

Hefty Aussies sound articulate

ACTIVE DESKTOP
SPEAKERS
EPOZ AKTIMATE



£ 350

FOR

Nicely made; well specified; full-scale, articulate sound

AGAINST

Prefer stands to a desktop

VERDICT

Anyone who sneers at the description of iPod as 'hi-fi' needs to hear a pair of these

IT'S A BIT OF a rubbish pun, but if we were an Australian hi-fi producer who enjoyed input from respected British speaker manufacturer Epos, we'd be tempted to call ourselves 'Epoz' too. Besides, when a product is as impressive as these AktiMate Minis (available in shiny black or shiny red as well as

"Punchy at the bottom end, eloquent in the mid and crisp at the top"

refrigerator-white), any number of wince-inducing wisecracks can be overlooked. Yet if these substantial (30 x 19 x 21cm) speakers are Minis, we shudder to think how much space a regular-sized pair would occupy on your desktop.

There's nothing unique about the AktiMates' configuration. The left-hand speaker is an active design, housing amplification rated at 40 Watts per channel and featuring an iPod dock on top, stereo RCA and 3.5mm inputs, plus a volume control and IR remote sensor on the

front. This speaker also powers its right-channel partner via a length of speaker cable. Plug the left-hand speaker into the mains, press home your iPod and away you go.

Sound quality impresses across the board. From Elliot Carter's *Mosaic* to Julian Cope's *Fear Loves This Place*, the Minis reveal fine levels of grip and go – they're punchy and well controlled at the bottom end, eloquent in the midrange and crisp at the top without any hint of splashiness. There's plenty of dynamic heft available, smooth integration between drivers and impressive stereo imaging. In short, this is about as good as your iPod can be made to

sound without you chucking a fair bit more money at it.

Just one drawback – they may have soft feet, but they sound (as most speakers do) far, far better when parked on dedicated stands.



ALSO
CONSIDER



FATMAN ITUBE
VALVE DOCK



£200

Ultimate Guide to Hi-Fi 2009
With speakers, the Fatman's much closer in price to the Epoz, but it gives away a fair bit of drive as well as looking a bit of a mess on your desktop

B&W ZEPPELIN



£400

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Elegant solution, and genuinely happy on a desktop, but inevitably doesn't have the separation or staging prowess of the AktiMates