



Test Peak Consult Sonora: in the realm of the most beautiful mids



The Danish luxury manufacturer's range is small and not at all cheap. The Sonora, priced at 25,000 euros per pair, is the entry-level model, but it completely enchanted us (Photo: H. Biermann)

The Peak Consult Sonora is just a 2-way design in floor standing speaker format. But everything about it is so consistently realized that its basic virtues make it one of the best that **LowBeats** has ever played.

The story starts back in 1996 and I'm probably doing company founder Per Kristoffersen an injustice by not starting this review until 2021. That's when Wilfried Ehrenholz and his partner Lennart Asbjørn joined the Danish loudspeaker manufacturer Peak Audio, which - it's fair to say

- had been largely under the radar of audiophile perception for 25 years. Ehrenholz is no stranger to the industry: He was a co-founder and long the sole owner of Dynaudio until he sold the flagship company to the Goertek Group in 2014. In 2018, he also left the last shares to the Chinese and from then on, he could have done a marvelous job as a grandfather...

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Wilfried Ehrenholz (left) and Karl-Heinz Fink at the presentation of the Peak Consult Dragon Legend MK2 in the listening room at Fink Audio Consulting in Essen (Photo: H. Biermann)

But he didn't. He saw this small company with its uniquely consistent enclosures and huge un-tapped potential - and his fingers itched again. So he took over the financially ailing company, kept the former owner Per Kristoffersen on as production manager, gradually introduced pro-fessional structures and turned Peak Audio into the new/old company Peak Consult.

And Ehrenholz was not alone: in addition to Jan Geschke, probably the best-known creative in the European hi-fi scene, Ehrenholz was also able to recruit developer Karl-Heinz Fink as a consultant to take the existing models to an even higher level in terms of sound quality.

But while awareness of the new Danish premium brand is only gradually growing, another goal has already been achieved: With the huge Dragon Legend MK2 (which was already presented at the HIGH END 2023), Ehrenholz and Fink have already set new sound standards. And the new edition of the Sonora, the entry-level model at Peak Consult, was so convincing that it makes an excellent ambassador for the sonic ideals of Mr. Ehrenholz and Mr. Fink ...

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What's special about the Peak Consult Sonora?



The 1-inch tweeter D3004/662000 is the best that the specialist Scan-Speak has in the range of high damping fabric dome tweeters (Photo: H. Biermann)



The mid-bass driver from AudioTechnology was not only labeled on the Dustcap for Peak Consult, but also adapted precisely to the requirements of the Sonora cabinet (Photo: Peak Consult)

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One is involuntarily reminded of Dynaudio. What has always characterized Dynaudio was the outstandingly good harmony of the drivers - especially in their compact speakers with a large dome tweeter and 17 cm (43,18 in) bass-midrange driver. This is exactly what we find here: The Sonora is a 2-way design with very similar components - except that neither the tweeter (Scan-Speak) nor the bass-midrange drivers (AudioTechnology) are from Dynaudio and that instead of a bass reflex port, a 20 cm (50,8 in) passive cone at the rear provides more bass boost.

Both the tweeter and the bass-midrange driver are among the best that loudspeaker technology has achieved to date. And yet Karl-Heinz Fink (who develops the drivers himself for other brands) was still able to introduce decisive distortion-reducing improvements at various points.

However, the decisive factor in the Danish transducers was and is the mechanics of the cabinets. There are clearly masters at work here, which becomes clear as soon as you unpack the speaker. With your hands you feel the flawless workmanship. And your back feels that these „small entry-level speakers“ should never be lifted alone. A Sonora is said to weigh just under 50 kilos (110 lb). I haven't weighed it, but I think the figure is greatly understated and suspect it's closer to 75 kilos (175 lb). In short, the Sonora may have a delicate shape, but it feels like it has been poured with concrete.

And the idea of a concrete filling is not entirely wrong. Cabinet maker Per Kristoffersen uses three layers of HDF (high-density fiberboard) and covers this already extremely solid construction with 14 millimeters (0,55 inches) thick real wood planks. The walls are thus up to 60 millimeters (2,36 inches) thick and simply do not vibrate. The Sonora responds to the usual knuckle test with - nothing.



