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Subject: Meet belle lab, a new manufacturer of single driver fullrange loudspeakers  
Posted by [Christopher Witmer](#) on Sat, 06 Aug 2005 03:28:58 GMT

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belle lab is a new Japanese manufacturer of single driver fullrange loudspeakers. The president, Yukihiro Akiyama, is a long-time, totally incurable audio nut who makes a good living from several biotechnology patents. He has hooked up with some very knowledgeable people to produce some very fine sounding loudspeakers. Persons familiar with Takashi Sano's "Exact" (now mu:xacta) line of drivers from my past posts will immediately note the similarity, and that is no accident. At the outset of the project, Mr. Sano was the head designer of these drivers. Part way through the project it became clear that Mr. Sano and the other people on Mr. Akiyama's team have some significant differences of design philosophy, and now Mr. Sano is essentially in the position of an outside consultant; the new chief engineer is a veteran with considerable experience at the highest levels of cone transducer design in Japan, including both fullrange drivers and field coil speakers. His full expertise is being tapped to create some truly unique 12cm and 16cm drivers, and I have been told to expect some prototypes of new models within a few days. Apparently, the current drivers differ from Mr. Sano's in two significant ways. First, the cone paper is different. I am not sure just what sort of a difference it is. Second, these drivers are intended to be connected directly to the power amplifier, whereas Mr. Sano's are intended to be used with passive circuitry that he calls an "EL control" between the driver and the amplifier. Note also that the belle lab drivers are nominally 16 ohm drivers; with the EL control installed, Mr. Sano's drivers have a nominal impedance of 4 ohms. Finally, whereas Mr. Sano never sells his drivers as part of an off-the-shelf loudspeaker system (believing that the drivers must be tailored to each user), the belle lab loudspeakers constitute a plug-and-play system, and the drivers are not for sale separately. (In the future they plan to make raw drivers available, at least for certain models.) I heard an early prototype of these drivers that had been built entirely by Mr. Sano, and I was hugely impressed. Mr. Akiyama tells me that the current drivers sound much better, but I have not confirmed that with my own ears. I do know that the motor on these is about 20% larger than that of the prototype I heard. Full disclosure: Mr. Akiyama hired my services as a translator to translate the website into English, and in the past I have also provided translation services related to his biotechnology business. I do not have any financial interest in his "belle lab" business, and neither is there any arrangement whereby I would receive some special consideration in return for promoting his business. In fact, beyond translating the website, he has never even asked me to publicize his products; however, I thought I would let interested users overseas know that these new products are available.

[http://www.ibi.co.jp/belle/lang\\_e/index.htm](http://www.ibi.co.jp/belle/lang_e/index.htm)