



(https://www.facebook.com/HomeTheater



(https://twitter.com/HomeTheaterRev)



(https://flipboard.com/@hometheaterrev/?
utm_campaign=tools&utm_medium=follo

Search	Go
--------	----

TELEVISIONS & VIDEO ▾ SPEAKERS ▾ AUDIOPHILE ▾ SMART HOME ▾ NEWS ▾

HOME
THEATER
(/HOME-
THEATER/)

HEADPHONES
(/HEADPHONE-
REVIEWS/)

STREAMING
(/APPLICATION-
REVIEWS/)

SMART
HOME (IoT)
(/REMOTES-
SYSTEM-
CONTROL-
REVIEWS/)

DEALERS
(/AV-
DEALERS-
INSTALLERS/)

BRANDS
(/AUDIO-
VIDEO-
BRANDS/)

EDUCATION
(/HOME-
THEATER-
EDUCATION/)

FORUM
(HTTP://WWW.HOMETHEATEREQUIPMENT.COM/)

(HT



SVS SB16-Ultra Subwoofer Reviewed

By [Brent Butterworth \(/brent-butterworths-associated-equipment/\)](#) | January 16, 2017



HTR Product Rating for SVS SB16-Ultra Subwoofer

Criteria	Rating
Performance	★★★★★
Value	★★★★☆
Overall	★★★★★


Disagree with our product rating? [Email us \(/submitting-review-feedback/\)](#) and tell us why you think this product should receive a higher rating.

ve always wondered why SVS, long one of the top names in subwoofers, didn't offer a sub with a driver bigger than 13 inches. Sure, smaller cones have a rep for delivering a more tuneful sound, but many judge a sub solely on the size of its woofer. With the new \$1,999 sealed-enclosure SB16-Ultra reviewed here--and its ported brother, the \$2,499 PB16-Ultra--SVS can now score as many points on size as it always has on quality. Each

060135

FEB 20

RSL Speedwoofer 10S Subwoofer Reviewed
(<https://hometheaterreview.com/rsl-speedwoofer-10s-subwoofer-reviewed/>) Dennis Burger auditions RSL's Speedwoofer 10S subwoofer, which houses a 10-inch woofer and 350-watt Class D amp in a modestly sized, ported cabinet. Also modest is the sub's asking price: \$399.

 (https://hometheaterreview.com/rsl-speedwoofer-10s-subwoofer-reviewed/)



The deep bass notes that begin Kanye West's "Love Lockdown" tend to distort at least a little bit through almost any system when played at a moderately loud volume. With the SB16-Ultra, I could hear no distortion at all, even with the system cranked to the limits of what the main speakers could handle. It's the first time I've heard the bass tones fill the room on this tune, pressurizing the entire space with intense low-frequency energy. Normally, a subwoofer would distort on these tones, producing higher-frequency distortion harmonics that draw my attention to the subwoofer. But with this sub, I felt truly enveloped, and I got the feeling that I was hearing the tune the "right" way for the first time. I also noted more subtlety in the bass tones. I assume they're generated electronically, through synthesis or sampling, then heavily processed to create the desired effect; however, with the SB16-Ultra, I could hear subtleties that gave the bass a more natural tone, somewhat like that of a Japanese taiko drum.

JAN 16

SVS SB16-Ultra Subwoofer

Reviewed

(https://hometheaterreview.com/svs-sb16-ultra-subwoofer-reviewed/)

(https://hom

sb16-
ultra-
subwoofer-
reviewed/)

With the new 16-Ultra Series, SVS has introduced its most powerful subwoofers to date. Brent Butterworth tests the new SB16-Ultra, a sealed-box design with a 16-inch woofer and a 1,500-watt Class D amplifier.

