



## B&W

ASW700

\$2999

It is unusual to see a \$3000 subwoofer fitted with a mere 250mm driver, but that is the route taken by B&W with its ASW700. Even though the review sample was finished in a boring black ash (other more pleasant finishes are available), it still reeked of quality. Just try picking up the ASW700 — 26.5kg packed into a box approximating a 365mm cube.

The sealed enclosure is slightly unusual — I must declare here that I prefer sealed subwoofer enclosures because, with good design, they often provide a more extended bass than bass reflex models. But lots of power is required to overcome the inherent resistance to movement from this design, and powering the driver here is an amplifier rated by B&W at 500W continuous.

B&W rates the bottom end of this subwoofer at 17Hz at the -6dB point, which is a bold claim indeed. But it includes an EQ switch on the back. In 'A' mode the bottom end is not electronically restricted, but in 'B' mode it is, allowing higher output levels above 30Hz.

With music, I found it necessary to turn down the subwoofer about 3dB below the level suggested by the receiver's test tones. I suspect my meter failed to pick up the extremely deep frequencies, biasing the measurement result downwards.

*Titan A.E.* suggested excellent bass extension, the opening producing significant throbbing in my abdominal organs. As to B&W's bold claims, my measurements showed a bottom end of an incredible 16Hz within my  $\pm 6$ dB measurement envelope. Fifteen hertz was at -10dB!

The 'B' EQ setting rolled off the bottom end a bit faster, so that within my measurement envelope the bottom frequency was 25Hz rather than 16Hz, and 20Hz was 13dB down from the average instead of 4dB. The distortion levels were excellent as well. At 90dB output at one metre, the second harmonic was well under 2% and the third was under 1%.

There is also a stereo 'Link' output so that you can on-wire the ASW700 to another one for higher performance.



- Enormous bass extension
- High output levels
- Low distortion



- Nothing



As indicated at the start, there is no winner here, or rather there are three winners, since the three subwoofers do different jobs at different price points. All three do them well.

But I must confess that one of my most favourite pieces of music in all the world is Bach's *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor*, in which (on some recordings) the 16Hz bass pedal has a mighty impact. But only if you can hear it. So I would try very hard myself for the B&W ASW700.



## FACTS AND FIGURES SUBWOOFERS 2

Brand	Mosscade	B&W	Velodyne
Model	Titan 11.4	ASW700	SC10/SC-1250
Price	\$1900	\$2999	\$4650
Warranty	2 years	3 years	5 years (3 years on electronics)
Distributor	Alex's Audio Pty Ltd	Convoy International	W C Wedderspoon Pty Ltd
Telephone	(02) 4872 4530	(02) 9700 0111	1300 885 083
Web	www.mosscade.com	www.e-hifi.com.au	www.wedderspoon.com.au
Description			
Drivers	1 x 295mm	1 x 250mm	2 x 254mm (2 enclosures)
Driver description	Not stated	Paper/Kevlar long-throw	EPDM rubber surround, 4.6kg magnet
Driver orientation	Side firing	Forwards firing	Forwards firing
Enclosure type	295mm passive radiator, side firing	Sealed	Sealed
Inputs	2 x stereo line level, 1 x stereo speaker level	1 x stereo line level, 1 x stereo speaker level	1 x stereo line level, 1 x LFE (via XLR), 1 x stereo speaker level, calibration mic in
Outputs	1 x stereo line level (filtered)	1 x stereo speaker level	1 x stereo line level, 1 x stereo speaker level (filtered at 80Hz)
Low pass crossover (Hz)	40-150	40-140	30-160
Filter bypass	No	Yes	Yes
Auto On/Off	Yes	Yes	Yes
Phase control	0/180 degrees switch	0/180 degrees switch	0/90/180/270 degrees switch
Other features	-	Link out for secondary subwoofer	Magnetically shielded, auto calibration, remote control
Dimensions (h x w x d)	380 x 360 x 400mm	347 x 340 x 408mm	327 x 314 x 241mm
Weight	25kg	26.5kg	21kg
Manufacturer's specifications			
Amplifier power	200W "longer term", 400W "short term"	500W continuous	1250W continuous, 3000W dynamic
Specified frequency response	20-140Hz	20-110Hz ±3dB, 17Hz @ -6dB	24-120Hz ±3dB
Measurements			
Cone diameter (not counting rolls surround - mm)	227	185	178 (x 2)
Total cone area (cm <sup>2</sup> )	405	267	498
Room frequency response (Pink Noise ±6dB)	23-82	16-138	23-107
Level at 20Hz (ref average level)	-17dB	-4dB	-16dB
Distortion 30Hz 90dB SPL** 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> harmonic %	5.0/0.89	1.6/0.89	2.5/1.0
Pros			
	High output levels	Enormous bass extension	Extremely powerful
	Effortless performance	High output levels	Very compact subs
	Immaculate build quality	Low distortion	Incredibly configurable
Cons			
	Little infrasonic bass		Little infrasonic bass
	Not suitable for small satellites		

\* Estimated since unable to remove grille. \*\* For stated output at one metre