Photos: Peak Consult

The front is more than 60 millimeters thick. This enables the acoustically optimized chamfers that prevent baffle reflections from occurring in the first place.

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A high-gloss acrylic strip takes away the visual austerity of the walnut cabinet



The 20 cm passive cone and the bi-wiring connection panel are located on the rear

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The cover plates made of 14 mm thick real walnut wood give the Sonora a hand-flattering quality (Photo: H. Biermann)



The baffle is solid. This allows the Peak carpenters to easily mill out the acoustically advantageous slopes (Photo: Peak Consult)

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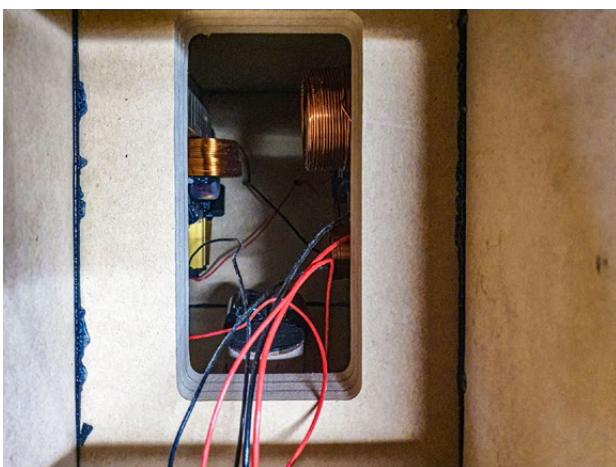


Everything about the Sonora is ultimate. The bi-wiring connection offers large contact surfaces with defined contact pressure (Photo: H. Biermann)

A quiet, immediately subsiding “thud”. That’s it. Even the large models from Wilson, Lyravox or Magico vibrate a little longer here.

Karl-Heinz Fink comments. „We used to do that a lot. But I had forgotten how much better a sand-damped crossover sounds.“

And if that wasn’t enough, the lower quarter of the enclosure, where the crossover is located, is completely filled with the finest sand. That alone should be good for at least 15 kilos.



Even the cross braces are multi-layered. Underneath sits the two-part crossover, which is equipped exclusively with the best components (Photo: Peak Consult)



Once the crossover has been installed, the chamber is completely filled with fine sand and then sealed. The sand effectively suppresses all vibrations of the components (Photo: Peak Consult)

How to handle

Now, nobody would think of combining a - let's say - 1,000 euro amplifier like the [Cambridge CX 61](#) with this 25,000 euro transducer. But this is possible because the Sonora is completely undemanding in terms of power and because it is actually already fully utilized with a good 100 watts.

This is mainly due to the low tuning - there is very little efficiency left. 83 dB (at 2.83 volts per meter) was measured by the laboratory. This is comparatively inefficient for a modern speaker and, at the end of the day, results in a rather low maximum level and not a particularly high load capacity. As I said: 100 watts per channel is quite sufficient. But you always must bear this in mind: The Sonora is a cultivated high-powered compact speaker.

If you want to fill large halls with sound with a lot of dynamics, you'd better look elsewhere...

During the Sonora test, I had a [Westend Audio Monaco](#) to listen to for a few days. It sounded intoxicatingly colorful, fine and open with the Sonora. But this experience is quite expensive because the tube amplifier is almost as expensive as the loudspeaker. The [Soul Note A-2](#) is recommended for anyone who wants a size smaller. This is currently my favorite (transistor) amplifier under 10,000 euros and even with it, the Sonora sounded beguiling...

