

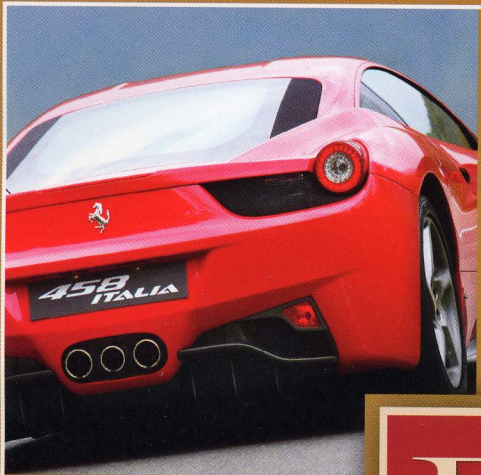
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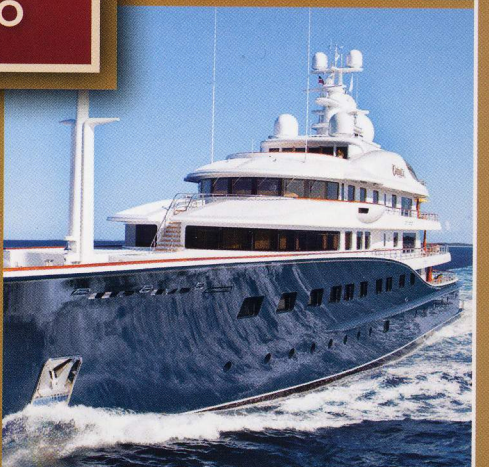
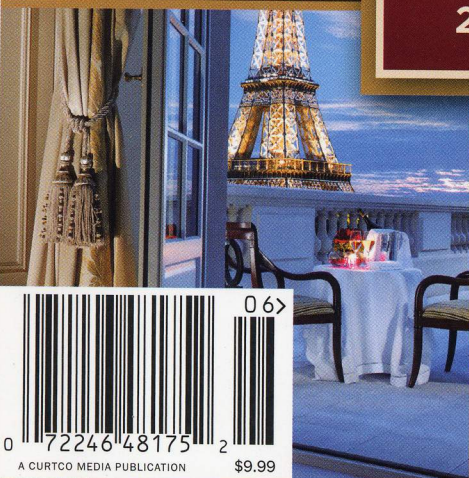


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# BEST OF THE BEST



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# The Sonus Faber

*A towering achievement in musical fidelity.*

**S**ONUS FABER'S FLAGSHIP loudspeaker, known simply as the Sonus Faber, stands 5 feet, 7 inches tall and weighs an astonishing 354 pounds. This tower of power's size, however, is dwarfed by its second-to-none sound quality.

Italian manufacturer Sonus faber, which debuted its namesake speaker last June, constructs the cabinets of all its loudspeakers to enhance musicality. (Most speaker cabinets serve simply to dampen internal resonance.) The Sonus Faber's cabinet is made from cross-grained, double-thick okoume plywood and, like the body of a fine stringed instrument, lends warmth to the speaker's sound. The cabinet's lyre shape, with its dual curvature, offers increased rigidity to help minimize unwanted coloration in higher frequencies.


The cabinet's shape also serves to direct heavy vibrations caused by lower frequencies to a vertically situated steel-alloy rod that runs down the middle of the speaker. The rod transfers these vibrations to massive aluminum conveyors at the top and bottom of the cabinet, as well as to a series of tuned mass dampers that cancel the vibrations by oscillating in opposition to their frequencies. This system, which Sonus faber based on structural engineering concepts used to wind-proof suspension bridges, ensures that the speaker's audio reproduction is free from noise. The company also borrowed earthquake-proofing principles from skyscrapers, creating four



"isolation feet" that decouple the speaker from the floor and reduce acoustic feedback and distortion caused by less-than-ideal listening spaces.

The speaker's vibration-reducing systems counteract the heart-thumping amount of air expelled by its sizable woofers, which would otherwise create distracting levels of distortion. The air produced by the woofers is vented through dual rear-facing ports that are specially insulated to minimize the chuffing caused by most bass ports. Also at the rear of the enclosure is a patented sound-field shaper composed of a tweeter and midrange driver. This device provides rear-firing audio playback to generate an indirect sound field, which users can control via knobs on the back panel of the speaker. These knobs also allow the user to pivot the device electronically to either side and adjust sound pressure to set the arc and depth of the sound stage.

While the Sonus Faber performs beautifully with a single amplifier, listeners will achieve the best results by using three amplifiers for each of the speakers—assuming you can acquire a pair. Sonus faber will produce just 30 pairs of its flagship on a made-to-order basis, for approximately \$200,000. Interested North American buyers should contact the manufacturer's U.S. distributor, Sumiko, of Berkeley, Calif.

—BAILEY S. BARNARD 

Sonus faber, [www.sonusfaber.com](http://www.sonusfaber.com); Sumiko, 510.843.4500, [www.sumikoaudio.net](http://www.sumikoaudio.net)

*The Sonus Faber loudspeaker produces powerful low-frequency results from dual 10-inch woofers and a lone side-firing 15-inch infrawoofer.*