



Klipsch

RP-150M £450

This striking US brand is known for its horn driver technology, but how does it fare in this company?

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Klipsch RP-150M

ORIGIN
USA

TYPE
2-way standmount
loudspeaker

WEIGHT
6.7kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
195 x 370 x 271mm

FEATURES
● 1x 25mm horn-
loaded titanium
LTS tweeter
● 1x 133mm
Cerametallic
mid/bass driver
● Quoted sensitivity:
93dB/1W/1m (8ohm)

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Every *Group Test* should have an intriguing oddball and, for this one, it's the Klipsch RP-150M with its horn-loaded tweeter, copper-coloured mid/bass driver, slim and mildly tapered cabinet, built-in plinth and horn-profiled, rear-firing, reflex port. Within the framework for a two-way standmount, this is about as daringly different as it gets.

Let's begin with the horn technology, a long-standing Klipsch belief in the clear advantage to be had by exploiting its founder's bright idea. The notion of having a flared opening in a speaker cabinet is to project sound waves more accurately and efficiently towards the listening area with less colouration and unfettered dynamic impact. For the tweeter, the newly designed Hybrid Tractrix horn features a circular throat around a titanium diaphragm tweeter that fires into a square 90 x 90mm mouth.

Klipsch says this horn design delivers a wider sweet spot with more precise placement of instruments and vocals. A matching Tractrix horn-shaped bass reflex port round the back makes claims for faster air transit and a more powerful low end with reduced port noise and distortion.

As for the drivers, the 25mm titanium dome tweeter is joined by a distinctive 133mm spun-copper

treated aluminium Cerametallic coned mid/bass driver, which is attached to a newly developed titanium voice coil former said to give more linear excursions for enhanced efficiency, lower distortion and extended low-frequency response.

Sound quality

If you crave the sonic equivalent of throwing back a triple espresso with a cayenne and turmeric shot chaser, the RP-150M is happy to oblige. Although Bruce Johnston and the rest of the boys emerge still sounding more or less dreamy at the other end of the RP-150M's raw scrutiny, it's hard to avoid the impression it would rather be ripping into Rage Against The Machine and giving it a good shaking.

It quickly becomes clear that, whatever I play, the way the RP-150M takes care of business, while not especially refined, is open, airy, potentially detailed and an indecent amount of fun. Yet it's far from aggressively shouty. Eels' *The Deconstruction* gains in immediacy and clarity with leading edges suddenly crisper than a chromium-plated Granny Smith. Slightly stripped-back tonal colours rob *I Can Let Go Now* of some warmth and emotional tug, but Thirty Seconds To Mars sounds as if it's been slipped a handful of uppers.

HISTORY LESSON

In 1946 Paul Wilbur Klipsch designed and hand built what was later to be called the Klipschorn speaker with the goal of bringing live music into his living room. During his service at the Southwest Proving Grounds in Hope, Arkansas, he refined his corner horn speaker design. The story goes that visitors to his officer's quarters were amazed by the lifelike sound quality and encouraged him to start his own manufacturing business. He duly patented his design, registered the name Klipsch & Associates, and began making each loudspeaker with his own two hands until he hired his first employee in 1948. The Klipschorn is the only speaker in the world that has been in continuous production for over 70 years.

Prepare to
have an
indecent
amount of fun



Everything the Klipsch does seems to be a scorching mainline route to the musical core. This isn't a soft, fluffy, cloud-cushioned ride – the music is vital, active and engrossing. It will tangle you up, there's no escape. You have been warned ●

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OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

EASE OF DRIVE

★★★★★

OVERALL

★★★★★

LIKE: Take-no-prisoners clarity and dynamic expression that's huge fun

DISLIKE: Silky warmth? Forget it

WE SAY: Something of an acquired taste, but addictive if you 'get it'