

Energy Veritas V-5.1 Speaker System

PRICE: \$3,600 **AT A GLANCE:** Glossy veneer makes a great impression • Crisp, up-front, detailed sound • Bipole/dipole surround provides subtle envelopment

Gimme Some Truth

Veritas is the Roman goddess of truth. It's also a distinguished speaker line from Energy. Since 1973,

Energy has passed from its founders through various Canadian and American owners. In 2006, along with its stablemate Mirage, it became the property of Klipsch. Earlier this year, the Klipsch brands—Energy, Mirage, Jamo, and Klipsch itself—became the property of Audiovox.

Although Audiovox also owns a couple of other ancient speaker brands (Acoustic Research and Jensen), in recent years, those brands have focused on car audio, personal audio products, small-scale video products, and accessories. That leaves the home theater niche wide open for Energy and the goddess of truth.

While Energy has long since lost its independence, it still holds the following truths to be self-evident: Listeners like flat frequency response, wide dispersion, and low distortion. And it's possible to design those attributes into loudspeakers and make a lot of money. That's what Energy's founders discovered

when they participated in blind listening trials at Canada's National Research Council during the 1970s and '80s and then turned what they learned into successful products.

Most of Energy's current products are concentrated in the Veritas and Connoisseur lines. The Veritas line includes several surround speaker packages, including two tower-based systems, an LCR-based system, the monitor-based system reviewed here, and a compact satellite/subwoofer system. This review covers the V-5.1 package, which includes two monitors, a horizontal center, bipole/dipole surrounds, and a subwoofer for a total of \$3,600.

Addictively Beautiful

As someone who handles one black box after another, I loved the look of the V-5.1 monitor and V-5.2-C center as soon as I lifted them out of their cartons and loosened their drawstring bags. Their lustrous Rosenut veneer was deep, reddish, and addictively beautiful. If you'd prefer to match finishes all around, you can also get the monitor and center in the Piano Black used for the V-S surround and V-SW10 sub.

The V-5.1 monitor is a two-way speaker that stands just over a foot high in a simple rectangular enclosure. Energy supplies a foam plug to fill the back port, which might come in handy if you're placing the speaker close to the wall and want to reduce bass output. Pop the magnetically attached grille, and you'll find a 1-inch aluminum-dome tweeter and a 5.25-inch Kevlar-coned woofer. Kevlar is the same tough woven synthetic material used in bulletproof vests.

These two drivers are arranged in what Energy calls a Convergent Source Module (CSM). It accesses one of those eternal truths: Listeners like wide dispersion. CSM reduces lobing and improves dispersion by placing the tweeter and woofer close together, so that they act more like a single point source. To access another of the eternal truths—listeners like low distortion—Energy designed the Ribbed Elliptical Surround, which it says allows the woofer cone to move more linearly in each direction, achieving more than double the peak-to-peak movement of a conventional woofer while maintaining greater phase coherence. The woofer's response is also regulated by the phase plug at its center.

The V-5.2-C is a horizontal center speaker with the same tweeter and two similar woofers. If you'd prefer to use this LCR-designated speaker across all three front channels, check out the V-5.2-C system (\$4,400). The system reviewed here used just one in the center position. Like the monitor, the center has dual metal-nut speaker terminals for biamping or biwiring with factory-installed bridges.

With the V-S surround speaker, the plot thickens. On the front of its three-sided baffle are a tweeter and woofer similar to those used in the monitor and center. On the sides, it adds 2-inch aluminum-cone midrange drivers in separate chambers. A switch beneath the grille switches the midrange drivers between bipole and dipole

operation, while a separate control allows for volume attenuation. In bipole operation, the output from the midrange drivers on the sides are in acoustical phase with each other. In dipole operation, the sides are out of phase with each other. The designers chose to give the bipole/dipole treatment to the midranges, as opposed to the woofers, to avoid diminishing bass output in dipole mode.

Energy recommends the dipole mode if you're placing the surrounds to the sides of the main seating area. This would provide greater envelopment for those sitting in the sweet spot. Bipole operation—which I chose, because I like to move around—is arguably less dependent on placement and provides broader coverage for more listeners.

As noted, below the bipole/dipole switch is a dial that adjusts

• The V-SW10 subwoofer is all business, sporting a front-firing 10-inch fiberglass woven composite woofer.



