

Speaker Placement Gets More Flexible

BY JOSEPH PALENCHAR

ATLANTA — The placement of in-room and custom-installed speakers continues to get more flexible with the launch here of new wireless subs, thin in-room speakers, an expanded assortment of outdoor landscape speakers and more in-wall speakers designed to be nearly invisible.

In landscape speakers, startup AmbiSonic Systems will launch its first models, Induction Dynamics will show off its first rock speakers, and SpeakerCraft will flaunt its latest series of rocks. For indoor use, Definitive Technology will expand its selection of Disappearing In-Wall speakers and display its thinnest in-room speaker ever with a depth of 1.5 inches for placement near ever-thinner flat-panel displays.

Likewise, offsite at the Omni Hotel, Polk Audio will display a prototype of its thinnest passive five-channel sound bar ever at 1.5 inches, and it will display the first custom speakers also meant to be barely visible, given that they protrude only 7mm from the wall or ceiling, have a slim bezel of about 1/8

inch, and come with micro-perf grilles. (See www.twice.com.)

Sub placement flexibility is the intent of the first wireless subs from high-end makers KEF and Martin Logan (see p. xx) and a suitcase-shaped sub from Wisdom Audio (see story, top right).

For its part, Bowers & Wilkins will make its broadest custom-speaker launch ever. (See www.twice.com.)

Here are what these and other companies plan to show.

AmbiSonic Systems: The Lake Havasu City, Ariz., company will demonstrate outdoor subs and satellite speakers in the SoniScape Systems series. The satellites look like aimable outdoor lighting fixtures that can be mounted in the ground or on trees. The subs use an underground enclosure that vents above ground through a tube topped by a copper canopy.

The company offers an 8-ohm series for replacing existing installs and a separate series that adapts the 70-volt system design popularized in commercial speakers to deliver audio up to 1,000 feet. The 70-volt satellite speakers incorporate a to-

roidal transformer to convert 70 volts into current at the point of sound reproduction to deliver “sparkling, clean resolution,” said executive Ben Gosvig.

Definitive Technology: The brand will go to the CEDIA Expo with the first of its thinnest in-room speakers to date and with the first LCR speakers in its Disappearing In-Wall speaker series.

The super-thin in-room speaker is the two-way Mythos XTR-50, a 1.5-inch-deep LCR. It ships to dealers in the first quarter at a suggested \$799. Two more will ship later in 2010.

The Disappearing In-Wall series, launched in 2008, is promoted as offering near-invisibility because of the speakers’ small diameters, hidden flanges, and low-profile micro-perf grilles. Each new LCR features pivoting 1-inch tweeter between two woofers. They ship in January 2010

at a suggested \$399 and \$499 each.

Induction Dynamics: The company will launch its on-wall ID speaker series to sonically match its IW in-wall speakers and ID in-room speakers.

The brand will also introduce its RockSolid line of outdoor speakers, whose molded polyurethane shells lack visible grille holes because their transducers couple directly to the shells, vibrating the shells to deliver omnidirectional sound. Three colors are available. Additional details were unavailable.

Paradigm Electronics: The third generation of the company’s flagship Reference Signature series speakers is the highest output generation. The in-room speakers boost output by 3dB over their predecessors, thanks in part to extensively modified bass/midrange and bass drivers in the two-, three- and 3.5-way speakers, the company said.

A dozen Reference speakers, positioned as value and performance leaders in reference models, are priced up to \$3,499 each for a three-way six-driver floorstander with cherry finish.

Phase Technology: The company



AmbiSonic Systems' SoniScape series

comes to the show with improvements to its two passive three-channel sound bar speakers. They are the two-way Teatro V-3.0 and the three-way Teatro PC-3.0. Both

add proprietary Spatial Field Expander circuitry and availability of custom-ordered grilles to match the width of different widescreen TVs.

Proficient Audio: For fourth-quarter delivery, Proficient will introduce the C655 in-ceiling LCR cinema speaker at a suggested \$175 and the \$250-suggested C625 in-ceiling distributed-audio speaker, also due in the fourth quarter. They feature silk-dome tweeter and graphite woofer to replace their predecessors’ polypropylene woofer.

PSB: The company replaced its Image series of in-room speakers, adopting some of the industrial-design and technology elements of the company’s step-up Imagine and Synchrony series.

SpeakerCraft: The company plans first-quarter shipments of three Vital in-room powered subs and shipments this month of new rock speakers.

The Vital subs deliver improved output, efficiency, and aesthetics compared to the BassX models they replace. The Vitals are the \$465-suggested V8, \$589 V10 and \$839 V12, all with front-facing driver and dual front-facing ports so that they can be placed in cabinets or wall units.

SpeakerCraft’s Ruckus is a new line of five outdoor rock speakers that sport upgraded sonics and cosmetics over their Rox-series predecessors. Each is available in granite and sandstone finishes. Because they feature a lacquer coating on top of a reinforced, poly-resin enclosure of the same color, the outer coating can be chipped, but the chip will reveal the same-color material underneath to maintain the model’s rock-like appearance, the company said. The lineup consists of three coaxial models from \$225 to \$450 each, a \$350 single-speaker stereo and a \$999 sub.

Thiel: The company is taking the surface-mount design of its indoor PowerPoint 1.2 on-wall/on-ceiling speakers to a home’s exterior with the DewPoint speakers. They shipped Sept. 1 at a suggested \$1,450 each. □

See www.twice.com for more details on many of these introductions.



SpeakerCraft's Ruckus rock speakers can be scratched or chipped without changing the color of their finishes.

Wisdom Readies Behind-Screen Planar Speakers

BY JOSEPH PALENCHAR

ATLANTA — Wisdom Audio plans to launch two Sage-series line-source planar-magnetic in-wall speakers whose 50-inch heights were designed for installation behind increasingly popular 2.35:1 aspect-ratio projection screens.

A suitcase-shaped subwoofer is also new.

“There was demand for models incorporating our line-source technology that could physically fit behind the increasingly popular 2.35:1 aspect

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Big Bass

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less than 3 percent. “Conventionally designed loudspeaker systems would require bass drivers of at least triple the size in an enclosure at least twice as large to produce comparable performance,” the company said.

Atlantic will ship its first H-PAS product, the H-PAS-1 floorstanding speaker, in the fourth quarter. Solus/Clements will deliver a tower and bookshelf model early next year.

The completely passive patent-pending design requires no active electronics and no special drivers, and it’s compatible with conventional amplifiers and A/V receivers, Atlantic said. H-PAS combines elements of bass-reflex, inverse-horn and transmission-line cabinet design, the company explained. The designs “are cascaded one to another to pressurize and accelerate low frequencies,” and the audio signal is passed through a passive resonance/harmonic distortion line filter, Atlantic continued.

“This new system,” Atlantic president Peter Tribeman contended, “is the first ever to break the famous iron law of loudspeaker design.” That law, he said, states that among three major goals of speaker design — deep bass extension, a compact enclosure and good efficiency — speaker designers must choose two at the expense of the third.

H-PAS “has applications in almost every corner of the loudspeaker business,” he added. □