component sets. In addition, Nobelium makes subwoofers... but we'll save that for another audition, another time.

Inside the box is a large 'thank you' card from DLS. Cute. Underneath that, you'll find two midrange drivers, two tweeters and two hand-built crossovers,

each enclosed in its own, separate cardboard box. I grabbed the midrange driver first, and initially thought it looked suspiciously similar to certain other DLS products. However, upon closer inspection, I realised these ones are unlike anything DLS has made before. The build quality is beautiful; these are impressive speakers.

We'll start with the midrange. The first thing you appreciate is the immensely strong but lightweight aluminum woofer with its soft dome diffuser/dust cap. This cone and the motor are seated in a die-cast eight-holed basket and this helps to anchor all the internal parts. Couple this advanced cone construction with a butyl rubber surround and heavy duty raised progressive spider and you'll see all the internals are held tightly concentric, which aids in providing accurate mid range response.

The chrome plated back plate is screwed on, clamping the comparatively small but extremely strong Neodymium magnet and motor structure firmly onto the bottom of the basket. Neat gold plated

brass screw terminals are also mounted into the side of the basket, and again emphasise the high levels of craftsmanship.

The voice coil is another reason why the Nobelium drivers are a vast improvement over the Iridium predecessor—it is now a flat aluminum wire wound on a massive, seventy-five millimeter diameter, coated aluminum former. The entire voice coil and former also benefits from side slot windows, which allow air to flow in and through the voice coil gap. This aids in cooling the driver considerably while under heavy load, and serves to maximise heat dissipation, giving the driver the ability to handle hundreds of watts continuous power.

Focusing on the tweeter, again the DLS engineers haven't cut any corners and have developed a tweeter far superior to those of the past. All three Nobelium component sets come with the same tweeter, the NO1. The 28mm first rate tweeter features a combination of a lightweight textile dome and a powerful motor system, which also sits in a die cast basket like the midrange motor. The beauty of the textile dome is that not only does it maintain its shape very well under most loads, but it also has a beautifully smooth response that lacks any trace of harshness from which many tweeters (including high end ones) suffer. The voice coil of the tweeter is also wound on the former with thick aluminum wire, which gives the tweeters quite high power handling abilities to match the Nobelium midrange.

The remaining part of the trio and arguably the most important are the crossovers. Housed in neatly finished clear and black plastic cases, they're quite bulky and thick. The DLS logo is clearly molded into the top cover with the Nobelium logo screen printed on the cover just below it. They contain high quality components such as hi-grade filters with ribbon coils, polypropylene capacitors and metal oxide resistors. DLS has developed

the crossovers with extreme tolerance and parameters resulting in the smallest possible aural misdemeanors. This is essential for providing both the Nobelium midrange and tweeter with crystal clear sound signals. The crossovers are 6dB low pass and 12db high pass and have tweeter attenuation controls built-in.

INSTALLATION

Installation of the Nobelium components is quite easy, thanks to the midrange—this has only a relatively shallow 65mm mounting depth. While not allowing the midrange to go just anywhere, it will fit into a lot more cars than many other high end components that are on the market today.

However, the tweeters are not quite as easy to find real estate for, because of the large 25mm mounting depth. In addition, you will need to find some space for the crossover, which may prove to be a challenge. Though the crossovers are not as large as many other, high end models, they're not small by any stretch of the imagination, either. However, showing them off is a valid option—they look quite good.

PERFORMANCE

Once mounted into the doors and kick panels of my test car, the Nobeliums were ready to go. The first thing I noticed was the smoothness of the drivers' sound—the woofers produced a surprisingly clean sound right throughout the frequency range, even up to a couple of thousand hertz before they're crossed and duties are handed to the tweeter.


I did expect quite a punchy attack from such a massive motor structure but I didn't think they would remain so smooth. I ran them from my 2 x 270 watt amplifier, and that sort of power coupled with the large motor structure (not to mention fully sound deadened doors) kept the Nobelium midrange drivers extremely accurate, even deep into the lower end of the frequency scale. I had them crossed at 55Hz and up

while my subwoofer was crossed at 60Hz and down.

The higher frequency reproduction was actually just as I expected—super-clean and smooth. With soft textile domes, I suspected the tweeters would not produce that harsh edge to the sound, of which so many tweeters are guilty. Due to the Nobelium tweeter design, they're actually a lot softer than you first suspect, but once you adjust the crossover to get the levels matched to your personal tastes, they really come to life.

VERDICT

The Nobelium components are a wonderful solution for someone who demands extremely accurate sound. I suspect many musicians would love a pair of these in their car. Metal heads and electronica fans may need to turn the speakers up a little, but this is the same with most high end components sets.

The Nobelium component sets will certainly handle larger demands, without worry. And just in case you're wondering, 'Nobelium' is a radioactive metal with atomic number 102, named after the Swedish scientist, Alfred Nobel. 

TECH SPECS

DLS NOBELIUM 6.2 COMPONENT SET

Type: Two-way speaker system

Bass: 165mm butyl rubber surround, aluminum cone, die cast basket, aluminum voice coil, progressive raised spider

Tweeter: 28mm textile dome

Crossover: Low pass 6dB, high pass 12dB

Power handling: 100–160 watts continuous

Sensitivity: 91dB

Impedance: 4 ohms

Cost: \$1799 RRP

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