

HOME
CINEMA
Choice
BEST BUY

1

Mark Craven doesn't have to make too much space for big bass with this dual 8in woofer

Sub specialist's micro machine

Since launching in the late 1990s, American company SVS has developed a reputation for home cinema subwoofers that blend high performance with bargain price tags. And the 3000 Micro, it's dinkiest model yet, continues that trend.

First though, I'll admit that the idea of a compact subwoofer, specifically designed to take up less floor space than a traditional model and therefore be more suited to installation in a living room or gaming den, doesn't quite fit my image of the SVS brand. This, after all, is the company that sells 16in ported subwoofers that almost require a forklift truck, vertical-standing cylinder models

nearly a metre high, and 'Ultra Tower' floorstanding loudspeakers that make no attempt to hide their monolith-from-2001 style.

Yet, actually, those tower models (such as the PC-2000 HCC #288) are proof that SVS is a brand that puts some thought into the rooms its products will end up in. So maybe I shouldn't be surprised its been bitten by the compact bug. Company present Gary Yacoubian even sees it as a noble endeavour, telling me: 'Perhaps it could open up the world of great bass to more people.'

Sledge hammer

The 3000 Micro, as the name indicates, is part of its 3000 Series. This means it shares the same 800W Sledge DSP amplifier unit as the SB-3000 and PB-3000 models

[HCC #308]. Only here it's used to power smaller drivers, in a smaller cabinet, at a lower price.

The new drivers are 8in aluminium cone designs, mounted on inverted surrounds to boost excursion potential. They're connected in parallel to the sub's singular amplifier, a configuration that SVS says means they receive the same amount of current 'to ensure precisely controlled and mirrored operation.'

As advertised, the 3000 Micro really is rather small, just 27cm deep and only a touch taller and wider. It sits on a quartet of small rubber feet and limits design flourishes to just a modest 'SVS' badge.

Finish options include piano gloss white, which Yacoubian reveals is more of a sop to the European market than the company's native US. There's no price premium for it, so certainly give it consideration, but I'd be perfectly happy with the sumptuous piano gloss black dressing of our review sample. There's no sign of SVS's traditionally more affordable (and less agreeable) black ash finish.

Now, if you're getting a sense of *deja vu*, I don't blame you. Last issue we looked at KEF's KC62, a fellow dual-opposed sealed subwoofer with a miniaturized design. It's tempting to consider them as direct rivals, but I'd argue that's really not the case, because while the KEF model is considerably more stylish and even more compact (by virtue of its overlapping voice-coil technology), it's some £500 more expensive. They are different horses for different courses.

As with all of SVS's current subwoofers (following the recent arrival of the 1000 Series Pro range), the 3000 Micro can be controlled via smartphone app. This connects to the subwoofer via Bluetooth, rather than Wi-Fi, which likely makes for a quicker setup.

Many will have little or no need to do anything with this app beyond perhaps adjusting volume if their AVR handset has gone walkies, and adjusting the woofer's phase during initial setup. Yet for the more experimental/knowledgeable, there's some interesting stuff here, including Movie and Music preset modes; a parametric EQ tool with three user slots (and a neat, visual representation of the response changes your finger taps will bring); and Room Gain Compensation feature (which covers 25Hz, 31.5Hz and 40Hz, enabling you to smooth output at a targeted frequency that your room dimensions have a problem with). The app itself is very responsive, and includes pop-up tutorials to describe what each feature does.

Sonically appealing

After spending a week with this woofer, one thing was obvious: it performs very much like SVS's more regular models. Slam, depth, and output all beguile. The pursuit of a tidy form factor hasn't resulted in obvious compromise.

Using the Bluetooth app to make an easy volume tweak – after my AVR insisted during setup on going below my preferred hooligan level – I was soon feeling battered and bruised by the performance of this cute cube.

The highway chase sequence in *Sonic The Hedgehog* (4K Blu-ray) found the 3000 Micro happily throwing its weight around. The engine of Dr. Robotnik's armoured truck has a throaty growl, but underneath there are much deeper notes that signify the vehicle's power and size. The soundtrack thumps ominously, and when the harpoon crashes through the car window it slams into the SatNav with a tight, sharp thud.

Later, during the film's climactic street battle between old spiky and Robotnik, the sound of the hovercraft's thruster, and the low-frequency surge when Sonic smashes into it, hit with startling volume and weight, before smoothly decaying.

