



GoldenEar Technology Triton Five

If you're a regular reader of this magazine, you'll have seen previous reviews of GoldenEar Technology loudspeakers, notably the quite magnificent Triton One, and its slightly smaller, passive sibling, the Triton Seven. Since then, the US brand has also launched the Triton Five, an even more compact, even slimmer passive floorstander.

The flagship Triton One, with its integrated active subwoofer, is a beast of a speaker, but with a level of finesse and clarity that rivals high-enders many times the Triton's asking price. However, in smaller rooms, it can become a little overwhelming.

Certainly, the Triton Five's form factor is more user-friendly, while it relies on passive bass radiators, rather than an in-built active subwoofer, for its low-frequency performance.

As with the other Tritons in the range, the Five uses a high-velocity folded ribbon transducer, rather than a conventional dome tweeter design. Based on Oskar Heil's Air Motion Transformer, it works by the concertina-style action of a pleated ribbon suspended in a magnetic field. The claimed benefits include enhanced efficiency, response and dispersion.

The aesthetic approach also remains common to all Triton models: a full-sized 'sock' covers the entire frame of the speaker, concealing all the drive units and the chassis they are mounted on. A gloss-black top cap and an integrated gloss-black plinth add a sophisticated touch.

Apparent is the narrow baffle, with the enclosure tapering outwards towards the rear. Thus, while the front baffle is only 168 mm wide in front, the rear width increases to 206 mm. Depth is 314 mm, while the Five stands 1124 mm tall.

The all-black treatment makes this most compact member of the Triton family seem even smaller, while also adding a touch of understated class. You can, of course, also remove the sock, laying bare the essentials of the speaker – but for me, the visual result is just too industrial.

The integrated plinth accepts screw-in coupling spikes, which are a must, given

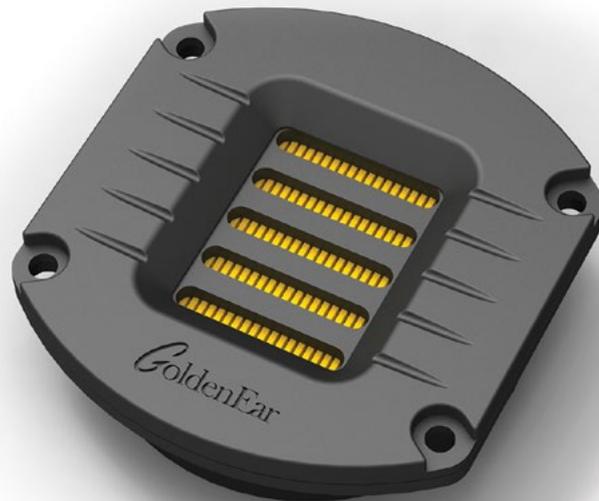
the speaker's penchant for low-frequency extension. A single pair of binding posts is located almost at floor level.

Like its larger siblings, I placed the Triton Fives well away from the rear wall and corners in our listening room, and about 50 cm away from the side walls. I toed them in slightly towards the listening position, which benefited the soundstage

in terms of depth and width, without compromising focus.

Driving the Americans was our trusty Parasound Halo A21 stereo power amp, combined with a Primare PRE32 pre-amp, the latter also equipped with Primare's MM30 media board. Acting as source was a Lumin A1 network streamer accessing music files stored on a Lumin L1 2TB NAS.





I kicked off with Brian Bromberg's 'If Ray Brown Was A Cowboy?' off *Compared To That* (Artistry 44,1/16 FLAC) and was immediately struck by the almost physical, tactile intensity of Bromberg's bass – but it was also fast, articulate and muscular, with no sign of flabbiness or bloating.

The Fives didn't only shine in the bass department. The tonal progression from those deep, authoritative low frequencies to the smooth, almost creamy midrange and onto to the detailed trebles was linear and convincing, with no low-mid bloom or high-frequency edge. They allowed the full range and register of Bromberg's double bass to be showcased to riving effect.

The piano sounded equally natural and enticing, despite its mostly secondary role here, while the percussion was rendered with clean focus and intent. The entire ensemble was painted onto a transparent, accessible sonic canvas that was meticulously constructed to believably reflect the stature and location of the instruments.

Linked with the ability of the Tritons to reproduce the full frequency range of the recording, the result was an overriding sense of authenticity.

Moving on to the stirring, modern Flamenco-inspired music of Javier Limón on *Mujeres De Agua* (Universal 44,1/16 AIFF), the Tritons dug deep into the atmospheric ambience of the recording, accurately reflecting its lush harvest of flamenco-infused guitars, vocals and choruses.

On 'Las Caritas Desnudas' the Fives delivered their sonic wares with aplomb and transparency, allowing the music to soar well beyond the expected constraints of the point sources, and creating a pervasive, immersive soundstage. The vocals were finely focussed and portrayed with precision and finesse, while the overall delivery was energetic and visceral, showcasing pace, attack and dynamics to thrilling effect.

French dance duo Daft Punk's mesmerising *Random Access Memories* (Sony 96/24 FLAC) is an excellent test of punch, slam and pace – and the Tritons

had no trouble passing the challenge with flying colours. On 'Lose Yourself To Dance', the floorstanders created a big, open soundstage underpinned by so much bass slam that you could almost feel the air being moved.

However, this physicality was achieved without any sacrifice in pace or control: the speakers remained agile and expressive, easily keeping up with the bright guitar, catchy vocals and the increasingly complex layers of synths.

Nor were the Tritons ever distracted by the increasing density of the sound: they remained composed and precise, easily revealing and contextualising even the subtlest of details, and showcasing their ability to deliver an extended frequency range.

Having now reviewed the Triton One, Five and Seven, it's this most compact, passive member of the Triton family that has endeared itself to me most. It delivers its sonic wares with an approachability and truthfulness that is compelling, while achieving a tonal range and balance that is almost startling.

Add scale, impact and agility to the package, and you have a floorstander that can duke it out with many high-end speakers costing substantially more than the Triton Five's asking price. The value on offer here is exceptional – and that may just be the most compelling argument of all.

Deon Schoeman

VITAL STATS

Enclosure type..... Sealed floorstander, infinite baffle

Drive units

..... 1x HFVR folded ribbon tweeter
2x 150 mm mid/bass drivers
4x 200 mm planar sub-bass radiators

Bi-wiring No

Impedance 8 ohms nominal

Sensitivity 90 dB

Frequency response 26 Hz – 35 kHz

Dimensions (HxWxD)

..... 1 124 x 206 x 314 mm

Weight 18,1 kg each

Verdict

They may look sleek and understated, but the sound of these floorstanders is arresting and exciting, with exceptional tonal range, wide-open soundstaging, agility and outright punch. A lot of high-end speaker for the money!

Price R33 990

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OUR RATING: 91/100

