



DEFINITIVE TECHNOLOGY SUPERCUBE REFERENCE

"Some Companies Still Have A Love For Audio"

"If you want to add the ultimate horsepower to your home theater system, purchase a SuperCube Reference Subwoofer and buckle up."



I hate titles that give away the review—typically they leave little to be revealed. However, that won't be the case here. My experience with the SuperCube Reference subwoofer is an ongoing one in which I learn something new every day.

I have had the pleasure of reviewing audio components for the better part of the past decade, and the misfortune of watching one company after another "sworn to high fidelity" steadily trade performance for price or market share.

Business is business for sure, but that doesn't mean it isn't shameful at times. There are a few companies, however, that refuse to shame mother fidelity—and Definitive Technology is one of those few.

"finally a single woofer that delivers the performance of two."

Several months ago, I reviewed over twenty subwoofers in the first ever Subwoofer Shakedown Special for DVD ETC. Like a night at the fights, there were a few surprises in the lightweight division—though everyone was waiting for the heavyweight match

"This subwoofer is as perfect as they come."

up. That match up came down to a three-way battle between an Infinity Intermezzo 1.2s, a Velodyne HGS-18 THX Ultra II, and a Definitive Technology SuperCube I. While each subwoofer held its own under extreme testing, the Velodyne would eventually emerge the champion. This was never designed as a face-off, but it quickly became one. Like thugs roaming an alley, there was little option.

"I am amazed that such strength on the low end can come from such a tiny enclosure—stunning."

As in any fight, there were highlights to talk about from each contender, but it came down to which could deliver the hammering knock-out punch. In the end, the massive 18-inch Velodyne did so with authority.

Soon after the reviews were printed I received a phone call from Sandy Gross, President and Founder of Definitive Technology. I held the phone away from my ear slightly, thinking he was going to start ranting (not an uncommon occurrence in my profession). Instead it was an excited and youthful voice, "So you liked it, eh?" Sandy did not attempt to argue the validity

▲ The Definitive Technology SuperCube Reference features a 14-inch woofer powered by a 1,800-watt Class D amplifier.

of my findings, nor did he demand a rematch, he simply offered me the first crack at the SuperCube Reference subwoofer.

Unique Features

What is perhaps most unique to the SuperCube Reference subwoofer is the driver selection. Here, three 14-inch woofers are employed. A single active (powered) piston is pressure coupled to two passive (non-powered) radiators. The active woofer is powered by an astounding 1,800-watt Class D amplifier. (This is four or five times the power of standard subwoofers.) The footprint is very compact at roughly 16.5-inches square and under 17-inches tall.

"My entire home felt as though it was sliding off the foundation."

On the back, you can expect to find standard features common with many subs, including low-level (RCA-type) and high-level (line-level) ins and outs, LFE Direct in, variable high-pass and low-pass filters, gain and even a 0 to 180-degree variable phase adjustment. The speaker-level inputs are high quality gold plated binding posts—a nice touch, though I doubt

that anyone would ever use them on a woofer of this magnitude.

Another unique feature on the Definitive Technology SuperCube Reference, yet common to most other Def Tech speakers, is the way the grille cloth covers the entire exterior of the enclosure. This "sock-style" grille is clean and eliminates cumbersome removable grilles that may be prone to rattle. The top and bottom plates are MDF wood and are offered in a piano gloss black or cherry finish.

Installation/Setup/Ease of Use

Probably the most difficult aspect of adding a SuperCube Reference to your home theater system will be unpacking it. At 95 pounds, you'll think this small-frame wonder is made of gold.

The compact build and complete feature set of the SuperCube Reference make it an easy choice for integration into high-end installations or entry-level theaters, though I believe there should be some discretion with regards to common-area living (apartments, condos, etc.). More on that note later.

"I pushed this woofer harder than I've ever tested."

I paired the SuperCube Reference up with my Infinity Kappa speaker ensemble. The large Kappas feature a 12-inch passive woofer, 6.5-inch midrange and tweeter. But my tastes require more definition in the mid-bass region and I demand a rock-solid foundation—bass.

My current reference system uses the Velodyne HGS-18THX Ultra II as the LFE and the Infinity Intermezzo 1.2s (12-inch) as the subwoofer. The Intermezzo is outstanding for mid-bass and the Velodyne pours the foundation on the low frequencies. (I've never owned a subwoofer that could deliver both mechanics.)