SPECS

SPEAKER:	V-5.1	V-5.2-C	V-S
TYPE:	Two-way, monitor	Two-way, center	Three-way, bipole/dipole surround
TWEETER (SIZE IN INCHES, TYPE):	1, aluminum dome	1, aluminum dome	1, aluminum dome
MIDRANGE (SIZES IN INCHES, TYPE):	None	None	2, aluminum cone (2)
WOOFER (SIZE IN INCHES, TYPE):	5.25, Kevlar cone	5.25, Kevlar cone (2)	5.25, Kevlar cone
NOMINAL IMPEDANCE (OHMS):	4-8	4-8	4-8
RECOMMENDED AMP POWER (WATTS):	20-175	20-200	20-125
AVAILABLE FINISHES:	Piano Rosenuit, Piano Black	Piano Rosenuit, Piano Black	Piano Black
DIMENSIONS (W X H X D, INCHES):	6.5 x 13.15 x 9.17	19.49 x 7.6 x 9.17	12.01 x 9.96 x 6.18
WEIGHT (POUNDS):	12	21.5	10
PRICE:	\$400/ea	\$800	\$500/ea

the level of the midrange drivers. At its minimum setting, it turns off the mids; at maximum, it matches the mid output with the tweeter and woofer. I used the factory-preset maximum. Unlike the monitor and center models, the surround doesn't have dual terminals for biwiring or biamping.

On the V-SW10 subwoofer, the Ribbed Elliptical Surround reappears, this time cradling a 10-inch front-firing fiberglass woven composite cone woofer. Backing it is an internal amp rated at 300 watts RMS (using the more conservative specification method) or 1,200 watts peak.

Associated equipment included a Rotel RSX-1550 A/V receiver and OPPO BDP-83SE universal disc player. All movie demos (and one music demo) were Blu-ray Discs with DTS-HD Master Audio soundtracks.

Crisp, Detailed, Up Front

Salt propels Angelina Jolie through an unpredictable spy scenario that bristles with defectors, assassinations, and betrayals. The Veritas system made a first impression that never wavered, with a strongly outlined midrange and well-developed highs. The presentation was crisp, not relaxed; detailed, not reticent. Male and female vocals both localized in the sub, although the

effect was minimal enough to be acceptable and didn't recur in the other movies. In complex high-volume scenes, the soundfield kept its shape, although the loudest moments could induce fatigue.

Case 39 casts Renée Zellweger as a social worker who gets too close for comfort to an odd little girl whose intimates tend to come to sticky ends. Much of the dialogue is delivered sotto voce,



• Although Mark loved the V-5.1's Rosenuit finish, it's also available in Piano Black.

allowing the V-5.2-C center to strut its low-level resolution. Moving off axis did virtually nothing to displace or diminish the center vocal image—in that respect, the system excelled. Although the soundtrack had reasonably wide dynamics, its loudest moments tended to be sudden and brief, so fatigue wasn't an issue this time.

The A-Team is a remake of the popular TV series with Liam Neeson taking over the George Peppard role and Quinton "Rampage" Jackson standing in for Mr. T. Although it's predictably bombastic—bristling with explosions, gunplay, and aerial combat—the movie was mastered at a uniform level with a relatively narrow dynamic envelope, much like the TV series on which it was based. This made it easy to catch all of the dialogue without wilting under the effects. At no point did the surround effects distract me from the main onscreen action. When they were switched into their bipole mode, the V-S surrounds rarely caught my attention except when especially strong effects made sudden lunges from front to back. The remainder of the time, they provided subtle surround reinforcement, as bipole/dipoles generally do. Their reluctance to noticeably localize effects gave me greater freedom of movement on the sofa: I could sit pretty near the left surround speaker without being distracted by it, even when the soundfield was fairly busy.

• In Energy's Convergent Source Module (CSM), the tweeter and woofer are placed close together.



• All of the Veritas woofers feature Energy's Ribbed Elliptical Surround, which is designed to produce more linear driver movement.



HT Labs Measures

ENERGY VERITAS V-5.1 SPEAKER SYSTEM

L/R Sensitivity:
87 dB from 500 Hz to 2 kHz

Center Sensitivity:
92 dB from 500 Hz to 2 kHz

Surround Sensitivity:
87 dB from 500 Hz to 2 kHz

This graph shows the quasi-anechoic (employing close-miking of all woofers) frequency response of the V-5.1 L/R (purple trace), V-5.2-C center channel (green trace), V-5 surround (red trace), and V-SW10 subwoofer (blue trace). All passive loudspeakers were measured with grilles at a distance of 1 meter with a 2.83-volt input and scaled for display purposes.

The V-5.1's listening-window response (a five-point average of axial and +/-15-degree horizontal and vertical responses) measures +2.15/-2.61 decibels from 200 hertz to 10 kilohertz. The -3-dB point is at 61 Hz,

and the -6-dB point is at 56 Hz. Impedance reaches a minimum of 4.65 ohms at 210 Hz and a phase angle of -54.56 degrees at 112 Hz.

The V-5.2-C's listening-window response measures +5.19/-2.62 dB from 200 Hz to 10 kHz. An average of axial and +/-15-degree

horizontal responses measures +5.50/-2.94 dB from 200 Hz to 10 kHz. The -3-dB point is at 54 Hz, and the -6-dB point is at 44 Hz. Impedance reaches a minimum of 4.53 ohms at 216 Hz and a phase angle of -65.05 degrees at 110 Hz.

