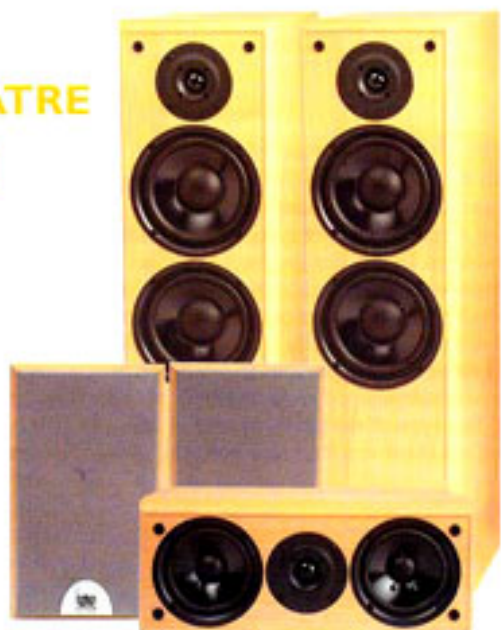


# Aaron

## ATS-3 HOME THEATRE SPEAKER SYSTEM



For more years than we can remember, Betetec Industries has concentrated on making Aaron loudspeakers the best value for money speakers in Australia, developing its own Low-Q Ratio bass drivers, 'teardrop' tweeters and building cabinets using the latest computerised machinery to virtually eliminate labour costs. The only problem has been that its speakers have been rather angular and mostly black, which hasn't helped them on the sales floor. It seems that's all in the past, because the speakers in this new ATS-3 home theatre package have curved top panels, all corners are rounded and, as you can see, the finish is light beech, the latest fashion hit in Europe now sweeping Australia.

### The Equipment

Aaron's ATS-3 home theatre speaker package is actually comprised of models that are available individually from Betetec, the ATS-3 front main speakers (\$799 per pair), SS-120 surround speakers (\$499 per pair) and a CC-120 (\$399). These prices total to give the 'system' price we've noted in the panel, but we suspect there isn't a retailer in Australia who wouldn't offer a better price as a package, particularly if you include one of Aaron's three subwoofers. We'd suggest the Sub-240 (\$1099) as the best match or the Sub 60 (\$699) if you're pushed for room.

Aaron may have updated the cabinets, but the bass drivers are pretty much identical to earlier models, which in our books is a case of 'if you're on a good thing, then stick to it!'. For the woofer in all the speakers in this package, this means dual-lami-

nate cones that are coupled to cloth surrounds. Aaron is one of the few manufacturers using cloth, but does so because it will easily outlast foam (evidenced by Aaron's ten year warranty, twice the industry average), and because unlike rubber surrounds, its compliance (flexibility) does not alter with age or temperature. As an Australian manufacturer, with constant feedback from dealers, Betetec is well aware that its products have to provide the same sound quality no matter whether they're in Cairns or Cooma.

The ATS-3 (it stands for Audio Technology Series) could have been an imposing speaker, standing 800mm high as it does, but Aaron's designer, Hume L'Estrange, has made it very narrow (210mm), preferring to pick up all-essential cabinet volume by making the speaker quite deep, at 410mm. Position the speakers carefully, and you'll never notice this dimension. The cabinet volume is necessary to cope with output from the dual 173mm Low-Q drivers. These have a Theile/Small diameter of 130mm, which gives a total cone area for the system of an impressive 265cm<sup>2</sup>. The huge port that's part of the Low-Q ratio alignment is at the rear of the cabinet, below the bi-wire gold-plated multiway terminals.

The two drivers cross (at 3kHz, because this is a three-driver, two-way) to a single 'teardrop' tweeter, so-named because the tweeter surround is curved like a teardrop, which L'Estrange says reduces air turbulence, which in turn improves sound quality. Otherwise, it's a fairly conventional though well-made 25mm fabric-dome

tweeter that's been slightly improved over the previous tweeters.

Aaron's SS-120 surround speakers use exactly the same tweeter as the ATS-3, but the single bass/midrange driver in this design is a smaller version of the bass drivers in the ATS-3. The CC-120 uses a pair of the same bass drivers used in the SS-120, again linked to the teardrop tweeter. The only difference is that this time the drivers are magnetically shielded, so the speaker can be placed on or under a TV.

### Listening Sessions

Aaron's speakers are renowned for their fast, tight bass response, and the new ATS-3s were no exception, delivering great kick-drum sound, and effortlessly reproducing the open string of an electric bass guitar. Connected directly to an electric piano via an amplifier, they reproduced the bottom note on the keyboard (A) easily and with excellent tone. Auditioned more conventionally, with multichannel super-fi soundtracks from DVD-A and Dolby Digital from DVD, the ATS-3s performed just as well, the bass being complemented by a mostly neutral midrange (we noted a slight 'plumminess' at times) and an extended, sweet-sounding treble. The tonal matching across the centre and rear channels was good, which you'd expect given the similarity of the drivers so there was a real sense of true 'cinema' sound when watching movies. Like all home theatre systems, this one benefits from a subwoofer, but the ATS-3s produce so much bass you likely could get away without one.

### Conclusion

This is Aaron's best version of the ATS series ever. This ATS-3 system looks great, sounds great and absolutely whips the imports on price. Get into it! **Bb**

#### Aaron ATS-3 Speaker System

PRICE:	\$1997
WARRANTY:	Ten years
	The new styling Long warranty Great value for money
	Rear-firing port on centre That midrange plumminess

CONTACT: Betetec Industries Pty Ltd  
92 9688 0277  
betetec@spot.com.au  
www.spot.com.au/aaron

For additional information circle 0181 on our Reader Information Service Card.