



New baby

Jamo is reborn, and with it comes a new speaker range. **Nick Tate** wets the head of this entry-level standmount

Hi-fi fascinating fact of the day: Jamo is an amalgam of the names of the company's founders, Jacobsen and Mortensen. Not a lot of people know that, as someone once said. The reason I'm telling you this is that it's in the strange position of being a long-established speaker brand that – in the UK at least – isn't as well-known as perhaps it should be. Now a member of Premium Audio Company, established in 2020, it's a sister brand of Klipsch, Magnat, Heco, Onkyo, Pioneer and Integra – having previously been acquired by Klipsch in 2005. The new mission statement is: "to offer contemporary speakers that are easy to use and deliver high-performance sound in a package that will seamlessly find its place in your home," according to Jamo boss Franck Blondel.

Pulling the S7-15B out of the box, the first impression is that it's pretty basic. To be fair, it's a budget speaker

and doesn't pretend to be otherwise, in terms of styling or finish. This isn't a criticism, more of an observation and a hint about who it's aimed at. It has a youthful, modern and characterful look; traditional and conservative it is not.

From an aesthetic point of view, the 7° tilt jumps out at you immediately – you hardly ever see such a thing in this segment of the market. There are sound engineering reasons to angle the front baffle, not least to help with time alignment. Jamo says time alignment is also the reason why the cabinet edges have been rounded, as they reduce diffraction.

The cabinet is basically a standard oblong type that's been tilted on a plinth. Behind is a pair of binding posts – not particularly robust ones it must be said – that point upwards on the back of the plinth. You'll also find the obligatory bass reflex port, too. The cabinet walls are MDF as you'd expect at the price, 15mm thick

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Jamo S7-15B
ORIGIN
Denmark/China
TYPE
2-way standmount loudspeaker
WEIGHT
5.9kg
DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)
200 x 320 x 340mm
FEATURES
● 25mm fabric dome tweeter
● 140mm paper cone mid/bass driver
● Quoted sensitivity: 86dB/1W/1m (4ohm)
DISTRIBUTOR
Henley Audio Ltd.
WEBSITE
jamo.com
henleyaudio.co.uk

everywhere except the front baffle, which is 18mm thick. Considering its budget origins, it would be churlish to complain about the S7-15B's build.

The drive unit complement starts with a new 25mm fabric dome tweeter featuring a copper Faraday ring, said to increase sensitivity and reduce non-linear distortion. The 140mm mid/bass driver kicks in at a fairly standard 1.7kHz. It uses an unusual-looking embossed paper cone with so-called 'Thor's Hammer' detailing claimed to increase its rigidity. The motor assembly has an aluminium inductance shorting ring said to enhance power handling and lower distortion. The crossover is internally isolated and uses Mylar and

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non-polarised electrolytic capacitors, along with iron and air core inductors and 25W resistors.

The result is a claimed frequency response of 71Hz to 21kHz (-3dB), quoted sensitivity of 86.3dB and nominal impedance at 4ohm. This is decent enough for a box as small as this, but it means that it's a tiny bit harder to drive than most. It shouldn't matter with today's budget amplifiers, but a 15-watter might struggle.

Sound quality

The performance of this little Jamo totally belies its price. The S7-15B is a long way from being perfect, but has so much charm that you forgive its foibles, and enjoy its strengths. It has a big-hearted, fun character, which seems to absolutely relish playing any music you give it. That's not to say it's a consummate all-rounder – it clearly prefers pop, rock and dance – but whatever you spin, it seems to eke out the drama in the music and deliver it direct to you. It impresses most in terms of its handling of rhythms and dynamics, by going straight to the heart of the music.

Feed it Isotonik's *Everywhere I Go* – a 1992 club classic that sounds like it was recorded in a shed – and the Jamo doesn't mind one bit. It gets right into the groove, serving up a fast and crisp hi-hat sound, strong piano breaks and a chunky synth bassline that shouldn't be this solid sounding considering its size. Of course, it's a long way from being the most transparent speaker, but that doesn't seem to matter as the song's emotion is so well conveyed.

It's interesting that the mid/bass driver takes up the vast majority of the width of the front baffle – in other words, it's the largest one Jamo can fit given the space. This is borne out by its lack of compression, when compared with price rivals. It seems to have more in reserve when you turn up the volume and is less prone to squashing dynamic crescendos. This is perfect for pounding techno,



KEF's Q150 costs the same as the Jamo, but is very different. It's not that different in size, weight or indeed measured performance, but its coaxial driver combines tweeter and mid/bass units in one. The result is better image precision and a more 'out-of-the-box' sound. Still, it can't match the S7-15B for fun. The KEF sounds smoother and more sophisticated, but doesn't quite have its rival's cheeky grin as far as music making is concerned. It's more of grown-up speaker you might say, and reproduces music in a highly professional way – but it's the Jamo that has the sparkle in its eye.

The 'Thor's Hammer' detailing is claimed to increase rigidity



but the same goes for better recorded pop such as Japan's *My New Career*.

Its midband really impresses, throwing out loads of detail for a budget box, including a convincing rendition of David Sylvian's vocals. Although the timbre isn't quite as pure as it should be, the Jamo is great at showing how well syncopated he was with the rest of the band.

No budget loudspeaker will capture the purity of a voice like his, but the immersive, atmospheric quality of the overall recording is unexpected at this lowly price point. The S7-15B seems like it wants to project sound as far and wide as possible. Image location isn't as pin-point as more expensive designs, but that kind of misses the point. The overall effect is upfront, expansive and hugely satisfying.

Don't confuse that with harshness, though, as this speaker doesn't laser-etch the record on the front of your forehead. Give it a well-lit modern rock recording like Crowfield's *Cardinal Motion*, and it takes it neatly in its stride. Those multi-layered strummed steel string guitars, soaring lead electric guitar and tight snare drums all have a visceral impact. Yet the Jamo doesn't assault your senses and lets you focus on the music rather than the mix. Indeed, it's a really good rock speaker in a section of the standmount market where few others are.

The same goes for modern pop, like Zero 7's *I Have Seen*; it's getting on a bit now in age, but its production is immaculate. The S7-15B gives a great rendition – expansive, articulate and powerful. Yet with tracks like this

with heavy basslines, it can tend to overwhelm a small room, especially when the amp is really pushing out the watts. If it's too close to a boundary wall, there's a slight boom from the cabinet, leading to bumpy, overbearing bottom end. A bit of judicious tuning and it's no longer a big deal, but it never quite goes away. Them's the breaks with budget speakers but all the same, few raise as much of a smile when playing great music as this.

Conclusion

Preben Jacobsen and Julius Mortensen would be proud. The new S7-15B is a great little standmount with a feisty and fun character. Whatever material you play, it simply wants to have a good time – and doesn't sweat the small stuff. Definitely one for the audition shortlist if you're looking for a compact budget box, then, as few speakers at or near the price come close in terms of musical enjoyment ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★
EASE OF DRIVE ★★★★★

LIKE: Really charming and fun sound
DISLIKE: Some won't like the looks
WESAY: Lots of enjoyment for the money

OVERALL

★★★★★