

CERWIN-VEGA!® CVHD Speakers

HOME THEATER SYSTEM FOR PLASMA LOVERS

The new CVHD home theater speaker system from Cerwin-Vega is a break from tradition for that company. Many people will think of big boxy speakers with big air-pushing woofers when they hear the Cerwin-Vega name (the company won an Oscar for the Sensurround system it designed for the movie Earthquake in 1974). The company still makes those, along with a popular line of car speakers and professional audio speakers, but now the company has caught up with the flat panel fashion trend and introduced something sleek, yet powerful enough to hold up the Cerwin-Vega name.

The CVHD system consists of five 22.5-inch high satellites (one horizontally configured to be the center channel) and one subwoofer. The satellites (if you can call 22.5-inch speakers

that) each house six 3-inch cellulose composite woofers surrounding a one-inch soft dome tweeter. The speakers employ what CV calls Linear Dispersion Speaker Technology, which is designed to maintain a uniform sound level at different distances and locations—this can be an important factor in a home theater system if your seats are not uniformly spaced around the room, which is often the case in a typical living room. The design of the satellites is very un-Cerwin-Vega-like. They're metallic gray, tall and narrow with attractive tooling, compared to the company's traditional look.

Cerwin-Vega CVHD 5.1
\$999
Impedance 8 ohms
Sensitivity 95dB
30 total speaker drivers
Wall mounting hardware included
250-watt subwoofer
www.cerwinvega.com

The subwoofer, however, is very CV. Housed in the 48-pound black block is a 12-inch woofer powered by a 250-watt built-in amplifier which really pushes the LFE air around. Take off the grille and you see the red band around the cone which gives it that CV look. On the back of the sub you'll

find line level and speaker level inputs, volume, crossover and phase control, which allow you a lot of flexibility in hooking the system up.

The speakers come with wall-mounting plates, which is probably the preferred method of positioning them in the room around a flat panel TV. I used the optional floor stands, which require a few minutes of assembly, but are very sturdy.

With a little adjusting of the sub and some time to break in, I settled down for some listening. Because I know CV has a reputation for good, rocking bass, I started out with some Led Zeppelin. The music came off powerful, with heavy bass as well as solid mids and highs without noticeable distortion. Jazz, supplied by Dave Brubeck, was crisp and smooth and particularly well dispersed across the room. The system did a particularly good job with bass, and I was extremely pleased with the sound when I listened to a CD.

On movies, I was looking for clarity and special effects, both of which were well-delivered by the CVHD system. Dialog is clear while the movie's musical score sounded full and dynamic. What the system really delivered on was the thunderous special effects, particularly on Tom Cruise's War of the Worlds, which can be a real window-rattler. Moving around the room, I found CV's claims for its Linear Dispersion Technology well founded. People at various seating locations won't be missing out on the action.

This system offers a lot that others don't—30 drivers, a powerful subwoofer and built-in wall brackets. At about \$1,000 for a 5.1 system, it's also a very good deal.

—Grant Clauser

