

BEST OF THE BEST: 2008's TOP 50 PRODUCTS

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PRODUCT
OF THE YEAR **2008**

KEF Reference 207/2



KEF Reference 207/2 loudspeaker. Right: Revel Ultima Salon2 loudspeaker

KEF Reference 207/2

(\$20,000/pair; reviewed by John Atkinson, Vol.31 No.2, February 2008 WWW)

Revel Ultima Salon2

(\$22,000/pair; reviewed by Larry Greenhill, Vol.31 No.6, June 2008 WWW)

Two state-of-the-art speaker systems share the honors this year. While the impressive KEF Reference 207/2 received the most first-place votes, the revamped Revel Ultima Salon won the most votes overall. The race was just too close to call; both of these outstanding performers are entirely devoted to the music and, therefore, deserve the highest recognition.

Back in 1999, the original Revel Ultima Salon impressed our reviewers with its exotic, curvaceous cabinet and its extraordinary sound, enough to warrant its status as “Joint Loudspeaker of the Year.” Though radically different in design, its successor does not disappoint. Built into a much slimmer and more room-friendly column, the Salon2 is 2.3" taller, 3" narrower, 7" shallower, and 72 lbs lighter than its predecessor, but manages to reach higher levels

of musicality. Larry Greenhill was astonished by the speaker’s combination of powerful bass extension, timbral accuracy, and superb dy-

namics. He raved: “The Revel Ultima Salon2 is the best-performing, most natural-sounding full-range loudspeaker I have auditioned in my listening room since I started writing for *Stereophile* in 1984.” John Atkinson couldn’t let Larry have all the fun; our editor was so swept away that he requested a second sample for a Follow-Up. Wait till you hear what he thinks.

JA did have the pleasure of living with the mighty KEF Reference 207/2, albeit for too short a time. Like the Revel, our other joint winner is the product of ardent dedication to engineering and design. Outwardly similar to the original 207, with a handsome, graceful cabinet that belies its considerable bulk, the 207/2 features a completely redesigned coaxial two-way Uni-Q drive-unit that eliminates the need for a separate supertweeter. The result was awesome dynamics, coupled with a treble response so natural and free from grain that JA couldn’t contain his excitement. I saw it—the dude positively *glowed*. His comments echoed LG’s sentiments: “The 207/2 is overall the best-sounding full-range speaker I have used in my current listening room. To all intents and purposes, it is without flaw.”

Wow.

