

Aaron

SAT-60 Indoor/Outdoor Speakers

Many people think they don't need speakers outside the house. "Oh," they say blithely, "if we're outside, we just leave the doors open and turn up the volume on the stereo."

Oops. Wrong. This is just about the fastest way to destroy your tweeters—and here's why. Sitting in your backyard you'll hear something from your living-room speakers, but most of the high-frequency sounds will have been absorbed within the house itself (even if the doors are open). Missing that top end, the temptation is always to push the volume—and when this inevitably results in your amplifier distorting, once again you won't hear it, because the distortion is taking place at high frequencies.

After a few rounds of this escalation, you'll need to replace your tweeters.

Remember, also, that as you bump up the volume then dance out to the patio, most of that extra sound isn't following you. Instead it's radiating sideways—towards your long-suffering neighbours.

Why damage your equipment and (possibly) relations next door when it's so easy to install a pair of outdoor speakers? These days, thanks to improvements in plastics technology, speaker manufacturers can produce cabinets that are completely waterproof and, even more impressive, drivers that are waterproof as well.

Aaron's new Sat-60 design is a fine example. Measuring 245x160x130mm (HWD) and weighing in at just on 2kg, each cabinet comes with a rear bracket that allows it to be fixed to a wall (or ceiling) and rotated through nine positions. (Note that because the speaker can be mounted vertically or horizontally, this actually lets you aim the speaker at 36 different points.)

The bracket is made from coated aluminium, so it won't rust like the steel fixtures that are often provided with outdoor speakers.

The SAT-60 is a two-way design. It's an infinite baffle (sealed) enclosure, of course, because a bass reflex design would mean that moisture—or, perhaps more importantly, bugs, insects and other creatures—could get inside the cabinet. The bass/mid-range driver has a carbon-impregnated polypropylene cone and a rubber roll surround, so not only is it

completely waterproof, it also won't rot away when exposed to the considerable ultraviolet light it will experience when mounted outdoors. (The plastic cabinet is also UV stabilised.)

The foams that are so popular for roll surrounds will rot away in Australia's climate, despite their manufacturers' protests to the contrary.

Aaron rates the driver with a diameter of 146mm. The tweeter is a 13mm mylar cone/dome that has a three-armed phase corrector immediately in front of it and is powered by a neodymium magnet. Both drivers are hidden behind a perforated metal grille—again, made of aluminium so it won't rust—that has a tiny Aaron badge that can be rotated through 360 degrees so it will read 'right way up' no matter how you've mounted the speakers.

Unlike many such rotatable badges, Aaron's is recessed and spring-loaded, so it can't be vibrated out of position.

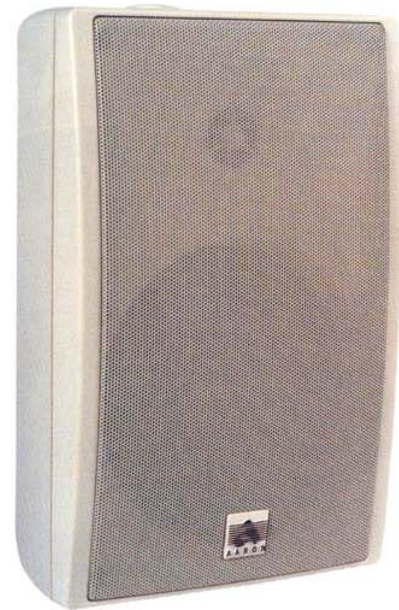
Unusually for such a relatively low-priced speaker system, the terminals that are located in a recess on the rear panel are audiophile-grade, gold-plated banana types, with holes drilled so you can use bare wire or gold pins if you want. We approve, since we've found that the budget-priced steel 'spring' types simply rust solid after a short time.

Performance

Since you can use the Sat-60s indoors if you like, as front/main speakers or (more appropriately) surround speakers, that's how we evaluated them for this review. When we used them as front-main speakers, we removed the brackets completely, which allowed us to stand the cabinets neatly on a pair of stands for the purpose of auditioning.

The speakers sit level, but if you place the speakers on their end in a system, we'd suggest some small dabs of Blu-Tac underneath will help stop any potential for movement.

In all our sessions, the Aaron Sat-60s performed brilliantly—so well that, from time to time, we had to pinch ourselves as a reminder that we were listening to budget, all-purpose loudspeakers rather than dedicated hi-fi speakers in larger, wooden cabinets. There's not much bass, but we wouldn't expect it from such small cabinets.



Conclusion

In fact the restrained bass did nothing to mute our enthusiasm for the Aaron Sat-60s. In the open air it's the bottom end that carries furthest and causes most friction with neighbours. And when you use them inside as surrounds, you'll be getting plenty of bass from the front speakers.

And if you decided to use the speakers as front-mains, it seems likely that you'd add a subwoofer to handle the bass.

All in all it seems that Aaron has all the, er... bases covered. **BE**

Aaron SAT-60 Indoor/Outdoor Speakers

Price	\$399
Warranty	Two years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + All purpose design - None
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