All technical data – PEAK CONSULT SONORA

Concept:	passive 2-way stand box
Equipment:	TMT: 1 x 17 cm, HT: 1 x 20 mm, Passive cone: 1 x 20 cm
Rated impedance: Efficiency (2.83 V/m):	7,4 Ohm
Wirkungsgrad (2,83 V/m):	83 dB
Maximum level continuous/short-term):	95 / 105 dB
Minimum power for maximum level (continuous)	> 35 watts
Dimensions (W x H x D):	113.0 x 28.0 x 38.5 cm
Weight:	48.4 kilograms

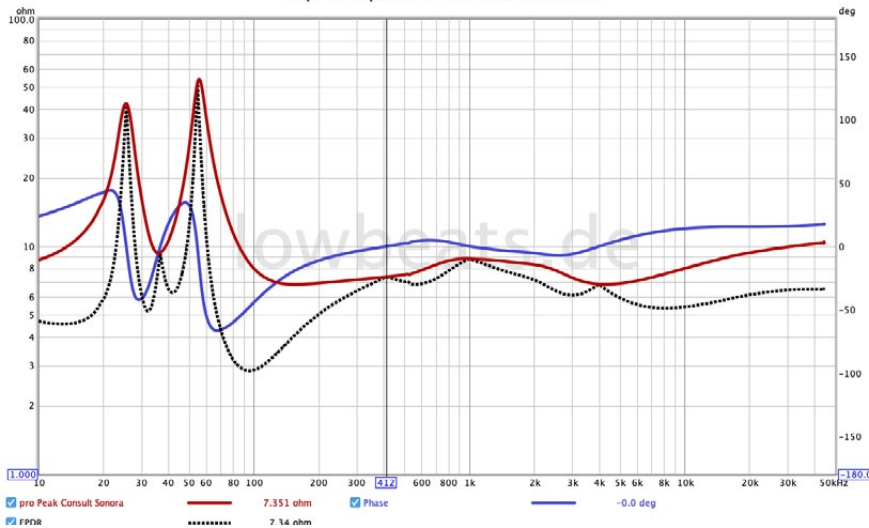
All technical data

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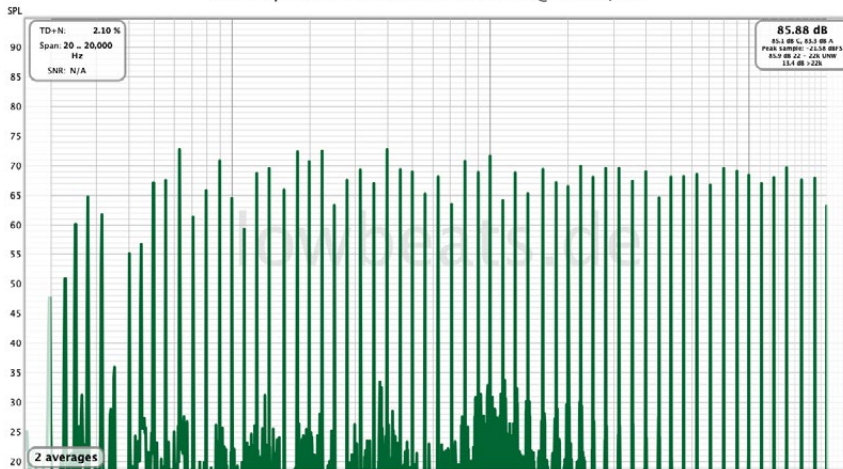


Impedanzprofil Peak Consult Sonora



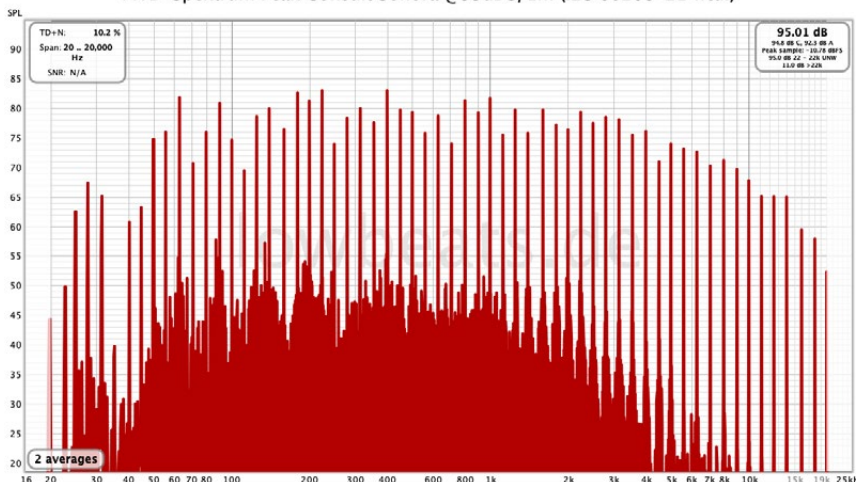
Impedance (red curve) and phase are linear and virtually without any offset. It doesn't get any better than this (measurement: J. Schröder)