"The compact build and complete feature set of the SuperCube Reference make it an easy choice for integration into high-end installation or entry-level theaters."

For the purpose of this review, I installed the Def Tech SuperCube Reference by itself, making the connection with 25-foot Monster 400 interconnect. I placed the woofer along the front 1/3 of the left wall, roughly eight inches from the side wall. I adjusted the gain to the halfway point, with the phase set to zero and the crossover up to 90Hz. I typically bring the sub up to overlap the bottom end of my main left/right

because I like the reinforcement on the low end of the mid-bass.

Final Take

The Definitive Technology SuperCube Reference boasts a frequency response of 11 to 200Hz. Quite frankly, at first I found this measurement listed on their spec sheet to be unbelievable. I went so far as to badger the folks at Def Tech about their claim before I embarked on this review and I listened... (This is the part where I eat crow.)

"the SuperCube Reference literally rattled the filament loose in every light bulb in my home and set my neighbors' house alarm off."

Whereas we typically do not measure equipment here at DVD ETC., I put the SuperCube through the paces using a USAC bass test disc with frequency sweeps from 5 to 200Hz. My home has sub-floors that can relate to loss or gain in SPL (output) in any speaker. Away from the corners, the SuperCube Reference generated an audible output (perhaps psychological) beginning at 15 cycles (Hz) consistently. Moving the unit into the corner produced astounding results, with audible output at 12Hz.

"This sub offers excellent transition between bass frequencies creating a smooth and musical demeanor."

I pushed this woofer harder than I've ever tested. I cannot describe the performance to be anything short of evil. My entire home felt as though it was sliding off the foundation. Repeating the 60Hz track at half gain on the SuperCube Reference literally rattled the filament loose in every light bulb in my home and set my neighbors' house alarm off. I spent the better part of an afternoon replacing bulbs and apologizing to my neighbors for the disturbance—where was the SuperCube Reference when I was in college? The sheer destructive force of the SuperCube Reference still has me chuckling inside—my wife couldn't wait for this review to end.

So brute force and destruction are cool, but what about usability for the SuperCube Reference? I put my toys away and began pacing the sub with movie cuts as well as DVD-Audio tracks.

I would describe the top end output (between 60 to 90Hz) to be fluid and smooth, but not snappy like my Intermezzo 1.2s. This took some getting used to

"Movies are a whole new experience with the SuperCube Reference."

and, after a week, I became accustomed to the effortless transition the SuperCube Reference made from 20 to 90Hz. This sub offers excellent transition between bass frequencies creating a smooth and musical demeanor.

The bottom end of the SuperCube Reference is absolutely rigid. I am amazed that such strength on the low end can come from such a tiny enclosure—stunning.

Movies are a whole new experience with the SuperCube Reference. I find myself cringing and jumping out of my seat, anticipating the explosions and effects. Indeed, people who resort to buying "rump shakers" to install in their seats have obviously never experienced home theater with the SuperCube Reference subwoofer from Definitive Technology.

"The bottom end of the SuperCube Reference is absolutely rigid."

This subwoofer is as perfect as they come. However, it misses scoring a 100 because nothing is perfect. I struggled to find something that I did not like about this speaker. In the end it came down to the power cord. The power cord of the SuperCube is fixed (non-removable). I would like to see it removable so that I can install my fancy Richard Gray's Power Company High Tension Wires on it. And maybe Def Tech could add a cool blue LED to the front to let me know it's on.

"astounding results, with audible output at 12Hz."

If you want to add the ultimate horsepower to your home theater system, purchase a SuperCube Reference Subwoofer and buckle up—finally a single woofer that delivers the performance of two. ●

—Clint Walker



Definitive Technology SuperCube Reference

Finish: Piano Gloss Black, Golden Cherry

Type: 14-inch Active, dual 14-inch Radiators

Power: 1,800-watt Class D

Crossover: Variable 40–150Hz

Phase: 0 to 180 Variable

Frequency Response: 11–200Hz

Weight: 95 lbs.

Dimensions: 16.9" H x 16.7" W x 16.7" D

MSRP: \$1,699

Definitive Technology

www.definitivetech.com

(410) 363-7148

From DVD ETC. November 2003 issue.