

# The clear choice

In the style stakes, there can be few speakers that match the Waterfall range, and those models that I have reviewed have been able to look and sound good (The two don't always go hand in hand).

This review now ups the stakes even higher, as it is of a Waterfall system that couples the brand's two largest floorstanding speakers, the Victoria and the Iguascu (which I still can't pronounce properly) to their dedicated centre channel speaker, the Elora centre channel, and to their largest subwoofer, the High Force 3.

Technically, the most innovative aspect of the two pairs of large floorstanding speakers (the Victoria stands 995 mm tall and the Iguascu 855 mm tall) is their all glass enclosure, which many a speaker manufacturer will say can't work, but they do.

Waterfall use a patented Acoustic Damping Tube, which according to the literature guarantees a quick bass and midrange without colouration. This certainly does seem to be the case.

Specifications for the two speakers are similar, but as the Victorias use dual 150 mm bass/midrange drivers, they play slightly lower – down to 45 Hz – than the Iguascu's 55 Hz. Both speakers play up to 20 kHz, but the Victoria can handle almost double the power – 200 watts to the 100 watts of the Iguascu – and at 90 dB are 1 dB more efficient than the smaller models.

This brings me to the Elora centre channel speaker, which for this review was supplied with a simple and elegant tabletop stand (a wall bracket comes standard). This speaker uses dual 100 mm bass/mid drivers and a single tweeter mounted in an aluminium enclosure sandwiched between two pieces of glass.

It can handle up to 250 watts of power, has an efficiency rating of 90 dB and will play frequencies between 120 Hz and 20 kHz.

The final speaker supplied with this particular package is the High Force 3, whose integrated 300 watt amplifier drives dual 10-inch drivers down to a rated 29 Hz, and Dynamic Reluctance Control (DRC) technology, which is said to deliver complete control over the bass driver.

Speaker set-up and installation was pretty simple. Place the Victoria to the sides of our equipment rack. Mount the Elora on its stand and locate it in front of an LCD television, site the Iguascus just a little behind the seating position, and finally heave the sub – at 36 kg it's rather heavy – into position. Next up I connected all relevant wires to the good quality binding posts on all full range speakers, and fed the sub power and LFE signal.

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### VERDICT

As I have come to expect from Waterfall, the system delivers dynamically as well as aesthetically. Using large, full range speakers for front and surround duties means that surround music is a notch above systems that use small surround speakers.

**PRICE** ..... R85 000

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After the above, the system was powered up and allowed to run for a couple of days before final tuning and placement was done.

Some people will tell you that it is best to have di-pole surround speakers for movies, and direct radiating speakers for music. My experience with the Waterfall system was that the Iguascus did a sterling job on movies, and an even better job on surround music.

The fact that the Iguascu sonically and dynamically matched the Victorias, meant that surround sound virtually seamlessly encircled me during my listening sessions. I was also particularly impressed with the way the Elora centre channel matched the Victorias.

More specifically I found that the system on review here delivered a similar, albeit larger version, of the sound delivered by the Hurricane speaker system I reviewed a short while ago.

This means that the package delivered a warm and inviting sound that whilst it could at some times have done with slightly more overall upper mid to high frequency detail – particularly when listening to some highly revealing music on a DVD-Audio sampler we have – I was impressed with the pace of the system.

Said pace was in no small part due to the High Force 3 subwoofer, which sounds better the harder it's asked to play. Waterfall would seem to have been quite conservative when rating the low frequency response and power of this speaker.

Just before finishing with the system described above, I hooked up a pair of Hurricane speakers, mounted them on the rear wall of our studio, and listened to 7.1 sound for the first time in the studio.

With these connected, the system gained a little more space in surround sounds, and effects were just a little more impressive as they moved from directly behind me to the front of the room.

What this system proved once again, was that looks and musicality can go hand in hand. There is a slight premium that one pays for this synergy, but you do get a system, in either 5.1 or 7.1 modes that is entertaining, and good to listen to for extended periods of time.

**Joel Kopping**