MTD-Spektrum Peak Consult Sonora @85dBC/1m



The classic living room measurement at 85 dB shows minor distortion artifacts over the entire low-mid range. You can also see the enormous balance

MTD-Spektrum Peak Consult Sonora @95dBC/1m (IEC 60268-21 wtd.)



At higher levels, the distortion increased across the board. And at a continuous level of 95 dB, the end was reached

(measurement: J. Schröder)

Listening test

The Sonora is one of those speakers that captivates you from the very first moment. Such an unagitated, balanced and natural, yet always finely nuanced reproduction is rare; voices come across with a fervor and intensity that one would wish for from all loudspeakers. There is the necessary dash of warmth, but also the multitude of fine overtones. The Sonora doesn't swallow anything up and yet never seems superficial or too present. All the small, very consistent detail solutions and damping measures seem to have a very successful effect here, because the Sonora simply celebrates vocal passages or individual instruments (solo violins, guitars) more convincingly than almost any other loudspeaker I know.

I recently went to Martin Kälberer's concert and had previously reviewed his multi-channel recording „Raum“. In a Dolby Atmos configuration, the recording is awesome, but even in stereo it has a wonderfully three-dimensional spatiality. Reproducing this is easy for the Sonora. The position of the percussion sounds (which the sound engineer placed to the left or right of the listener's head) was surprisingly firm and precise. But the Sonora also created a breathtakingly deep soundstage.

Naturally, we were extremely curious to see how the Sonora would fare against our reference FinkTeam Borg - both of which, ironically, were bred to perfection by the Grand Master Fink. In fact, all points that were more in the quantitative area (coarse dynamics, depth) went straight to the Borg. It was also the one that sounded even firmer and more menacing with the timpani and made the listener move much more with pithy bass drum attacks - or rather made our legs bounce along. The Sonora seemed a touch more restrained here.



A benchmark in terms of spatiality: Martin Kälberer „Raum“ (Cover: Qobuz)

But there is so much more. I would like to call it „grace“ and „tonal elegance“. Kristin Asbjörn-sen's wonderfully multi-layered voice not only placed the Sonora almost holographically in the room, but also transported it with an extraordinarily cultivated and transparent resolution and immense richness of timbre. Although the Borg is a real fine spirit in the mid-high range and has long been an incorruptible benchmark for us in terms of naturalness, it only came second in the tonal comparison. To put it simply, the Sonora simply sounds beautiful and right.

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Fotos: Peak Consult

Conclusion Peak Consult Sonora


With their artificial leather baffle cover and the perfectly crafted, solid walls with real wood planking made of American walnut, the Sonora look a bit like they've fallen out of time. Perhaps they are, because they combine a technology that has been known for many years and mechanical tricks that have been known

for a long time with the greatest effort and consistency. All this comes at a price, but it also produces an outstandingly beautiful result: the Sonora may not be a world champion in dynamics, but it has a tonal beauty and authenticity that has few rivals even in this class.



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PEAK CONSULT SONORA



LowBeats®
OUTSTANDING

4,7
RESULT

RATING

SOUND	★★★★★
PRACTICE	★★★★☆
PROCESSING	★★★★★
TOTAL	★★★★☆

2023-12-26

The evaluation always refers to the respective price category

Pro & Contra:

- + Enormously fine, musically natural tuning
- + Particularly realistic spatiality
- + Electrically undemanding, suitable for any amplifier
- + Outstanding cabinet quality

Preis:

(Manufacturer recommendation)

Peak Consult [Sonora](#):

25.000 Euro

Mit- und Gegenspieler:

[Test Vollverstärker Soulnote A-2](#)

[Test FinkTeam Audio Borg: die neue LowBeats Referenz](#)

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