

REVIEW
FYNE MODEL F500
LOUDSPEAKERS



With a fine heritage of experience behind them, Fyne are a new company based in Scotland. Here Alan McIntosh takes a listen to their £600 Standmount model f500.

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As a Scotsman who hill walks often and enjoys the finer things in life (beyond Hifi) the name Fyne instantly resonates with me as the loch that's home to some of the best shellfish in the world. At the risk of a bad pun, Fyne isn't just a name in the case of these speakers, fine is the clearly the aim of the design. With manufacturing based in Scotland the name is valid, and with a team who have worked together for over 10 years, with a couple centuries of Hifi heritage behind them, the brand may be young – but is the offering grown up enough to play with the big boys? Spoiler alert – yes – and in spades!

CONSTRUCTION

The 500 are the midrange, standmount offering from Fyne, the little brother if you will of the award-winning 501 Floorstander's (Fyne offers a 300, 500 and flagship F1 range of various capabilities and price points). Arriving in a pretty ubiquitous sized box they are well packaged and once out and freed of their cotton shipping covers it's immediately evident these are not your run of the mill offering. The main enclosure is black oak using real wood veneer (dark oak also available) with a point source design dubbed Isoflare where the Titanium constructed tweeter sits inside the 6" paper/multi fibre bass/mid cone and shares a common centre allowing for a more isotropic stereo image even off axis. A twin cavity muffler design and down firing bass port with an internal "Tractrix" diffuser technology complete a dispersion design that Fyne calls Basstrax. These together with the grille outlet, direct plain directional waves into an expanding 360-degree wavefront that Fyne suggests interacts far more uniformly with the room and allows for less fussy placement. Bi-wired at the rear they employ a 3rd key technology design feature in their "fluting" of the bass cone edges. A slight curve to the front and rear baffle makes for a strong aesthetic as well as removing colouration of sound. A subtle and understated Fyne Audio logo is etched into the aluminium band at the base of the oak casing. Magnetic grilles with the Fyne logo in silver can be removed or

attached as needed without the spoils of holes in the fascia. Visually the 500 impressed me greatly suggesting authority, strong design and power.

SOUND QUALITY

For this test, I employed Ecosse MS4.45's to allow a true bi-wire setup and allow the highs and low cones to perform as designed.

First up is Trevor Horns production masterpiece "Welcome to the Pleasure Dome" by Frankie Goes to Hollywood - anything but a superbly engineered and musically capable speaker just fails to really deliver what's on offer from this LP in my experience – thin or bloaty these are not – the bass is up front but controlled without being flat or restrained. That 6" driver complimented with the superbly designed down firing port provides lower notes that are musical, smooth and liquid in their feel, but with definition and a strong hand on the tiller to ensure they don't bloom or wash away - with lesser stand mounts it's like a poor relation of the original sound. With Crossover at 1.7Khz and a 1st order hi/2nd order low combination in play, vocals and the dynamic synth and percussion sections have real timing, velocity and just .. sing – no other word for it. It's like hearing the album with fresh ears. The resolution and delivery is very impressive, musicality is wonderful and listening is simply more fun than many other speakers in this price bracket I've heard (few if any have been as good to my ears if I'm honest).

Sticking with Pleasuredome, when I hear the gibbering of monkeys it's like I can almost smell them, they are so realistic and staged, the icing on the cake is when Holly Jonhson's voice announces "the world is my oyster" - his voice, free of any sibilance, hits you in the ears and just grabs your attention to seat edge levels - my listening companion at the time uttered an audible "Wow" at this point - not a bad start I'd say.

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Typically with standmounts I have them roughly 4 ½ -5 feet apart and allow for a good 18 inches at least from the back wall (to allow for rear porting) and this was my initial placement, so deciding to experiment I widened them to give them more air and reduced the back wall gap to half of before (just enough for the bi-wiring clearance of the Ecosse MS4.45's). Running Pleasure Dome again I was impressed to find more air further drove resolution and staging in an already impressive sound stage and there was no detriment to bass response – this being a proof point of the BassTrax system for me. Sitting way off axis the overall sound is still very impressive – this isn't a speaker you need to show deference to as a listener in terms of placement or even seating – they are just great fun regardless.

Already enjoying the 500's I decided to try the staple if the tired, reference of "Tubular Bells pt1". As the guitars enter the fray at around 4 minutes the drive is wonderful – overall there is space, timbre, and resolution that just excites me – and belies the form factor of these stand-mounts. Pushing the volume knob north and none of the ragged edges I've found with other speakers is apparent, finesse and refined "grunt" is here in spades.

With Coltrane's "I'll Wait and Pray" (Naima, Le Chant du Monde 2017) John's tenor sax play is just wonderful, the highs sing out with a soulfulness and clarity that is rare at this level, smoothness through each note and delicious, well machined lows courtesy of Paul Chambers masterful bass play really shows what these can do.

When Art Blakely opens in "The Egyptian" (Indestructible, Bluenote ST-84193) and then Lee Morgan joins him you hear just how well the Fynes can cope with busy dynamics in a fashion I find many others can't – that Isoflare, single centre design delivering coherency in every note, strum, and hit – the energy is infectious . The only "weakness" being you need to let them run free a bit, don't expect to listen at whisper levels or you're missing the main act!

When Wayne Shorter's sax steps up, the staging and image is abundant and correct – each player projected in their own space, no muddling or loss of details even in the most frenetic of playing. It just sounds real and alive in front of you, not a sheet of vinyl originally put down in 1966!

CONCLUSION

Place these well and you are going to enjoy them immensely, give them some volume and put your favourite music on and be prepared to enjoy it like perhaps you haven't before. They are a well designed, good looking and incredible sounding standmount for the price (or well above it). Detail, immediacy, liveliness and resolution of sound is what I find myself repeating time and time again. Bass is simply wonderful – getting down to 45hz it's solid enough to excite and tight enough to satisfy the audiophile pedant in me. Whether its Jazz, rock, electronics or classical, the Fyne 500's should most definitely be on your "must audition list". Smaller or medium rooms where their big brother may overwhelm when driven at higher volumes are perfect for the f500s. The technology and heritage of the team at Fyne have come together to deliver a class-leading system. Put plainly I didn't want to give them up so - they are now my reference standmount!

AT A GLANCE

Build Quality: Designed well, high-quality materials and strong audiophile aesthetics – Titanium Isoflare cones and diffused Basstrax porting with its base grilles make for a high-quality offering in my book.

Sound Quality: Whether it's acoustic, jazz, rock or electronic the 500's delivered well for me, indeed very well for their class, and will stand up to many at a loftier price point in my opinion. Clarity and refinement where it matters, air and strength in equal measure – all down to that single point driver and superbly executed porting. Close your eyes and you will forget the position of your speakers and maybe even that they are stand mounts – or in fact that you are listening to speakers at all instead of sitting mid-row in red light, dim and cozy jazz club or gig joint.

An impressive ability to deliver even with highly dynamic tracks. Staging and resolution is strong, bass and lows are deep enough to feel real and handled easily and well enough to not wash or become lazy.

Don't require overly sensitive pairing or positioning, even off-axis listening is enjoyable. Give them some welly to really hear their soul sing.

Value For Money: At an RRP of £600 no question, I'd put these side by side with many at up to twice that price. You are getting an incredible sound for your money (maybe that's the Scottish in me coming out again, or maybe the Scottish in the design). So much so – I kept them!*

Pros: Overall delivery especially of bass, handling of varied styles, resolution even with dynamic pieces, design and looks.

Cons: Absolutely none at this price

Price: £600

