



**AV MAX**  
★ RECOMMENDED ★

# VIII Degrees Of Separation

The makers call it the 'little giant of sound' and rightly so, for the Quadral Aurum Orkan VIII effectively combines bass reflex properties and the pressure-chamber technology to give you a richer, clean bass. Read on.

The audio industry has a lot to offer when it comes to speaker design, be it in the bookshelf or the floorstanding department. The experimentation finds its balance as the price of the speakers go up; and you'll see how a very complicated design element has been implemented in each of them. That's the real joy of reviewing hi-end speakers, and we had a chance to really have our fun with Quadral's Aurum Orkan VIII towers.

## OUT OF THE BOX

These are the largest of Quadral's hi-end Aurum models and they sure look it. Made from pure wood and spreading wider and wider towards the base, the cabinet of these guys looks graceful and masculine, all at the same time. You can see the workmanship put into these guys, especially, when you disarm the grilles. The front baffle houses the ribbon tweeter, the mid-driver and the two bass drivers, all blessed with the same metallic sheen that gives this speaker that hi-end touch. The elephant in the living room is the chamber that houses the bass drivers. So the drivers aren't exactly on the front baffle but a little behind it; imprisoned behind bass-string thick bands that make it look all the more intriguing.

## TECHNOLOGY

The compression chamber is a combination of bass reflex and

pressure-chamber technology that helps to render a deeper, cleaner and richer bass. The drivers used are the Altima mid-bass ones that comprise a composite of aluminum, titanium and magnesium in one membrane. It makes the cone very stiff and light, which is the goal of any driver manufacturer. So the chamber's job is to make both sides of the membrane—in which the two mid-bass drivers sit—meet the same air resistance, therefore increasing the sound pressure. The towers can go as deep as 28Hz, thanks to this technology. But when a speaker can go that deep, it also needs an upper end that can match it.

Here Quadral's gone for the Oak Choco Ribbon Tweeter that has an especially large membrane surface that minimises stroke and improves dynamics. The tweeter works on the magnetostatic principle which is where a very heat-resistant Kapton film with etched voice coil moves in a very strong magnetic field. The ribbon is pre-stressed by hand, which minimises sound colourations. Since the ribbon is so quick, Quadral decided to let this give crossover from the mids at 2200Hz, so as to let the upper-mids also get their fair share of ribbon quickness. On the upper end, the tweeter can belt out a 65kHz top, which is plenty enough to let you enjoy those SACDs.

The entire cabinet has been handcrafted, with horizontal and vertical struts used for reducing

## Specifications

- DESIGN** 3-way
- DRIVERS** 1xOak Choco Ribbon Tweeter, 1x6.6" ALTIMA Mid-range, 2x6.6" ALTIMA Woofer
- FREQUENCY RESPONSE** 28Hz–65kHz
- NOMINAL IMPEDANCE** 4–8Ω
- POWER HANDLING** 160–250W
- SENSITIVITY** 89dB
- WEIGHT** 31kg
- DIMENSIONS**



## TRIED & TESTED

**"BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE" BEE HIVES**



This album is from the genre of shoe-gazing with tracks bordering on electronic, ambient and rock. There's a fair share of analogue recording and electronic, and these guys can balance this sort of hybrid environment well. It's a great way to see your speaker's ability to separate elements in its soundstage.

CD



natural resonance. The front baffle is 38mm thick and is narrow, because it helps reduce baffle reflections.

### PERFORMANCE

We headed over to New Delhi for this review as these Quadral's were set up in a neat demo room there. We had them hooked up to the Cambridge Audio 840E pre-amplifier and a 840W power, so that was giving these power hungry beasts enough to munch on.

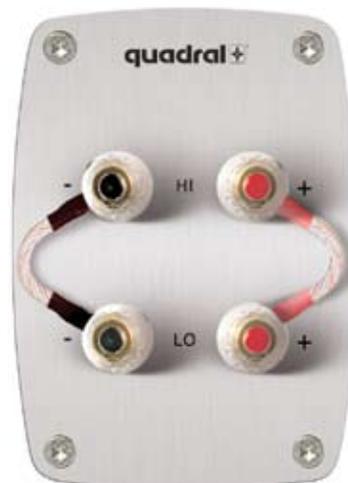
When we spun Bjork's performance at the Royal Opera House in London of "Generous Palmstroke", the undertones we got of the harp we simply had not heard in the past. The harp was all that was there in the track; so these speakers gave it such immense depth even in the upper octaves that Bjork's voice had a solid foundation to sit on. And since the harp is a resonant instrument, it's very easy for the speakers to let these tones hang in places, but that was not the case here. It was quick and precise, delivering to us the entire lower range with such ease that the speakers quite easily disappeared from the environment. Even with Deru's "Flux Of Humor", we could tell that the bass was going to those really deep parts that most towers claim to be going to but don't really. It made this electronic track sound warm even in the lower mid-range.

With a more upbeat track like Broken Social Scene's "Da Da Da Da" from their album 'Bee Hives', we realised that the bass was a bit too heavy for the highs to penetrate. That's not to say that the highs weren't getting through at all and everything sounded muddy, no. It

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just needed a little getting used to. Also, when we asked the owner, he told us that this pair hadn't had more than 20 hours of playtime so they still needed to be properly broken-in. The additional break in activity would essentially help warm up the bass chamber a little more and give it more control and let the ribbons also get warmed up and give them an edge.

In the track "Transit" by Finnesse, the male vocals which were deep and the music which was almost exclusively in the mids and highs, the balance we got from the



current condition of the speakers was marvelous. The speakers had a seamless crossover transition with the entire soundstage built like a sandwich. As you drive the speakers more, the soundstage gets thicker and thicker, but never gets distorted. You can quite easily listen to these guys for long periods at higher volumes without worrying about your eardrums getting swollen. At the same time, at lower volumes, the sound does tend to sacrifice its highs and let the lows take the stage.

### CONCLUSION

There was no doubt that we liked these speakers, even with the dipping higher end. With a fair amount of listening hours, these speakers will get up to a level that most people will like, because at the moment they still would need you to get used to them. The music you play through them will be given its fair share of balanced bass accentuation which you may or may not like, but we know you'll love if electronic music is your cup of tea. In our case, the Aurum Orkan's were like finding an old friend who's put on a lot of weight but still hasn't changed from the inside.

Karan Gour

Quadral Aurum Orkan VIII	
PRICE	₹ 3,10,858 (+ Taxes)
WARRANTY	3 Years
CATEGORY	Floorstanding Spkrs
AESTHETICS	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★★
AUDIO	★★★★☆
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
VFM	★★★★☆
<b>WHAT SAY AV?</b>	
When it comes to a masterful rendition of a lower range, you can't get better than Quadral's Aurum Orkan VIII. It is the highest in their Aurum speaker range and it sure as hell proves it by sheer power handling alone. The highs, even with the ribbon tweeter, do tend to get pushed back due to this powerful lower end, but over time, they will find their balance. The speakers look majestic and surely keeps that hi-end theme alive.	
<b>OVERALL</b>	★★★★★
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