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, Yukihito 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

Subject: Thanks for the info, even if it is high priced
Posted by akhilesh on Sat, 06 Aug 2005 04:32:52 GMT
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$22,000 a pair of speakers. Wow! These may be the priciest single driver speakers on the planet. Thanks for the link. They look beautiful. -akhilesh

Subject: Re: Thanks for the info, even if it is high priced
Posted by Christopher Witmer on Sat, 06 Aug 2005 04:38:21 GMT
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Yeah, I might be able to purchase a pair in about 220 years. I'm glad to be able to go to listening demonstrations featuring speakers of this caliber, although when I go home it takes me quite a while to be able to forget what I had heard and start enjoying my own system again.

Subject: Re: Thanks for the info, even if it is high priced
Posted by lon on Sun, 07 Aug 2005 01:07:39 GMT
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I saw this over at Full Ranger Driver forum.Hello Pink Freud.I thought the pricetag was for _one_. Didn't read it thatclosely.

Subject: Re: Thanks for the info, even if it is high priced
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sun, 07 Aug 2005 13:52:24 GMT
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How can they be auditioned in the United States?Ask your contacts if they would be willing to bring some speakers to the Great Plains Audiofest next May. I'm sure some of the folks with oil money around here would love to see what $22K will afford.

Subject: Re: Thanks for the info, even if it is high priced
Posted by Christopher Witmer on Sun, 07 Aug 2005 18:59:45 GMT
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Anyone interested can email Mr. Akiyama directly by clicking on the link provided. I will pass the Great Plains recommendation on to them.BTW --1) They will be at CES in January2) They say they plan to introduce less expensive loudspeakers and drivers as well, to cover a range of price brackets. (I doubt they will try to compete with Fostex on price, however.)Chris Witmer

Subject: Any idea how Metallica would sound on these ;-) (nt)
Posted by GarMan on Mon, 08 Aug 2005 19:21:35 GMT