

EXCLUSIVE Epoz Aktimate Micro | Powered speakers | £260

Mighty Aktimate Micros will max your desktop tunes

The two Epoz Aktimate speakers we've reviewed to date are called Maxi and Mini. Now meet the new smaller sibling: the Aktimate Micro, which takes Epoz's powered speaker/integrated dock template to its logical desktop conclusion.

Despite their being usefully smaller in every direction than their Mini siblings, Epoz has nevertheless squeezed an iPod/iPhone dock, 3.5mm and USB inputs, and 40 watts of amplification into one Micro, while the other, passive, speaker makes do with speaker-cable binding posts. Build and finish are exemplary, and there's a choice of glossy black, white or red finishes. The control on the left is the input selector; the right the volume control.

Big sound from small speakers

With an iPod docked and an Apple Lossless file of Tom Waits' *Bad As Me* selected, the Aktimates immediately impress with the scale and energy of their delivery. Vibrant and exciting, the Micros offer punchy dynamics and a spacious, well-organised soundstage. Treble sounds attack crisply, the midrange is detailed and communicative, and the bottom end has the sort of substance and textural variation that all-in-one iPod docks can only

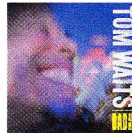
dream about. Integration of these elements is smooth, and the Aktimates time a thumping dance tune as competently as they unravel a full-scale symphony orchestra.

Undoubtedly the size and configuration of the Micros suggest them as an ideal desktop solution, but that's not automatically the case.

USE IT WITH

Tom Waits - Bad As Me

His first new album in seven years is a clamorous joy



Low frequencies can get over-confident unless the speakers are given breathing space - in fact, they're a little overstated in all circumstances, and are only reined in when the speakers are shifted to some worthwhile stands.

How many users will go down that route is debatable, but in light of the many things the Epozes do well, we're inclined to overlook their bass-heavy tendencies - especially as some users will see that as a positive.

Rating ★★★★★

FOR Finish; spec; assertive, involving sound
AGAINST Require proper support if bass is to remain disciplined

VERDICT Another in a series of hugely enjoyable powered speakers from Epoz

Also consider

Audioengine A5 £225 ★★★★★☆

The evergreen A5s remain a fine budget choice - and are slightly less fussy about how you site them than their Epoz rivals

