



Focal Theva N°2

At a point where many rivals are reducing the number of different ranges they produce and having each cover a wider price point, Focal looks to be taking the exact opposite approach. Having released the Vestia models, it has now added the Theva range, which sits below and overlaps quite considerably. Some of this is down to the role that Focal sees each range performing. The Theva lineup includes more in the way of dedicated AV offerings, but the Theva N°2 – is very much aimed at stereo buyers. This is because, unique to the series,

the N°2 uses 130mm drivers rather than the burlier 165mm design employed everywhere else. This means the resulting cabinet is slimmer and more compact when compared with the beefier Theva N°3. You could realistically consider using the Theva N°2 in spaces where the larger Focal floorstanders would almost certainly be a bit too much of a good thing.

There are three 130mm drivers in each enclosure. As in the Vestia range, these are all 'Slatefiber' cones of the type first seen in the outgoing Chora models. These contain no actual slate of any kind and are in fact heavily

compressed carbon fibre strands. While they are all the same size, the three drivers are not mechanically identical. Two are used as bass drivers, taking the same feed from the crossover. The third is a dedicated midrange, operating between 280Hz and 2.9kHz where it crosses over to the tweeter. It can be identified by a different dust cap to the bass drivers.

The tweeter is an inverted dome of aluminium and magnesium that uses suspension made of a material called Poron, which is not too dissimilar to memory foam. Different to the design used in the Vestia models, the shape is closer in configuration to the beryllium type used in the more expensive ranges and sits in a shallow waveguide. The four drivers give a quoted frequency response of 53Hz-28kHz and that lower figure feels like a very safe estimate. In the great Focal tradition, the Theva N°2 is single-wiring only with a pair of reasonably stout three-way posts at the base of the speaker.

The cabinet that contains the drivers is materially simpler than the one that was used in the Vestias, but it is

The tweeter has a sweetness and fluency that is very similar to the Vestia

nonetheless solid and well made. A large rear port helps with low-end extension, but the bore is sufficiently large that the perceivable flow from it is fairly low and while I'd counsel against jamming the Theva N°2 in a corner, it proves to be fairly relaxed about placement during testing. The cabinet is designed to be used in combination with a plinth that imparts a rear lean to the cabinet to help with time alignment. This has the side effect of also reducing the visual mass of the speaker at the same time. The plinth is supplied with both spikes and rounded feet, which is a nice touch.

The overall design is visually simpler than the Vestia models. It does without the side cheeks and centre section in different finishes and details like the sharper corners all point to a lower price. Importantly, though, it is a good-looking option. The rearward tilt and slender cabinet result in a speaker with elegant proportions that will sit comfortably in most spaces. This is helped by some well-judged finishes. A full-length grille is also supplied with colour varying depending on finish.

Sound quality

The most immediately noticeable aspect of the performance is that the quoted roll-off figure of 53Hz is a considerable understatement. In this test environment I comfortably break 40Hz before any meaningful roll-off occurs, which lends the Theva N°2 a scale and impact that you'd need a seriously good standmount to get anywhere near. Combined with its generally room-friendly behaviour, this is a very tractable way of ensuring a room-filling sound.

Beyond simple scale, it combines this impact with all the speed and agility that I have come to associate with the company's standmount output. The very Led Zeppelin-esque *Poor I Need by Gov't Mule* is a seriously enjoyable listen here. The muscular percussion is delivered with the same speed and agility I so enjoyed in the Vestia N°1 and it ensures that nothing I play sounds in any way sluggish. This ability to handle high-tempo material hasn't been bought at the expense of delicacy at less ballistic tempos, either. The way that it deftly handles the plucked bass in *Interlude 3* on Sarah Jarosz's beautiful *Blue Heron Suite* is flowing and unforced in presentation, but superbly agile in how it stops and starts.

The other noteworthy area is that midrange driver. It achieves the single most important goal of any such driver in that you cannot determine



HOW IT COMPARES

Q Acoustics' Concept 50 (HFC 491) is a larger and pricier speaker and has a larger, more inert cabinet to sound bigger and less overt in the soundstage. It's also better looking. It doesn't have things all its own way, however. The more conventional plinth arrangement of the Focal means it has a smaller footprint and will work in spaces that the Q Acoustics will struggle in. More intangibly, the Theva N°2 is fun in a way that the Concept 50 can sometimes struggle to match. Integration between the drivers and its impressive rhythmic cohesion grant it a sense of musical joy that the notoriously more impressive Q Acoustics doesn't always replicate. A demo session between the two speakers could go either way.



when it begins and ends its frequency response, but this and, you have a formidable speaker that doesn't do much wrong. Coming so soon after the Vestia, the most noteworthy aspect of the Theva N°2 is just how close the more affordable model gets and that, divested of its multi-channel duties, it might arguably be more fun. If you are looking for a speaker that can deliver a big, confident and engaging sound in spaces that some rivals might struggle in, congratulations, you've found a worthy contender. **ES**

Conclusion

Sort this, and you have a formidable speaker that doesn't do much wrong. Coming so soon after the Vestia, the most noteworthy aspect of the Theva N°2 is just how close the more affordable model gets and that, divested of its multi-channel duties, it might arguably be more fun. If you are looking for a speaker that can deliver a big, confident and engaging sound in spaces that some rivals might struggle in, congratulations, you've found a worthy contender. **ES**

DETAILS

PRODUCT

Focal Theva N°2

PRICE

£1,500

ORIGIN

France

WEIGHT

17kg

DIMENSIONS

(WxHxD)

191 x 931 x 352mm

FEATURES

- 25mm aluminium and magnesium tweeter
- 130mm slatefiber midrange driver
- 2x 130mm slatefiber bass drivers
- Claimed sensitivity: 90dB/2.83V/1m (8ohm)

DISTRIBUTOR

Focal

WEBSITE

focal.com

REVIEWED

HFC505

