

Mission statements

Mission m34i

Stereo speakers

↑ FOR

Refined, detailed and potent performers; good-looking, too

↓ AGAINST

Lack the transparency or resolution of the best at the price; need space

→ VERDICT

You'll be hard pressed to find a better balance of talents anywhere else for this amount of money



THE CURRENT CIRCA-£300 market for floorstanders is a minefield. There are few great designs about, and the original m34 model isn't one of them. On the other hand, the m34i (i stands for improved) certainly is.

Aesthetically and mechanically, these are the same speakers as the m34s: they use the same 165mm DiaDrive mid/bass cones and 25mm Viotex HF unit, and everything's housed in the same attractive 95cm-tall cabinet.

What's changed is the internal wiring has been improved - it's now Mission's own HP-OFC - and there have been some crossover refinements made, too, incorporating expertise Mission's engineers gleaned from work on the flagship Pilastro speaker.

These subtle mods have had some dramatic results. The original m34s impressed us with their easy-going bass, but had an undynamic and uninvolved balance. Not the m34i: they're refined and enjoyable.

Slightly toed-in and placed around 30cm from a rear wall, the bass is taut, musical and weighty enough to inject potency and excitement into the music. It also beefs up lower-midrange frequencies, delivering Will Oldham's subtle vocal on Bonnie Prince Billy's *The Way* in a full and emotional

manner. The performance opens up even more when they're biwired.

Treble is impressive, digging up detail without harshness. The high-frequency noodling on Radiohead's *Idiotape* is rendered in all its unpredictable glory. Remember these are large speakers that need room to breathe, otherwise they can sound a bit bright. Timing is good, too: there's a hint of bass lag, but it's not intrusive.

Transparency and resolution aren't the best on the market, but we've yet to hear speakers that sound as big and refined as these do at the price. They've earned their 'i' suffix.

ALSO CONSIDER

Acoustic Energy Aegis 3B

£350 ★★★★★ *July 2011*

These are phenomenal speakers at the price; remarkably musical

B&W 602.53

£300 ★★★★★ *December 2010*

Serious standmounters, sounding as big and impressive as they look



The Missions are more suited to larger rooms, where they have space to breathe.