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Robb Report

## HOME ENTERTAINMENT



### Breaking News

There are iPod speakers in the shape of a zeppelin, and iPod speakers in the shape of a teddy bear, but recently I encountered an iPod accessory not even the world's greatest technology prognosticator could have predicted: iPod speakers in the shape of speakers.

This refreshing development carries the name AktiMate. I found the concept arresting—a simple speaker system with an iPod dock built right into one of the speakers. Anybody can understand what it does at a glance. And anyone can work it: Plug the iPod into the top to turn it on, select whatever music you want on the iPod, and adjust the volume using the knob on the front of the speaker.

The speaker with the iPod dock also contains a stereo amplifier rated at 40 watts per channel; the other speaker is just a speaker. The speaker with the amp has RCA and 3.5mm stereo audio jacks that let you plug in a second source, and audio/video output jacks for the iPod. U.S. distributor ifideliti talks up the facts that the AktiMate uses a Burr-Brown digital volume control, drivers from U.K. manufacturer Epos, and an amplifier from high-end manufacturer Creek Audio, all of which certainly show that this is no generic white plastic iPod system.

I caught the AktiMate on the way out of a trade show that had ended 20 minutes earlier, so I heard the system on an open floor with the noise of guys feverishly collapsing their booths in the background, and all I had a chance to listen to was a Jack Johnson tune I don't know. So all I can say for the moment is that the AktiMate definitely sounds at least pretty good. It's easily far better than the average iPod speaker system.