



Voila: Grand Nola

It is not everyday that you get a product that not only amazes you with its aesthetics but leaves you speechless with its performance. Nola Grand Reference II is all set to enchant you and will surely leave you wanting for more

An instant favourite at AV MAX, Nola Speakers, based out of Brooklyn, New York, has managed to set up a strong base here in India within no time. We still fondly remember the Nola Boxer bookshelf speakers that we had reviewed in our August 2012 issue for their simple and minimalist design with exemplary audio performance. This time, JNB Sound, has taken the bar a notch higher with their flagship bookshelf speakers; the Nola Micro Grand Reference II.

OUT OF THE BOX

Unlike the simple and sweet Nola Boxer speakers, the Micro Grand Reference is a different ball game all together. Its grandeur defined in true sense, the Micro Grand Reference II is a definite visual treat. What we liked the most is that though highly attractive and inviting in terms of looks, they have still managed to maintain a certain level of simplicity and 'easy-on-the-eyes' approach in the speaker design—making it more acceptable. A taller than usual, slender body with a supreme lacquer finish and an even exquisite looking stand—it is just too eye-catching!

TECHNOLOGY

The speaker is a basic 3.5-way design where the major contribution is towards the selection of high quality components that are reliable and trustworthy in all senses. The driver arrangement includes two

magnesium woofers, one Alnico magnet open baffle mid-range, and one open baffle true ribbon tweeter installed in a 3.5-way Unison crossover design. The Unison crossover topology employs only top quality audiophile grade components throughout. The wiring has been done with Nordost* mono-filament silver wire. The crossover boards are hard wired (no PCBs) for maximum quality as they believe that it provides with the highest amount contact and connection between the components. In terms of drivers, the open baffle, true ribbon tweeter eliminates any kind of diaphragm, as the ribbon is the diaphragm. The moving mass of this design is about 25 times less than any known dome tweeter. The result is effortless detail without hardness. Further, the driver array also utilises a 45 degree mirror-imaged concept for mid-range and tweeter. The twin 4.5" cast-frame magnesium woofers operates in an optimum rear vented enclosure. The vent is an oversized, double-flared design that eliminates port noise. The other 4.5" cast-frame tri-laminate cone mid-range uses an Alnico magnet and operates as an open baffle dipole to eliminate enclosure colouration.

WHAT IS
*Nordost
Nordost Corporation is a high-technology cable manufacturer specialising in the audio and medical fields, using precision conductor solutions first developed for the aerospace industry and in conjunction with NASA for the space shuttle program. It is based in Holliston, USA.

PERFORMANCE

A major reason for us falling in love with the looks of the Micro Grand Reference II was the stand. And more than its inviting form factor, it's even more interesting to set up the entire stand. The speakers and the stand are coupled with a very

Specification

DESIGN 3.5-way
DRIVERS 1 Ribbon Tweeter, 1x4.5" Alnico Magnet Diver, 2x4.5" Magnesium Woofers
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 38Hz to 46kHz
NOMINAL IMPEDANCE 8Ω
POWER HANDLING NA
SENSITIVITY 86dB
WEIGHT 15.87Kg
DIMENSIONS (Without Base)



Nola Micro Grand Reference II	
PRICE	₹ 9,90,000*
WARRANTY	1 Year
CATEGORY	Bookshelf Speakers
AESTHETICS	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★★
AUDIO	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
VFM	★★★★★
WHAT SAY AV?	
This speaker is definitely not for the weak hearted. Priced at a mind boggling Rs 9.9 lakh for a pair, we doubt how many in the entire country would be up to go for it. But all those who can, should definitely give it a try as there is nothing to criticise about these speakers. It's clean, resolute and, as we have said, utterly entertaining, period	
OVERALL	★★★★★
CONTACT	jnbssound@gmail.com

*Additional Price Of Base Rs 99,000 Per Pair



bright so as to tamper the feel good sound. We considered some of A R Rahman's mixes to be a thorough HF test for all the high-frequency content used in these songs and even for these songs the speakers managed to reproduce the shimmer just in the right manner so as to not make it sound shrill or piercing (even after prolonged listening sessions that lasted for hours). And balancing the other end was a deep and 'heavy' lower-end response. By heavy we don't mean that it was overpowering the rest of the spectrum, instead, it had a fantastic depth and weight to it, which was highly instrumental in making the music experience interesting. Particularly for those who like to appreciate the percussive sections in any form of music, the Nola Micro will be a treat for its thumpy and weighty lower-end response. The strong mid and high-frequency response of the speakers was also a great help towards enhancing the overall soundstage and directivity of the speakers.

Roger Waters, in his album 'Amused to Death', has truly pushed the limits of soundstaging in stereo mode and the Nola Micro Grand Reference did complete justice to the extraordinary score on the entire album. There are certain pieces in the album where you can literally hear sounds coming from spots where you would otherwise have surround sound speakers placed and the Nola Micro was very well able to reproduce the engulfing effect to its fullest.

We had a Verastarr multi-channel amp connected to the speaker driving the speakers at a neat 200 watts per channel. The speakers looked completely in control of the situation with a neat and clean sound replete with all the requisites like a perfect tonal balance.

neat arrangement of ball bearing isolators and the base of the speaker to reduce colouration due to floor-borne vibration. Even the placement of the speakers can get a little tricky, particularly if you are going to use the speakers in a room with substantial reflection. The trick here is to find a balance between the highly directive ribbon tweeter and the widely dispersive mid-range driver. In our room, which is approximately 15 feet wide, we had the speakers placed around nine feet wide, leaving a distance of three feet from either walls. After some trial and error, we also had the speakers toed-in by around 15 to 20 degrees to find the overall concentration of sound neatly locked at the sweet spot that was around 8 feet from the speakers. The company also recommends a burn-in of around 100 hours which was already religiously followed by the people at JNB Sound and hence without wasting any time we immediately started off with the listening session.

The very first impression was simply entertaining. We had a Verastarr multi-channel amp connected to the speaker driving

the speakers at a neat 200 watts per channel. The speakers looked completely in control of the situation with a neat and clean sound replete with all the requisites like a perfect tonal balance and enough excitement to keep us glued to the seat. The combination of the ribbon tweeter with the mid-range driver was working wonders to keep the sparkle intact in the overall sound and yet not sound too

Sumit Bhosle

