

**GROUPTEST** STANDMOUNT LOUDSPEAKERS  
£2,400-£3,500



# Neat Majistra £3,500



Combining elements of Neat's Ministra and Prestige Ultimatum XLS, can the Majistra better its siblings?

**DETAILS**

- PRODUCT**  
Neat Majistra
- ORIGIN**  
UK
- TYPE**  
2-way isobaric bass reflex standmount loudspeaker
- WEIGHT**  
11kg
- DIMENSIONS**  
(WxHxD)  
220 x 380 x 290mm
- FEATURES**
  - 60mm true ribbon tweeter
  - 2x 170mm mid/bass drivers
  - Quoted sensitivity: 88dB/1W/1m (4ohm)
- DISTRIBUTOR**  
Neat Acoustics

**T**wo years ago, this speaker's baby brother – the Ministra (HFC 465) – did extremely well in our standmount *Group Test*. Now it's time for the next model up the range to be put through its paces. In the words of designer Bob Surgeoner: "there is essentially no design difference between the two except size". The Majistra boasts eight more litres of cabinet volume and three extra kilos of weigh over its smaller sibling in an effort to improve efficiency and bass extension. When all is said and done, there is no substitute for cabinet volume when you want to move air around the room.

No other speaker in this group sports isobaric cabinet loading; indeed it's very rare full stop. Surgeoner explains that this configuration: "makes the drive units behave as if they're housed in a cabinet of much larger internal volume." The mid/bass drivers – one on the front baffle and the other inside the speaker – are now 170mm to the Ministra's 134mm. The 60mm true ribbon tweeter is this speaker's

other *pièce de résistance*. It has super-fast transient response thanks to its ultra-light diaphragm, which has a lower moving mass than any conventional dome tweeter – plastic, cloth, silk or metal. A high-quality crossover divides up the drivers.

The exterior paint finish on our review sample is very good and the whole cabinet feels solid with its well-damped 18mm-thick MDF walls; nice real-wood veneer is also offered. The result is a speaker with a very wide claimed frequency response, one that goes down to 25Hz (no cut-off point specified) with a sensitivity figure of 88dB. The latter might not be anything to write home about, but most modern solid-state amps shouldn't have a problem with it. Placement proves to be easy, with controlled bass from as close as 30cm from the rear wall.

**Sound quality**

Given this speaker's relatively complex design, the Majistra is actually an exceptionally gifted loudspeaker at this price. Its greatest strength is its all-round excellence;

indeed it will surprise anyone who thinks they know what a small-to-mid sized floorstander can and can't do.

First thing's first, this Neat offering is able to conjure up the best treble performance of the group by a fair distance; its ribbon tweeter makes the ride cymbals on the Felt track sound soaring and ethereal.

On Gregory Isaacs' *Night Nurse*, the hi-hats are deliciously delicate and defined. This also impacts the midband, giving acoustic instruments and vocals a crystalline glint complete with sparkling harmonics. The piano work, for example, on the Led Zep cut is a pleasure to behold. It also has ramifications for the stereo imaging too; this speaker offers a great, out-of-the-box sound that hovers in space. Again, it's up there with the best of the rest in this respect – like the Paradigm.

**Exceptionally gifted at the price, Majistra's biggest strength is its all-round excellence**

Then there's bass performance, which is superb. The Majistra pulls off an amazing trick of being able to sound bigger and less strained at high volumes than you'd expect given the cabinet's dimensions. On really powerful low-end transients, such as with the sub-bass on the Manix track, there's less hint of compression and/or unease at high listening levels than all here except perhaps the Mission 770. Even the ATC SCM19 with its professional heritage doesn't quite pull this off. Yet the ATC does have a tighter, tauter and less lumpy bass; there's definitely a slight 'sweet spot' in the upper bass, which is the only blot on an otherwise spotless copy book. Overall, this is an extremely accomplished performer – and state-of-the-art at its price ●

**Hi-Fi Choice**

**OUR VERDICT**

- SOUND QUALITY**  
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Punch; clarity; supreme musicality
- VALUE FOR MONEY**  
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Lacks ultimate bass grip
- BUILD QUALITY**  
★★★★★ **WESAY:** Superb all-rounder, from bottom to top
- EASE OF DRIVE**  
★★★★★

**OVERALL**