I dug out *Ready Player One* (4K Blu-ray) and its race sequence. This did highlight the limits of the SVS's low-end extension (it's rated down to 23Hz) as the footfalls of first >



AV INFO

PRODUCT:
Dual 8in compact active subwoofer

POSITION:
Compact, ranged above SVS's 1000 and 2000 Series models

PEERS:
REL T/7x;
KEF KC62
SVS SB-2000 Pro

1. The 3000 Micro is the brand's most compact design yet

2. SVS's app handles volume control and EQ



the T-rex and then King Kong missed out on the scale and depth that I've heard on larger subs – but for a £900 woofer intended for small environments, it's hardly lacking. Meanwhile, its handling of the M.U.T.O.-by-the-bridge sequence in *Godzilla* (2014, Blu-ray) was thrilling – a smorgasbord of low- and mid-bass effects and whumps that stopped and started, rose and fell, with delightful precision.

During quieter, more thoughtful fare, the 3000 Micro doesn't just shut up shop. With the Dolby Atmos mix of *Promising Young Woman* (Sky Cinema) it needed to show a lighter, more nuanced touch, adding an easy-does-it sense of ambience (including the background music of the nightclub and coffee shop scenes), and helping the film's oddball soundtrack hit new lows. Its upper-range bass performance felt spot-on – rich and textured. And then the sound team throw in a huge, room-rattling LF rumble when Cassie arrives at the bachelor party, and I realised my AVR was right all along and had to dip the volume a bit.

SVS no doubt wants hi-fi enthusiasts to enter the world of subwoofers, and the unobtrusive 3000 Micro is an obvious potential partner for a stereo loudspeaker pair. With Michael Jackson's *Beat It* (Tidal), it imbued the kick drums with a lovely sense of physicality, and bounced along tunefully to the track's iconic bassline.

4

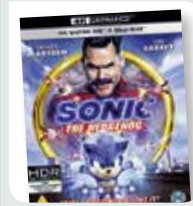


SPECIFICATIONS

DRIVERS: 2 x 8in aluminium cone woofers **ENCLOSURE:** Sealed, with dual-opposed driver configuration **ONBOARD POWER (CLAIMED):** 800W (RMS) Sledge amplifier **FREQUENCY RESPONSE (CLAIMED):** 23Hz-240Hz (+/-3dB) **REMOTE CONTROL:** No. SVS Bluetooth app instead **DIMENSIONS:** 278(h) x 297(w) x 271(d)mm **WEIGHT:** 10.2kg

FEATURES: Stereo/LFE line-level input; stereo output; Intelligent Control Interface (ICI); 50MHz Analog Devices Audio DSP; 12V trigger; auto standby/on control; low pass filter, phase, polarity, room gain compensation and parametric EQ on SVS control app; structurally reinforced MDF cabinet

TESTED WITH



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG: The rarest of things: a Hollywood videogame adaption that doesn't suck. Sure, it's family-friendly antics won't appeal to all, but there are Easter Eggs aplenty (including a *Fast & Furious* gag) and the Dolby Atmos soundmix on Paramount's UHD Blu-ray is routinely entertaining and chaotic.

I dutifully switched to the sub's Music preset for two-channel listening, and the effect of its adjusted response, in my room, was a minor but welcome additional level of bassline body.

Weighing up

Eventually, just as with KEF's KC62, interested parties will have to weigh up the benefits of the 3000 Micro's size and styling, versus its price and performance. SVS itself sells a range of larger models that go deeper and stay louder, and pack the same connections and slick control options. Perhaps this model's biggest rival is SVS's own single 12in-driver SB-2000 Pro, which sells for the exact same price and has more potential to range below 20Hz.

Judged entirely on its own, however, this can be considered a first-rate woofer, mixing a very high-quality finish with customisation potential and a performance that only a total bass-head wouldn't love ■

HCC VERDICT



SVS 3000 Micro

→ £900 → www.svsound.com

WE SAY: A superb addition to SVS's portfolio of home cinema subwoofers that outperforms its size and price point. Overall styling and the Bluetooth control app are positives too.

3. The Intelligent Control Interface uses LED status lights to denote volume and low-pass filter changes

4. The 8in woofers are mounted within injection-moulded 'extreme excursion' surrounds