



# Giving "Perfect" a Facelift

**"We've got to update your Avantera" – I've been hearing that for years from Audio Physic. Update? Why should they?**

**Our "reference loudspeaker of choice" plays superbly, so keep your mitts off it, thank you, there's nothing to "update".**

In a manner of speaking, they are absolutely right. But the fact of the matter is, there is no way to come out with a "plus+" version of the second-largest standing loudspeaker in the Brilon manufacturer's range, which is the topic of interest here. Just swap out a few parts, and presto, you've got the new super loudspeaker – no way. The modifications are of a structural nature, and they require a conscious decision from the beginning. For us it offers the benefit that we can listen to our trusty old Avantera and its modernised sister in a side-by-side comparison.

A word about pricing. Given the runaway madness concerning price trends in the upper echelons of models offered by manufacturers in the high-end segment,



*The standard spikes can be replaced with decoupling feet – definitely recommended*

what Audio Physic is asking for this high-calibre product can almost be considered a bargain (I'm fully aware of the bitter irony in that statement). An Avantera currently costs upwards from 13,690 Euros per pair, and the plus version runs 15,290 Euros. That is to say, the price for the large version costs a moderate 1,600 Euros extra, and I'm here to tell you: that is the version you want. If you're a fan of high-gloss finish (black or white) as with our test sample, then you are up to 17,000 Euros.

In terms of looks, you can hardly tell both versions of the Avantera apart – you have to take a very close look at the control terminal, which on the large version is in silver, using the outstanding WBT nextgen terminals. And because we're on that general topic, and it's so easy to overlook the tiny details (which were also featured on the original Avantera): The terminals are not merely attached to the cabinet by screw connections, they are mounted on an elastically-suspended board. What's that all about? In the meantime, developer Manfred Diestertich only fields questions like these with an impish grin: "Try it out, you'll be amazed", is his typical response to such questions.

The Avantera is a good 2 kg heavier than its – actually not much smaller – sister. And it exists because Manfred Diestertich simply cannot keep from trying out new things. The technical fundamentals on the original Avantera were so advanced, there was hardly anything to improve on anyway. The drivers on both models are the same. Four of them are not readily obvious, namely the woofers. On each side of the loudspeaker are two 7-inch woofers arranged one above the other, and working in concert, with impressive volume, a meticulously reinforced cabinet and two reflex tubes coming together at the bottom, delivering a powerful boost at low registers. And they do so with clever matching that is well attuned to living space: The frequency range tapers off slightly towards the lower registers, which is generally put into perspective in real space, providing for a balanced bass frequency range.

There are two mid-range drivers 6 inches in diameter, which Audio Physic refers to as "Hyper Holographic Cone midrange drivers". This term refers to the

high-tech basket with the unique double aluminium-plastic configuration. Aluminium makes it sturdy, whereas plastics offer strong dampening characteristics. The membrane itself consists of ultra-thin aluminium, and it is purposefully dampened in order to eliminate any bad habits.

A very special element indeed is the one responsible for the high notes: What at first glance looks like a perfectly normal dome is in fact a genuine cone tweeter. If you've never seen drivers like this anywhere before, you're right: Whilst Audio Physic do not produce these specialities themselves, thanks to superb connections to a large supplier, exotic designs like this are possible – naturally, these beauties are assembled in Brilon as well.

So what is it that now makes the Avantera plus version different? The easily tangible features include the use of new capacitors in the crossover network. They are not off the rack either, but instead are purpose-built for Audio Physic by the specialist company Clarity Cap. And the differences to the series versions are in no way related to a customer-specific imprint, rather Manfred Diestertich, or "Manni" in short, had a few ideas of a structural nature here as well, which the manufacturer was willing and able to accommodate.

Cabinet dampening is also a big issue when it comes to sound quality. Manni started experimenting again and – you guessed it – he found a material that no one else had on their radar screen: a very special ceramic foam. It is not as flexible as mats made of polyester batting, and it has to be mounted as a fitted part when assembling the cabinet – it's not something you can install afterwards, which is why there is no upgrade kit to the plus version.

*The four woofers in the loudspeakers breathe through two tubes on the base*



## Teammates

### Turntables:

- TechDAS Air Force Two
- Yamaha GT-750 / Reed 3P

### Phono cartridges:

- Lyra Atlas
- Goldring 2500

### Phono preamp:

- MalValve preamp three phono

### Preamplifier:

- Accuphase C-2420

### Amplifiers:

- Accuphase C-46
- Bryston 4BSST

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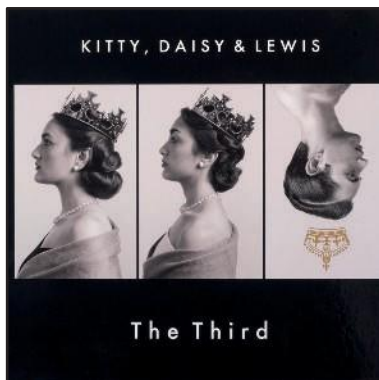
### Accessories:

- PS Audio P10 power regenerator
- Cables from Transparent and van den Hul
- Record cleaner from Clearaudio

## Adversaries

### Loudspeaker:

- KLANG+TON Nada
- Audio Physic Avantera



Music played

**Kitty, Daisy & Lewis**  
The Third

**Rickie Lee Jones**  
Rickie Lee Jones

**Colour Haze**  
Temple

**Nina Simone**  
At Carnegie Hall



Insulation, dampening, resonance control (just look at the suspension of the tweeter network) are all areas where Manni wielded his magic screwdriver. And then of course there are a few special electrical features the developer is no longer particularly keen to talk about, because the ensuing discussions won't get anywhere. He simply does it - and that's it.

There is an accessory, available at additional charge, that absolutely deserves mentioning, however, as I would never use the loudspeakers without it: the "VCF V Magnetic" feet. You can place the 650 Euro optional set of four underneath components – that's how I first became familiar with the dampeners and was quite dumbfounded indeed to discover the difference it made in the Accuphase pre-amp – or using the enclosed thread adapters, you can screw them into the "outriggers" of the loudspeakers, replacing the standard spikes. Technically, it involves a combination of advanced string suspension in combination with two powerful repelling Neodymium magnets that together provide for effective decoupling from the rest of the world. Each puck can handle 30 kilos, more than adequate for this loudspeaker. For use underneath components, there are smaller (and cheaper) versions.

And if the differences between the original Avantera and the plus version are already far beyond my wildest dreams – replacing the spikes with the magnetic feet ultimately catapults the loudspeaker into another league. To be sure, the Avantera is grandiose and superior, and it is absolutely masterful in projecting a full range of textures. Everything is fantastic, as long as you have never heard the "plus" version. It conveys a slightly different tonal character, because the bass appears more slender – which of course it isn't, but it is simply more responsive to the lower tones. In fact – and this is another instance where you have to take traditional measurement technology with a grain of salt – both Avanteras are veritable

*The cabinet configuration reveals far more than a homely MDF box. What's more, each filter is placed directly on its corresponding chassis.*



*Cables are connected via mechanically-decoupled pure silver terminals from WBT.*



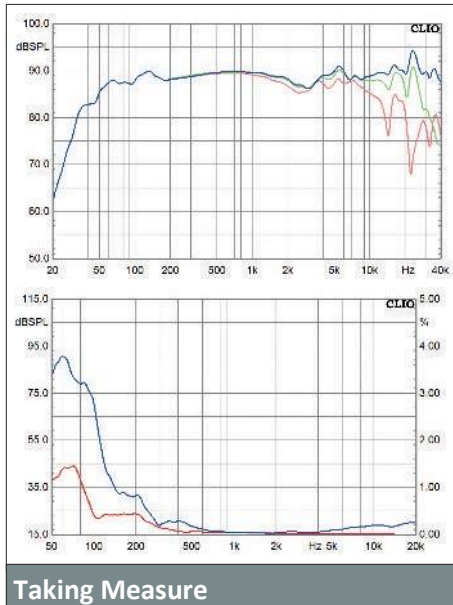
### Audio Physic Avantera plus+

- from 15,300 Euros per pair
- **Manufacturer:**  
Audio Physic, Brilon, Germany
- **Telephone:** +49 2961 96170
- **Internet:** [www.audiophysic.de](http://www.audiophysic.de)
- **Warranty:** 2 years
- **Finishes:** various veneers and lacquers
- **W x H x D:** 240 x 1150 x 420 mm (incl. feet)
- **Weight:** 42 kg

#### Bottom line ...

» Perseverance pays off in the end. With lots of small updates, Audio Physic has raised Avantera to a new level of sound quality, as the loudspeaker sounds incredibly natural, substantive and spacious. Actually this is obligatory: the proprietary decoupling feet.





### Taking Measure

#### Measurement Technology Review

*The frequency range plot of the Audio Physic loudspeaker reveals meticulous care in matching: The slight tapering off of the bass frequency range is of benefit in living spaces, and towards the upper range, except for a minimal trough in the presence, the loudspeaker is very well balanced. The sensitivity is at a pleasing 90 decibels, the nominal impedance is four ohms. There is no impedance linearisation. The loudspeaker has almost no harmonic distortion, and the waterfall plot also looks very clean.*

*The Avantera plus+ is elaborately insulated and damped. New: the ceramic foam for the mid-range enclosure, seen here at the centre of the illustration*

bass virtuosos, but the Plus is simply somewhat more civilised and colourful. On the high notes, both versions are sublime; what the cone is able to project into the room in terms of detailed definition is absolutely astounding – it's no wonder that Manni has abandoned the dome. The plus model plays even more "invisibly", especially when it is mounted on the decoupling feet. It puts more space between events, appears more spectacular in its precision of positioning, and simply performs better than the old model. And we are not referring to preferences in taste, but rather to indisputable innovation.

*by Holger Barske*

