

Towering delight

Mark Craven auditions SVS's triple-woofer Prime Pinnacle floorstanders to find out whether they sound as big and imposing as they look

SVS IS PROBABLY best known by cinephiles for its consistently impressive subwoofer range, having started out solely as a bass-box maker back in the late 1990s. But it now offers two separate lines of passive loudspeaker: its flagship Ultra Series, and step-down Prime. The Prime Pinnacle is the top dog of the latter, and very much designed to deliver bang-for-your-buck. It's available in multichannel packages – the range also has centre, bookshelf, satellite and height/elevation options – or on its own.

It's a fairly big speaker (a shade over 1m high and 35cm wide), and its largely boxy styling won't make it the most glam addition to your movie room. The standard £1,800-per-pair cabinet finish is the same black ash affair offered as the entry choice on SVS's woofers, but scaled up to this size it's a little harder to love. So you might want to rustle up the £200 extra for SVS's black gloss iteration, which looks far sexier.

The speakers are supplied with grilles (clip-in, not magnetic) and fitted with Elastomer feet, swappable for the supplied spikes.

Mid up high

Somewhat unusually, the Pinnacle mounts its 1in aluminium dome tweeter unit below its 5.25in glass fibre midrange, a result of a testing process that found this arrangement delivered better control of diffraction between the two, but also kept the high-frequency driver aligned with a typical listening position. That midrange is unique to the Pinnacle, as all other Prime models use either 3.5in or 4.5in polypropylene drivers. The glass fibre construction is a trickle-down tech from its Ultra Series.

Sited below the mid and high is the Prime Pinnacle's (not-so) secret weapon, a trio of 6.5in polypropylene bass drivers that visually let you know the speaker means business. Some might be expecting a larger woofer, but choosing three at this size has enabled a relatively



slender cabinet width while maintaining a claimed low-frequency reach of 29Hz (-3dB).

Around the back, three 2in bass ports are used for LF tuning and midband integration. The Pinnacles warrant a little breathing space from your wall if possible to avoid excessive boundary gain.

A warm welcome

Put into action, the Prime Pinnacles demonstrate a love of big soundtracks and plenty of energy. Bass delivery is, as you'd hope, a plus point, but there's no sense these

SPECIFICATIONS

DRIVERS: 1 x 1in aluminium dome tweeter; 1 x 5.25in composite glass/fibre midrange; 3 x 6.5in polypropylene woofers
ENCLOSURE: Rear-ported
FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED): 29Hz-25kHz
SENSITIVITY (CLAIMED): 88dB
POWER HANDLING (CLAIMED): 20W-300W
DIMENSIONS: 1,044(h) x 203(w) x 353(d)
WEIGHT: 25.9kg

FEATURES: Black Ash or Gloss Black finish; triple rear ports; black cloth grille

Each bass driver is separately rear-ported

speakers have been voiced to pummel your innards and nothing else. Detailing higher up the frequency range is ever-present, and there's nuance and texture to the midband. The sound is rich and warm, not as attacking as some, but always enjoyable.

It's a performance that's right at home with the pounding action of Denzel Washington thriller *The Equalizer* (Blu-ray) and the rhythmic groove of Harry Gregson-Williams' score. The scene where Robert McCall visits the Russian mobsters to dispense his unique brand of justice is all about quiet menace and then explosive violence, and the Pinnacles deliver on both counts. There's a clean, tactile feel to Foley details (a rustling envelope, a door being closed) and then, as McCall's brain goes into slow-mo mode, a surge in the speakers' output. The soundmix swirls left-to-right, and the depth of soundstage created is excellent.

In terms of bass-handling, these towers combine genuine heft with precision. Robbie Robertson's theme for *The Irishman* (Netflix), with its deep-reaching cello motif, is conveyed with weight and grit; the integration between the woofers and midband is silky smooth.

Used for strict two-channel replay, the Pinnacles have considerable all-round appeal. Stereo imaging is impressive, allowing you to easily isolate instrumentation, and even when basslines and percussion are in short supply, there's a fulsome quality to the vocals and acoustic guitar of Don McLean's *Vincent* (CD).

Fronting up

Proof that SVS isn't solely a sub-bass specialist, these three-way floorstanders couple low-end excitement with upper-frequency finesse. If you want to bolster your L/R performance, add them to your wishlist ■

HCC VERDICT



SVS Prime Pinnacle

→ From £1,800 (pair) → www.karma-av.co.uk

WE SAY: These speakers live up to expectations with a big, crowdpleasing performance that's nuanced when needed.

AV INFO

PRODUCT: Full-range floorstanding speakers

POSITION: The pinnacle of SVS's Prime series

PEERS: Quadral Chromium Style 8; KEF R5