Go



SVS SB-1000 Subwoofer
(Black Ash) – 12-inch Dr...
(<https://aax-us-east.amazon-adsystem.com/x/c/Qva-oqQVzasSRrt2bEXS404A...>



SVS PB-2000 Subwoofer
(Black Ash) – 12-inch Dr...
(<https://aax-us-east.amazon-adsystem.com/x/c/Qva->

SVS SoundPath Subwoofer
Isolation System, 4-Pack
([https://aax-us-east.amazon-
adsystem.com/x/c/Qva-](https://aax-us-east.amazon-adsystem.com/x/c/Qva-)

Ads by Amazon (https://iaax-us-east-amazon-adsystem.com/x/c/Qva-ogQVaq-program.amazon.com/home/ads/ref=sm_n_se_dkp_gb_logo?addId=log&cre20&linkNum=&w2&ref=URL=https%3A%2F%2Fhome.theaterreview.com%2Freviewed%2F&storeId=&imprToken=9.POFVbCcpOFXVJR76Kg&adType=ms-src=nsa-ads&cId=nsa-ads)



(http://fixedpos.advertserve.com/servlet/click/zone?

zid=217&cid=513&mid=860&pid=0&sid=1&uuid=0223ca9788dc099d96723ef8abe84050&ip=86.131.186.72&default=false
sb16-ultra-subwoofer-reviewed%2F&redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.focal.com%2Fen%2Fhome-audio%2Fhigh-fidelity-s

60137

When this sub is in the system, one may get a strong urge to play EDM and hip-hop, just because its output is so powerful and its sound so tight. I especially loved hearing the Deadmau5 remix of Medina's "You and I" through this sub. It's a shame that more people can't hear this type of music through the SB16-Ultra because it's really something different. I've never heard a subwoofer this powerful that starts and, perhaps more important, stops so quickly. On "You and I," I heard not a trace of ringing or overhang, which gave the tune a rhythmic precision and power I've never before experienced with either home systems or even with the incredibly powerful sound reinforcement system at the Deadmau5 show I saw a couple of years ago.

The classic submarine movie U-571 is one of my favorite bass tests, especially in the "Face to Face" chapter where the sub confronts a German destroyer. This movie's known for its scenes involving depth charges, but the snippet where the submarine goes under the destroyer and the destroyer's propellers start turning contains more intense deep bass than the depth charges--although most people don't hear it because their systems can't reproduce it cleanly. Like only a couple of other ultra-high-performance subs I've tested, the SB16-Ultra actually seems quieter on this scene than lesser subs do because it doesn't distort significantly, and thus it doesn't produce the higher-frequency distortion harmonics that are much easier to hear than the fundamental bass tones.

Click over to **Page Two** for more Performance notes, as well as Measurements, The Downside, Comparison & Competiton, and Conclusion...

[Continue to Page 2 ↻ \(?page=2\)](#)

Post a Comment

20 Comments

Home Theater Review

 Login ▾

 Recommend

 Share

Sort by Best ▾



Join the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS 

Name



(http://www.bluray.com/servlet/click/zone?cid=513&mid=860&pid=10&sid=1&uid=0223ca9788dc099d6725cf8abec84050&ip=86.151.186.72&default=false&random=49257174×tamp=20180718060137) Great writing! Thanks for mixing in some education (about audibility of infrasounds and ports vs. no ports) with the reporting. Most of all, thanks for including references to music other than the "audiophile" standards.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Roger Skoff • a year ago

Congrats, Brent, on the very best subwoofer review I've ever read. Brilliant, well-written, complete, and well-illustrated, it's of a caliber and quality I would hope to achieve (but probably not be able to) if I were to go back to product reviewing. One small question, though, have you ever heard the big Kinergetics SW-800 woofers? Those were a twin tower sealed-box system with five 10" SEAS driver per side, and just slightly under twice the driver area per side of these 16 inchers and they were FAST. Their minus 3db point, as I recall, was something like 15Hz and (also as I recall) they had a built-in cut-off at around 10 Hz to avoid screwing-up any record player on the same planet (record-player nominal resonance point, as I know you know, is normally set to around 8Hz.)

