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Above DeVore Fidelity O/96 loudspeakers – the first piece to join Ten, a new artisan collection from Absolute Sounds

Absolute Sounds launches Ten – an artisan collection

The UK's foremost high-end audio distributor compiles a carefully curated collection of singular sonic artistry from independent makers – starting with DeVore's O/96 loudspeakers

London, England – For more than 40 years, Absolute Sounds has brought the world's finest audio equipment to discerning music lovers in the UK. Today, the company launches a new distribution concept called Ten – a hand-selected portfolio of extraordinary sonic creations curated by Ricardo Franassovici, Absolute Sounds' founder and MD.

Ten stands apart from Absolute Sounds' main catalogue, which consists of 21 established high-end audio marques widely recognised as among the finest in the world. The products selected for Ten are made by audio artisans – perhaps less well-known, more specialised and smaller in scale, but no less accomplished in their pursuit of sonic perfection.

Ten will not necessarily carry a featured maker's full range. Instead, each piece is selected for its outstanding individual attributes, lovingly crafted in limited quantity to satisfy the specific tastes of

audio connoisseurs. Only adventurous designs of exceptional quality stand a chance of making the grade, and only makers who specialise in a singular concept – a specific type of loudspeaker, or amplifier, or source component – will be considered.

Speaking about the formation of Ten, Mr Franassovici said: “If I were to draw an analogy from my music industry background, I would describe the main Absolute Sounds catalogue as a ‘major label’ to which many of the world’s most critically acclaimed artists are signed, while Ten is a specialised subsidiary with a more ‘indie’ ethos, shining a light on exceptional creative talent from every corner of the globe.”

Mr Franassovici continued, “Each maker has a high level of specialisation. Just as an accomplished shoemaker makes the best shoes, an exceptional tailor makes best suits, and a superior milliner makes the best hats, so the best audio equipment is made by creators who specialise in a particular thing. The bar for membership of Ten is set at the highest level and each maker has proved they exceed it.”

Ten is a number of great significance in culture, religion, science and mathematics. The Japanese word ‘天’ (pronounced ‘ten’) translates as ‘heaven’, ‘sky’ or ‘destiny’. Now, Ten also signifies the extraordinary work of gifted audio artisans, brought together to represent the absolute art and soul of sound.

DeVore Fidelity O/96 – the first entry to the Ten collection

The first piece selected for Ten comes from New York City’s DeVore Fidelity – a loudspeaker named Orangutan 96, or O/96 for short.

Made in Brooklyn, the O/96 exudes New York arthouse attitude, flying in the face of prevailing fashions to set its own agenda. This is not a speaker intended as a crowd-pleasing commodity; but for those who appreciate its singular artistry it is pure revelation. This makes it a perfect fit for the Ten collection.

The O/96 is a rarity in these modern times – a wide-baffle, high-sensitivity loudspeaker. The ‘96’ in its name alludes to its quoted electrical sensitivity of 96dB; to put that in perspective, most modern speaker designs are rated in the 85dB to 90dB region. Decades ago, when low-output valve amps were commonplace, high-sensitivity speakers were all the rage. Now, in the age of powerful solid-state amps for which high-sensitivity is less essential, they are often viewed as a curiosity from a bygone age.

Those who hold that view have yet to experience a speaker like the O/96. It forms a perfect partnership with single-ended triode (SET) valve amplifiers, which have a modest power output – SET amps and wide-baffle, high-sensitivity speakers are a classic combination delivering spellbinding tone, texture and musical engagement. But the O/96 is not only made for SET amplifiers; other types of valve amp as well as low-power Class A solid-state designs and even amps with higher power outputs thrive when driving the DeVore speakers, prospering from their masterful skills in the art of musical communication.

The O/96 incorporates a bespoke mid/bass driver with a 25cm wood fibre cone and a motor system developed from DeVore Fidelity’s Silverback Reference drivers. This combines with a 25cm silk-dome tweeter built into a concave flange that lends a subtle horn-loading effect, driven by a powerful double-motor magnet system with a tuned chamber at the rear.

Each speaker is handmade to perfection, its wood-veneered cabinet finished with polyester lacquer. The baffle is fronted by a choice of richly patterned veneers, with ebony wood, lace walnut, wild cherry

and bird's eye maple among the options. Paint finishes are also available; in fact, DeVore Fidelity will endeavour to match any finish that is requested by a customer.

The sound this speaker produces is energising, life-size and full of emotion, with free-breathing dynamics and an effortless quality that just flows into the room. It is a true work of art for passionate music lovers, distinctly different to the contemporary high-end loudspeaker 'norm' in a way that perfectly embodies the Ten concept.

The DeVore Fidelity O/96 loudspeaker is available in the UK from the start of 2021, priced from £13,500 per pair including stands (custom cabinet and finish options are also available). Three other DeVore Fidelity speakers are set to join the O/96 in the Ten collection – the O/93 (£8,998 per pair), Gibbon Super Nine (£9,998 per pair) and O/Reference four-piece speaker system (£POA).

For more information about DeVore Fidelity, visit devorefidelity.com.

Other makers whose sonic creations have been selected to join the Ten collection will be revealed in 2021 – brought to the UK exclusively by Absolute Sounds.

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Absolute Sounds is the UK's leading importer and distributor of high-quality hi-fi and home cinema equipment. The company was formed in 1979 by Ricardo Franassovici, who left a successful career in the music industry to become one of the world's leading hi-fi entrepreneurs. Ricardo's burning desire has always been to give UK-based music fans the opportunity to experience audio at the highest level, cherry-picking the very best components from around the globe to create a 'hi-fi boutique' overflowing with highly covetable, high-performance products. Like the finest watches and most prestigious motorcars, these brands deliver finely tuned, supremely engineered products that simply ooze desirability. If you are seeking the world's best hi-fi and home cinema equipment, Absolute Sounds is your first port of call.

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