

All New Look

COMPACT HOME THEATER SYSTEMS

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Micro **MONSTERS** 4 systems fight it out

Features

- Women In Country Music
- Interpretation Of Raag
- Great Indian Music Director



Athena AS-F1

Canadian audio group API (Audio Product International) is one of the largest speaker manufacturing conglomerates in North America with brands like Energy, Mirage and now, Athena. Although Athena is the newest member of the group, it gets the full support of the massive API group, along with all its R&D facilities and engineers.

Athena's speaker portfolio is not extensive and actually just comprises three ranges of speakers. Among the three, Audition is the latest and the AS-F1 is the smaller floorstanding speaker of the range. While Energy and Mirage both have ostentatious and glamorous personalities, one look at the AS-F1 will confirm that this one has a bookish aura about it, nerdy and upfront but with more brains than what the other two can chew on. The front baffle design is such that the grille doesn't fit flush to the body but rather exposes a part of the panel, giving it a distinct look that is not glam but not boring either.

What lies beneath the plain Jane looks of the AS-F1 belies its capabilities. Simplistic in design and execution, the 2-way tower consists of a 1" Teteron tweeter and an 8" Injection Moulded Polypropylene woofer. Teteron might sound exotic to many but it is really a form a manmade silk and supposedly aids in a smooth HF response. Some might frown at this combination since an 8" woofer is usually too much

to handle for a single 1" tweeter in terms of partnership and more often than not it's a 6.5" woofer that does duty. Yet, Athena has managed a 2kHz crossover point that again, is a break from the norm. Construction of the cabinet is top notch and uses a 1" thick front baffle with 3/4" sides. Even the name of the designer is mentioned on the back panel, which in this case happens to be Gord Van Kessel and Carmine Gitto. These guys are also responsible for penning the highly rated and successful Energy Take-5.2 home-theatre system. If you need any more guarantees for a no-compromise design, Athena also supplies proprietary spiked feet made from a special composite to resist vibration.

Being a floorstanding design doesn't make the Athena AS-F1 difficult to drive either due to its generous 92dB sensitivity rating. Theoretically, it means that you could even use a 20-watt amp and get room-shaking results! One of the better features, especially for Indian homes is the front-firing port instead of the rear. This will enable close proximity to the rear wall, without sacrificing performance. We did manage to get sneak peek at the goods, in sonic terms and we weren't disappointed at all. The highs were presented in a way that not many speakers in this price range can. Open and airy, the speakers virtually disappeared into the room and did wonders with some AR Rahman recordings that had a little reverb added into the mix. The bass was adequate enough for mid-size rooms and gelled well with the 1" tweeter despite the crossover point being bang in the middle of the vocal range.

Of course, AV MAX will be bringing you a full-fea-



What to look out for...

- Value for money designs
- Reputed brand name with critical acclaim
- High-efficiency, obliterating the need for monster amps
- Home-Theatre on a budget
- Sorry, tight budget!

tured review on Athena in the coming weeks and that should provide more clarity on how these little gems perform under pressure. As a budget brand though, Athena looks set to take the Boston Acoustics and Polk Audio speakers head on. Not to mention some stiff competition from its own brethren, Mirage and Energy who are also present in our country!

NISHANT PADHIAR