
Subject: Re: Reports from LSAF '09

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 22 Jun 2009 04:06:37 GMT

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I thought it was a great time. Turnout was good and the hotel was really pleasant. I'd be happy to come there again next year.

You know, if you're a small niche business, then you have to invite customers to your shop or home to demonstrate your products. So when we all get together at the LSAF, we instantly get the opportunity to show to dozens or even hundreds of guests. Even if there were only ten or twenty auditions, that would make it worthwhile. There are always way more people than that, so it's worthwhile, not to mention really fun!

I was impressed with the sound of all the rooms I visited. Regretably, I didn't get to listen in every room, but I did go to several and all were sounding great. Here are some highlights, from my perspective:

1. Classic Audio

As usual, John Wolfe was displaying gear that makes you feel like a Pavlov test subject. Instant drool factor. I spoke with him for a while, and the speaker shown above has a radial tweeter horn with tractrix profile on the top and bottom. Good stuff. The super-tweeter is also a tractrix flare. All drivers have field coil motors. And just look at that woodwork. Awesome!

There are lots of other great products CAR had on display that you should see - So be sure to scroll up and click on the photos page. Hopefully someone else will comment and link the photos in. I'm too beat to write more right now.

2. Crescendo Systems

It was a pleasure to meet Kim Beumer, who is local to Dallas. I think he is a good fit for our regional audio club(s) and I'm glad he found us. He definitely fits in!

What was cool to me was those big speakers. Those are planars, and they do something I personally have never seen any other planars do - they have a pretty wide sweet spot. It think it is probably due to the convex curve of the radiator facing the listener. What makes this even cooler is these are completely DIY. My hope is that Kim will start making these as kits, or perhaps provide a forum to help people build their own, give advice and instruction and sell supplies.

3. Van Zyl Audio

I've known Johan Van Zyl for quite some time, and consider him to be a personal friend. He designed the BASSMAXX horns sold by David Lee and the single-driver backhorns sold by Bob Spence. Each of these guys are good friends of mine too, all part of this regional audio

family, so to speak.

So when Johan said he was coming, I assumed it was as MaxxHorn, even put that on the website. Not so! The speakers Johan brought out this year are marketed under his own name, and they're a moderate price offering (as opposed to the Spence price-no-object models). I gotta say, MaxxHorn sounds good, but Bob better watch out for this one!

4. AudioFred

Fred Thompson and his lovely wife Linda are two people I always look forward to seeing. But in spite of their outgoing and fun loving personalities, Fred has one very irritating quality. He almost always builds really great sounding DIY speakers that put many of the commercial products to shame. Makes us speaker companies have to get up real early in the morning to keep up with this guy!

This year was no exception. He brought a neat little mini-monitor kit from Parts Express that sounded great.

5. Audio Note

David Cope is a long time friend of mine that does a neat trick. He can be just as excited about a \$4000 audio system as he can about a \$400,000 system, and yes, he does get a chance to display both, often in the same month, sometimes at the same show. This year, he brought a system that's truly a budget model in the Audio Note lineup, and it really sounded great.

Look how those components fit into the end table. Looks like it could have been made specifically for them!

6. John Busch

John is one of those guys that comes to these shows with so much random stuff, you're sure he could perform surgery on just about any audio gear in production, and even some cars and quite possibly airplanes. I mean, this guy really might actually have a kitchen sink in his inventory. No kidding, I had forgotten a compression driver + horn that I usually bring to do my Crossover Electronics 101 seminar, so the first thing I thought of was "call John".

This year, he brought some dipoles (no surprise) that sported a 15" midwoofer and a large format soft dome tweeter. These things sounded great, and had more bass than is possible from a dipole. Most people were looking for the sub, I, on the other hand, was looking for the voodoo charms. All jokes aside, it sounded great.

7. Jim Rivers

Jim brought a really great pair of Heathkit monoblock amplifiers. I connected them in my room and just loved them! Unfortunately, I needed gain control so I could match the subs and without that, the subs wouldn't integrate properly. So I couldn't run them long. It was indeed a pity, 'cause I really loved those little amps!

8. Bob Brines

Bob brought his usual lineup of single driver speakers and, as usual, they sounded great!

I will say that I like his Fostex models better than the Lowthers. But of course, that's a personal opinion. I think his Fostex models sound the most balanced.

Now for the systems I didn't see:

9. Keith Larson

Keith Larson brought his partner, Brian Smith, and they did a seminar on loudspeaker measurement and design. I'm a big fan of their work, and use their measurement systems heavily in my own design process. So I'm familiar with their product line. However, this year Keith also brought his own personal system and I regret that I didn't get a chance to listen to it.

10. Jumping Cactus

Now this is a huge oversight on my part. I feel pretty bad about it, to tell the truth. Jim Harrell has been at three shows in a row, and I've only had the chance to listen to his system once, and not for very long at that. That's a big oversight, on my part. We always chat in the halls, and Jim is a really great guy, unpretentious and always smiling. I wanted to stop over and listen this year for more than just a quick listen, but didn't make it. Next year, for sure!

11. Brad Baker

I need to make the same apologies to Brad, who has been a good and regular participant at several of the LSAF events, but I've always missed him. I'm told that's the funnest room to hang out in too!

12. Audio Mirror was here this year, and was also here last year. I've always loved the looks of their gear, and I understand it sounds as good as it looks. I really want to make a point to see these guys next year.

I was very pleased with our sound and got lots of favorable comments. Next year, I'll probably