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Vince • a year ago

I have a question. Why do we need such big bass producing subwoofers. I have two \$100 Dayton 10" subwoofers and if I turn the volume on the back of the subs more than a quarter of the way up then they are producing too much bass relative to the rest of the sound. The music and effects should be in proportion should it not?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

JonFB → Vince • a year ago

You probably need to tune the subs. They no doubt have very strong bass in the 50Hz - 80Hz region, so they sound very loud on those passages, and there may be loud "peaks" in the frequency response of your room that emphasize certain frequencies. If you eliminated the peaks, then the bass would be much smoother, and you would get a better feel (literally) for how strong they are, and they would sound much more in proportion to the other speakers. But you're probably missing most of the bass in the 20Hz-50Hz region. Tuning subs can become quite a hobby, but you could start by getting a Dayton Audio IMM-6 microphone and FFT analyzer on your phone or tablet and looking at some pink noise in different spots around your listening area.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Vince → JonFB • a year ago

How should a person such as myself who has regular subwoofers go about tuning the bass output? I've now changed my receiver to my old, very powerful Yamaha receiver (130 watts p/ch into 8 ohms at 0.08 THD) and even with me unplugging the subwoofers and running my Nohr 9.0 marble speakers full range (minus 3dB point is 33-34Hz) I often feel like the bass is too much for the small upstairs theater room that they are in. I know about room nodes of cancellation and reinforcement but changing the speaker and seating position that I have now is not a good option as the soundstage is excellent now.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

JonFB → Vince • a year ago

If your receiver doesn't have an automatic sub-tuning feature (like

Audyssey MultiEQ, which a Yamaha won't), then you need a way to go in and equalize the peaks. The best way is with a device called a "Behringer Feedback Destroyer" or BFD. This page has a lot of info on that:

<http://forum.bluray.com/sh...>

You'll need a calibration mic, and (free) software for your phone, tablet or PC (use Room EQ Wizard for your PC). This will make a huge difference in the quality of your bass. Just remember that if you can't move your subwoofers, you may have dips in the response at the listening position and you should never try to "raise" the dips with EQ. Just focus on reducing the peaks.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Bryan • a year ago

Great review. I've always liked the deep, tight sound. This sub is rather expensive though, compared to other ID subs. It may justify its cost by sounding amazing and offering some cool features.

Have you ever tried a Rythmik sub? If not, it might be worth seeking one out for review . . .

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Brent Butterworth → Bryan • a year ago

I would like to. I tried a while back, but they were between models at the time.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

(http://fixedpos.advertserve.com/servlet/click/zone?zid=217&cid=513&mid=860&pid=0&sid=1&uuid=0223ca9788dc099d96723ef8abe84050&ip=86.131.186.72&default=false&random=49257174×tamp=20180718060137) of a reviewed%2F&redirect=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.focal.com%2Fen%2Fhome-audio%2Fhigh-fidelity-speakers%2Faria-900) sb16-ultra-s

I don't see why you can't use an analog microphone for Room EQ Wizard. The analog noise even on a junky laptop is going to be -70 dB or so, which isn't a factor. It has to be measurement mic, though. Most of those are electret condenser and have a built-in preamp that requires phantom power. What mic are you thinking about using? Probably even the ones used for A/V receiver setup would work fine. Electret condensers are TMK all flat below 1 kHz.

I made a mistake in the text. The chart is correct. I'll ask Adrienne to fix it. Thanks for the catch!

Whether there's an advantage in buying this sub versus a smaller one for lower-volume applications is a tough question. This one will play cleaner at low frequencies, as I noted when I wrote about the U-571 clip. It depends on how often you play deep-bass material. For most people, a smaller sub would be fine -- but if you're reading this, you're probably not "most people." The SB16-Ultra is designed for enthusiasts who want to push the pedal to the metal.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Glenn Benidt ➔ Brent Butterworth • a year ago

Brent,
Are the Focal SW 1000be subs any good?
Should one get one of those if they have Focal speakers?
Thanks
Glenn

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

This comment was deleted.

