



ATHENA AS-P300 SUBWOOFER

"Tight Bass on a Tight Budget"



Last year, I recorded the scores of nearly 20 subwoofers in the first DVD ETC. "SubwooferShakedown." There were a few surprises in the group for both high performance and lack of performance. We mistakenly included the Athena P5 eight-inch subwoofer rather than the AS-P300 eight-inch.

The Athena P5 subwoofer is not available separately and is designed to work with another Athena package ensemble. Regardless, Athena was quick to shoot an AS-P300 over to us as they felt confident that it would meet our expectations.

Athena is the newest brand under the Audio Products International (A.P.I.) corporate umbrella, which also includes Mirage and Energy—some pretty serious contenders in the home theater speaker business.

Athena takes advantage of "trickle engineering" from its parent brands at price points that won't make your wallet squeal. The end result delivers products like the AS-P300 subwoofer that redefine the word "value."

Unique Features

What's perhaps most unique about the AS-P300 is that both the volume and crossover controls are conveniently located on the front baffle of the enclosure. While this certainly makes the AS-P300 one of the easiest woofers I've ever melded into a system for review, I can't help but wonder how many poor fathers have to put tape over the controls to keep their young'uns from playing radio with the knobs. Since I don't have to worry about this, I'll scratch up a couple of points in the convenience category.

There is a single, forward firing, eight-inch, polypropylene woofer directly above a large, forward firing port—both covered by a removable grille. This relatively large enclosure with black ash veneer makes good use of an efficient design with its 100-watt RMS (300-watt peak) internal amplifier.

The back panel features high and low level



▲ The Athena AS-P300 features a single, forward firing, eight-inch polypropylene woofer directly above a large, forward firing port both covered by a removable grille. Ins and outs for seamless integration with virtually any speaker system.

Installation/Setup/Ease of Use

Even with its rigid build, the AS-P300 weighs just under 28 pounds. Using the RCA low level input on the rear of the sub, I connected the woofer directly to the sub out of my Onkyo receiver. Due to the front firing, front ported design, I did not find placement of the sub to be particularly sensitive. (Subs ported to the rear tend to load up in corners or against walls.)

With the gain and crossover controls located conveniently on the front baffle, I was able to quickly blend the subwoofer with my satellite speaker ensemble.

Final Take

Athena recommends a minimum of 500 hours of break-in time before really punishing the AS-P300. Good news Athena, I effectively beat the snit out of your AS-P300 with just ten hours of break-in...

Using a relatively gutless group of satellite speakers (name withheld until review) for my top-end, I was able to quickly assess the limits of the AS-P300. The eight-inch woofer reached

up well into the 110Hz range to meet the satellite speakers with impressive performance and yet was able to quickly reach down into the 40Hz range for lower passages. I would describe the transient response as excellent, and even surprising at times. The woofer is well-matched with the enclosure and amplifier.

The AS-P300 was not heavy enough to hold itself down on my hardwood floors. Standing atop plastic cone-shaped feet didn't help much either. I wound up placing a doormat under the woofer to complete the review.

The AS-P300 likes to dig down on deep passages and yields a tremendous reading on the cool factor scale. I especially enjoyed its musical characteristics and noted them to be tight and responsive on the top end.

On longer deep passages, the tiny eight-inch woofer lost steam well into the cut, yet recovered quickly for top-end response. I would not recommend the AS-P300 in rooms larger than 400 square feet. Loaded into a corner would certainly yield deeper bass response, but would likely muddy up the top end. These are trade offs to any small sub.

At a street price of under \$300, I don't know of a better value than the Athena AS-P300. Well done.

—By Clint Walker



Athena AS-P300

Finish: Black Ash

Type: 8" front firing, front ported

Power: 100-watt RMS (300-watt peak)

Crossover: Variable 40-120Hz

Phase: Fixed

Frequency Response: 27-120Hz

Weight: 28 lbs.

Dimensions: 16" H x 9 9/16" W x 11 7/16" D

Street Price: \$300

Athena Technologies

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