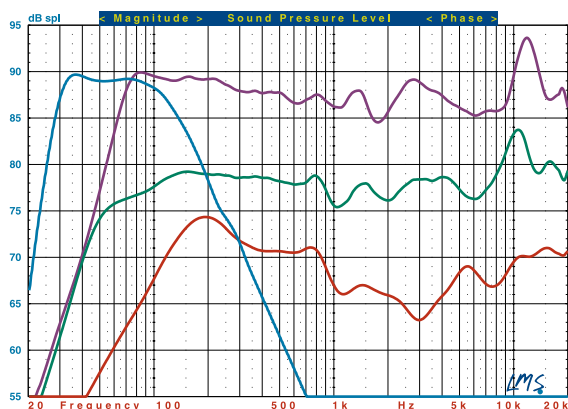
The V-S's three-face averaged response in dipole mode measures +3.41/-8.05 dB from 200 Hz to 10 kHz. The -3-dB point is at 102 Hz, and the -6-dB point is at 84 Hz. Impedance reaches a minimum of 4.60 ohms at 216 Hz and a phase angle of -66.46 degrees at 112 Hz.

The V-SW10's close-miked response, normalized to the level at 80 Hz, indicates that the lower -3-dB point is at 29 Hz and the -6-dB point is at 27 Hz. The upper -3-dB point is at 126 Hz with the Low-Pass Filter control set to maximum.—MJP

Visit our Website for a detailed explanation of our testing regimen, plus a list of our reference gear.

on the web

ENERGY VERITAS V-5.1 SPEAKER SYSTEM



In the Club, at the Proms
Jeff Beck: *Performing This Week... Live at Ronnie Scott's* is a rare



music demo on Blu-ray with DTS-HD Master Audio. The guitar had plenty of bite without getting overtly strident.

These speakers served Beck's varied voicings well. The drummer wasn't as lucky: The front speakers seemed to favor cymbals over drums to the point where I felt the presentation had become



SPECS V-SW10 SUBWOOFER

ENCLOSURE TYPE: Vented **WOOFER (SIZE IN INCHES, TYPE):** 10, fiberglass woven composite cone **RATED POWER (WATTS):** 300 RMS; 1,200 peak **CONNECTIONS:** Line-level LFE in, speaker-level stereo in **CROSSOVER BYPASS:** LFE AVAILABLE **FINISHES:** Piano Black **DIMENSIONS (W X H X D, INCHES):** 14.57 x 16.65 x 15.55 **WEIGHT (POUNDS):** 40 **PRICE:** \$1,000

unbalanced, so I notched up the sub's volume control from 33 percent, my default setting, to just under 50 percent. This let me hear more of the drums and also gave the bass guitar a much-needed lift. The surrounds—maintaining consistency with the movie demos—didn't distract attention from the stage.

Lang Lang is a frequent visitor to my listening room. I've seen him live twice, and he did not disappoint. He performed Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 3* live at Royal Albert Hall, during the BBC Proms, with Yuri Temirkanov and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. This 2002 Telarc CD came through with more of an edge to the strings than I'm accustomed to hearing from Telarc recordings. It was also airier, which helped. Even after the bass hike in the preceding selection, the piano still felt light on the left-hand side of the keyboard. However, even without any change in settings, the piano sound gained solidity and depth in a set of Scriabin Etudes on the same disc—recorded without orchestra at a different venue.

Monk's Dream by the Thelonious Monk Quartet was the first album the great pianist and composer made for Columbia Records in the early 1960s. The CD is typical of early stereo recordings, with drums at left, piano at right, and plenty of room left in the center for the tenor sax and bass. When I switched between the Dolby Pro Logic II Music mode and stereo, it revealed surprisingly little difference. Whether the center speaker or just the left and right speakers alone delivered the tenor sax, it retained the same light, supple tone that's characteristic of Charlie Rouse. In fact, the basic stereo pair did so well, the instrument sounded as though the center speaker were running (except when I moved off axis). On a few selections, the

sax got a little edgy. The speakers revealed some subtle distortion embedded in the recording—as if, perhaps, the sax had gotten too close to the microphone. These speakers aren't forgiving, but they can make fine distinctions and had resolution to spare.

This latest iteration of the Energy Veritas retains the uncompromising personality of the line. Performance is content-dependent: Although their finishes are lustrous and lovely, these speakers make no attempt to varnish the truth. If I were going to live with them, I'd mate them with electronics voiced for warmth. Indeed, I can easily imagine the monitors running off one of the numerous cheap tube amps that have been enlivening the two-channel domain, perhaps for near-field desktop use. If I saw these speakers first thing every morning when I crawl from my bed to my desk, the day would always get off to a good start. ☞

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