



KEF R100

It's been a while since I had to put on my Big Boy pants here at *AV Magazine*, and while I'm definitely not complaining about all the cool, modern toys I've got to play with this year, it's nice to swap the gadgets for a bit of pure hi-fi now and then.

The KEF R100s were the reason for my wardrobe change, which seemed fitting in a market that has recently filled up with midrange stand-mounters. And even though it's a market I'm not too familiar with, the R100s seemed a great place to start.

The unboxing process lets you know you've just purchased a high-quality product, with everything laid out neatly and carefully. Remove the packaging around the actual speakers and the perfectly finished high-gloss cabinet makes a striking entrance with its stylish simplicity. Mine were black, but there's also a choice of either white or a more traditional walnut or rosewood veneer finishes.

With the magnetic grilles off, the bare drivers leave you with a striking, modern appearance reminding one almost of a slightly more aggressive alloy rim. With the grilles on the R100s have a more refined feel about them and the nice aspect of the magnetized grilles means there's no need for ugly fascia holes to keep them in place.

The excellent build quality is very evident from top to toe including the terminals, which are situated at the back and employ a screwing mechanism for either single or bi-wiring attaching.

The R100s are quite unique and come with an array of interesting tweaks, starting with the drivers that are set up using KEF's exclusive Uni-Q arrangement, which sees the 25 mm aluminium dome tweeter set in the middle of the 130 mm magnesium aluminium alloy mid/bass driver. This kind of structure is designed for more consistent dispersion than the traditional separated driver arrangement.

The tweeter itself also has a trick up its sleeve in the augmented dispersion department that comes in the form of a 'tangerine' waveguide and an overall

vented design inspired by KEF's higher-end Blade speakers. The mid/bass cone, meanwhile, is reinforced with ribs set equidistant from each other for improved rigidity.

All those little tweaks and tricks are evident as soon as you hit play. From the moment the R100s came to life, it was easy to hear that the sound is dispersed high and wide on a full, expansive soundstage.

The sense of scale from these relatively small speakers is so spacious that you'd be forgiven for not really believing that this kind of big sound is actually coming out of these little things. But it is!

Equally impressive is the accuracy of the stereo imaging. Voices and instruments are placed rather purposefully in the room, with each component distinctly defined and given plenty of space. Integration between midrange and treble was flawless, for a mouth-watering balance that left no part of the frequency spectrum wanting.

Bass performance was impressively large for its size and had me almost jumping out of my seat in the louder battle scenes from *Edge Of Tomorrow*, the new Tom Cruise flick.

However, balance is always evident and voices are never pushed back by the big explosions or the roar of futuristic vehicles. The R100s simply remain planted. Games are really given an immersive feel with heaps of nuance in the foreground and background sounds and plenty of dynamics to fill even larger listening rooms.

All in all, the R100s are fantastic as both bookshelf speakers or set up with your television arrangement. In a stereo-only role, they were phenomenal, so I would have loved to have heard them in a complete 5.1 package for the full home theatre experience.

That said, they're a fantastic size for modern requirements and style.



Everything about them screams quality and beauty, and they certainly jazzed up the look and sound of my entertainment system.

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw

VITAL STATS

Design	Bass-reflex
Drive units	1x 25 mm vented aluminium dome tweeter, 1x 130 mm aluminium mid/bass driver
Frequency range	49 Hz – 45 kHz (-6dB)
Frequency response	56 Hz – 28 kHz (±3dB)
Amplifier requirements	25 – 100 watts
Sensitivity	86 dB (2,83V/1 m)
Maximum output	107 dB
Impedance	8 ohm (min. 3,2 ohm)
Weight	6,6 kg
Dimensions (HxWxD)	280 x 180 x 289 mm
Price	R12 900

Verdict

Mouth-wateringly beautiful to look at and to listen to.

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OUR RATING: 90 / 100

