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Fyne Audio F1-8 review

Capable and thrilling standmount speakers Tested at £5999 / \$8295 / AU\$12,995

By [What Hi-Fi?](#) 25 September 2020

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(Image: © Fyne Audio)

OUR VERDICT

Fyne's F1-8 deliver a terrific combination of dynamic punch, rhythmic precision and insight.

Dynamic and exciting listen
Work well across all volume levels
Excellent build and finish

Needs careful system matching

Read Fyne Audio's website and you'll come across terms such as IsoFlare, FyneFlute and BassTrax. It's easy to dismiss these things as marketing bluster, but take a look and you'll find real substance in the engineering.

Fyne Audio may be a young company, [formed in 2017](#), but the people that run it

have decades of experience and it shows. In just three years, it has established a strong foothold at most price points in the budget to mid-priced speaker arenas and is now taking aim at more premium sectors.

The Fyne Audio F1-8 standmounters, alongside the smaller F1-5 (£2999, \$4495, AU\$6995) are part of this process and complement the established towers in the company's high-end F1 series. These products represent the very best the brand can do, and as such, pack in a full dose of its technologies.

Build



(Image credit: Fyne Audio)

The people behind Fyne Audio are mostly ex-Tannoy employees, so it comes as no surprise to discover that the two-way F1-8 speakers use a co-axial driver array that puts the 25mm magnesium dome compression tweeter at the centre of the 20cm multi-fibre mid/bass driver. This dual-driver design is what the company calls IsoFlare.

This kind of arrangement has all sorts of advantages over conventional configurations, from even dispersion to allowing a degree of time alignment between the two drivers so that the sound from both reaches the listener at exactly the same time. This bodes well for focus and precision.

Fyne Audio F1-8 tech specs



(Image credit: Fyne Audio)

Type 2-way, downwards firing port

Max power 360W

Sensitivity 91dB

Impedance 8 ohms

Frequency response 33Hz to 34kHz

Dimensions (hwd) 47 x 28 x 44cm

Weight 15.2kg (each)

Look carefully at the larger driver and you'll see that its rubber surround has notches all the way around it rather than being smooth. Called FyneFlute, the idea is to terminate unwanted mechanical energy in the cone more effectively, leading to cleaner, more detailed results.

The two drivers crossover at 1.8kHz and are linked with a carefully calibrated crossover – first order for the tweeter and second for the mid/bass. The crossover is cryogenically treated to remove internal stresses in the components, which leads to a better performance.

Sensitivity is relatively generous at 91dB/W/m and nominal impedance is claimed to be 8ohms, so you should get decent volume with most price-compatible amps.

The curved speaker cabinet is lovely. It's built of a composite ply (made of various hardwoods) and covered in a lovely walnut veneer with a burr walnut inlay on the front panel, which extends to the top panel.

The whole lot is finished in a sumptuously deep high-gloss varnish. The cylindrical section around the driver array is covered in high-quality soft leather. Add it all together and you have a pair of speakers that look as luxurious and expensive as the price point demands.

While some may not like the Fyne Audio F1-8's distinctive appearance, there's no denying the quality of build and attention to detail that's gone into those hand-finished cabinets.

How to choose the right speakers **Compatibility**



(Image credit: Fyne Audio)

You'll find an aluminium plinth at the base of the wooden cabinet. This is home to the BassTrax cone diffuser. The idea is that the speaker's downward-facing port fires at this diffuser, with the sound output spreading 360 degrees into the room. It's claimed to make the speakers less fussy about room placement, and we certainly don't have an issue with speaker positioning in our test room.

The quality of sound from any standmounter is heavily reliant on its support. Fyne Audio is taking no chances here, offering a dedicated stand that, with a change of

top plate, also works with the smaller F1-5s too. The FS8 Stands are pretty costly at £999 (\$1800, AU\$2695) but match the speakers well, physically and visually. They're a good bet, but if that's your budget there's plenty of choice, so it's worth experimenting.