Brent Butterworth ➔ Guest • 2 years ago

Yes, if that mic will put out a signal when you plug it into your computer, that will be a great choice. I once measured the mic that came with a Denon receiver and it was very close to my \$400 Clio measurement mic. Often they use similar elements, sometimes even the same element.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Jonathan Pacheco • 2 years ago

Hi great review as always but I would love to hear your opinion between this sub and the PSA S3600I that has a more similar price range. Is not fare to compare this \$2000 against 15s that is only \$900.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Brent Butterworth ➔ Jonathan Pacheco • 2 years ago

To me the S3600i, while closer to the SB16-Ultra's price, is a very different sub, which is why I didn't think to compare them. The S3600i has great definition and output, plays lower than the SB16-Ultra, and is of course much larger. The S3600i sounds a little more like a ported sub to me; it doesn't have that extreme punch of the SB-series subs. As I stated in the article, I have come to prefer the sound of ported subs, and the S3600i is closer to that so it would be my personal preference -- IF I had space for it, which I really don't. Once you're getting into a sub that large, the physical considerations can become daunting.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

David Musoke • 2 years ago

How does the sound quality of the SB16U compare to that of the SB13U?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Brent Butterworth ➔ David Musoke • 2 years ago

Can't say for sure because I didn't review the SB13-Ultra. But I did the previous model and the character of that one's sound is similar to the SB16-Ultra. The 16 just plays lower and louder.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

David Musoke ➔ Brent Butterworth • 2 years ago

OK... I based my question off your comment in the review where you said "...that the SB16-Ultra sounds like no other subwoofer, but that doesn't necessarily mean its sound will suit your tastes". That was the statement that concerned me alot. After-all, the reason why a person doesn't like the sound of a subwoofer would mainly be due to the nature of its design.

So, if I've misunderstood you, I'm sorry. Would be correct to say that you found its sound extremely accurate (due to less distortion than normal?) that some may dislike it for this reason, as they may be used to predominant 2nd/3rd/4th order harmonics their favorite subs are producing?

order harmonizes their favorite subs are producing:
(<http://fixedpos.advertserve.com/servlet/click/zone?zid=217&cid=513&mid=860&pid=0&sid=1&uuid=0223ca9788dc099d96723ef8abe84050&ip=86.131.186.72&default=false&random=49257174×tamp=20180718060137sb16-ultra-subwoofer-reviedirect=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.focal.com%2Fen%2Fhome-audio%2Fhigh-fidelity-speakers%2Faria-900>)

Well, it's very low distortion, very low boom, almost no overhang. But it's very punchy. Punchier than any bass amp, punchier than my double bass ;). This sound is common to high-excursion sealed-box (not passive radiator) subs with ~1 kW amps. SVS told me the SB13-Ultra outsells the PB13-Ultra by a wide margin, so either people really like that punchy sound or they like the small size. Accurate ... it's hard to say. I don't think there's a pro studio sub on the market that can do what this thing does, so there's nothing to compare it to to say whether or not it's accurate. Definitely if you like that tight, punchy sealed-box sound, you will love this sub.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

David Musoke ➔ Brent Butterworth • a year ago

— | 📌

Thanks Brent. Appreciate your well thought out answer.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Glenn Benidt ➔ David Musoke • a year ago

— | 📌

How do these subs compare to Focal SW 1000be?
Thanks

Sponsored Links

North Yorkshire:People With 3-49 Vehicles Have Discovered This Tracker

Expert Market

The One WD40 Trick Everyone Should Know About

Honest To Paws

This Photo Has Not Been Edited, Look Closer

HistoryInOrbit.com

The 34 Most Tragic Photos Ever Taken

Mental Flare

Born Before 1960? Here's A Genius Way To Avoid Funeral Expenses

Experts in Money

The Latest Football Transfer News and Rumours

Gambling.com



“ With the Invisa Signature Point Source GoldenEar has once again delivered on its promise of high-end audio at real world pricing.”

-John Sciacca, Residential Systems



\$999.99 / ea