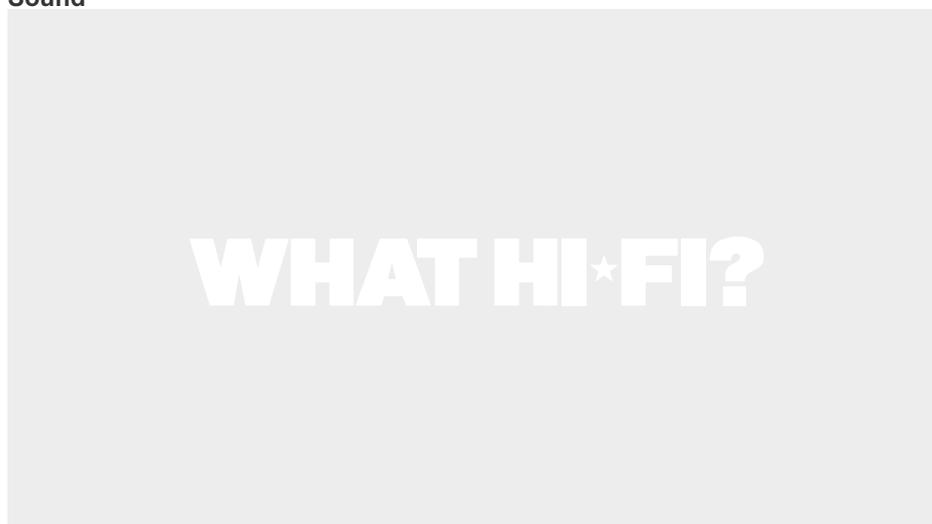
Any speakers at this level demand a top-class system. We use our reference [Naim ND555/555 PS DR](#) music streamer and [Technics SL-1000R](#) record player connected to [Burmester's 088/911 Mk 3](#) amplifier. We also have [Naim's SuperNait 3](#) on hand to see how these speakers handle more modest amplification.

The F1-8s may be just 47cm tall, but they still deliver a properly weighty and authoritative bass. In our room, they prefer to be in free space with a slight angle towards the listening position to firm up the stereo image.

Those with small rooms will probably get better results with the smaller F1-5s. However, give these bigger standmounters a bit of space to breathe and they turn in a terrific performance.

How to position your speakers

Sound



(Image credit: Fyne Audio)

We start with Neneh Cherry's *Broken Politics* and love the F1-8's exuberance. They have a direct and taut sound that grabs the listener's attention from the off. Basslines are surprisingly powerful but remain agile and tuneful with it. These speakers have no difficulty showing differences in texture between different low-frequency sounds and can track multiple bass strands with ease.

Cherry's voice is well projected and clear. The F1-8s are excellent at communicating the emotion in her vocals and can convey subtle shifts in intensity and phrasing wonderfully. There's never any doubt as to the emotion she's trying to convey.

We're impressed with the cohesion of the presentation. Every sound has a place and contributes towards our musical enjoyment. These speakers are impressively rhythmic too and, given appropriate music, have a sense of drive that few rivals get close to. If you're looking for cold-blooded analysis tools, these aren't the ones. Simply put, the F1-8s promote entertainment above examination.

We switch to Dvorak's *New World Symphony* and these Fynes respond with impressive scale and the kind of wide-ranging dynamics that are rare for a product of this type. In part, it's the benefit of using a larger mid/bass driver than most of the competition – 20cm against the usual 16.5cm. Their sound is suitably dramatic but has a lovely sense of control and composure with it.

They have the insight to let us home in on any particular instrumental strand but would prefer us to look at the bigger picture and enjoy the majesty of this symphonic work.

For anyone wanting the last word in tonal neutrality or refinement, these aren't the speakers for you. By absolute standards, the highest frequencies aren't the purest sounding and can be provoked with poor recordings or an aggressive partnering system. But, take a bit of care over system matching – let's face it, at this level you really should – and there shouldn't be an issue.



(Image credit: Fyne Audio)

It's worth noting that rivals that better the Fynes in high frequency refinement can't match the F1-8's infectious energy, so the preference comes down to taste and partnering electronics.

There's a control dial on the front panel called a Presence Control. This gives a subtle degree of adjustment over the frequencies in the 2.5kHz -5kHz range, which offers a degree of fine-tuning in any particular set-up. It could prove useful in fine-tuning the sound for a particular room.

Shifts in musical momentum are rendered superbly, while dynamics swings are punched out with enthusiasm. These speakers sound truly commanding when volume levels rise, but remain an entertaining listen at lower levels too. This is something to note if you listen late at night and don't want to disturb neighbours or others in the house. Most rivals tend to sound bland when asked to play quietly.

We're impressed by the F1.8's stereo imaging. They have a wonderfully focused sound and deliver a wide and nicely layered sound stage. The stability is pleasing and doesn't start to waver, even when the recording becomes demanding.

Verdict

These Fyne F1-8 standmounters are excellent speakers. They prove an immensely entertaining listen, provided the recording and system are good enough. There's no shortage of capable rivals, but in our opinion the F1-8s have little to fear.

SCORES

Sound 5
Compatibility 5
Build 5
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spanner 25 September 2020 19:48

The review states "provided the recording and system are good enough" why is compatibility 5, surely the score should be 3 or 4?

[Reply](#)

Sliced Bread 29 September 2020 06:32

My guess; it's about appropriate system matching. They are a £6k pair of speakers and would therefore need components at that level. I read it that they're just saying don't partner with budget or under-par electronics but above that they're pretty flexible. Just my inference though.

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