

# Slim towers

For sheer style, few compare with this elegant Swiss floorstander. **David Vivian** wonders if it sounds as good as its look

## DETAILS

### PRODUCT

Piega TMicro 60 AMT

### ORIGIN

Switzerland

### TYPE

Three-way floorstanding loudspeaker

### WEIGHT

16kg

### DIMENSIONS

(WxHxD)  
140 x 1,060 x 170mm

### FEATURES

- Air Motion Transformer ribbon tweeter
- 3x 120mm MDS mid/bass drivers
- Quoted sensitivity: 90dB 1W/1m (4ohm)

### DISTRIBUTOR

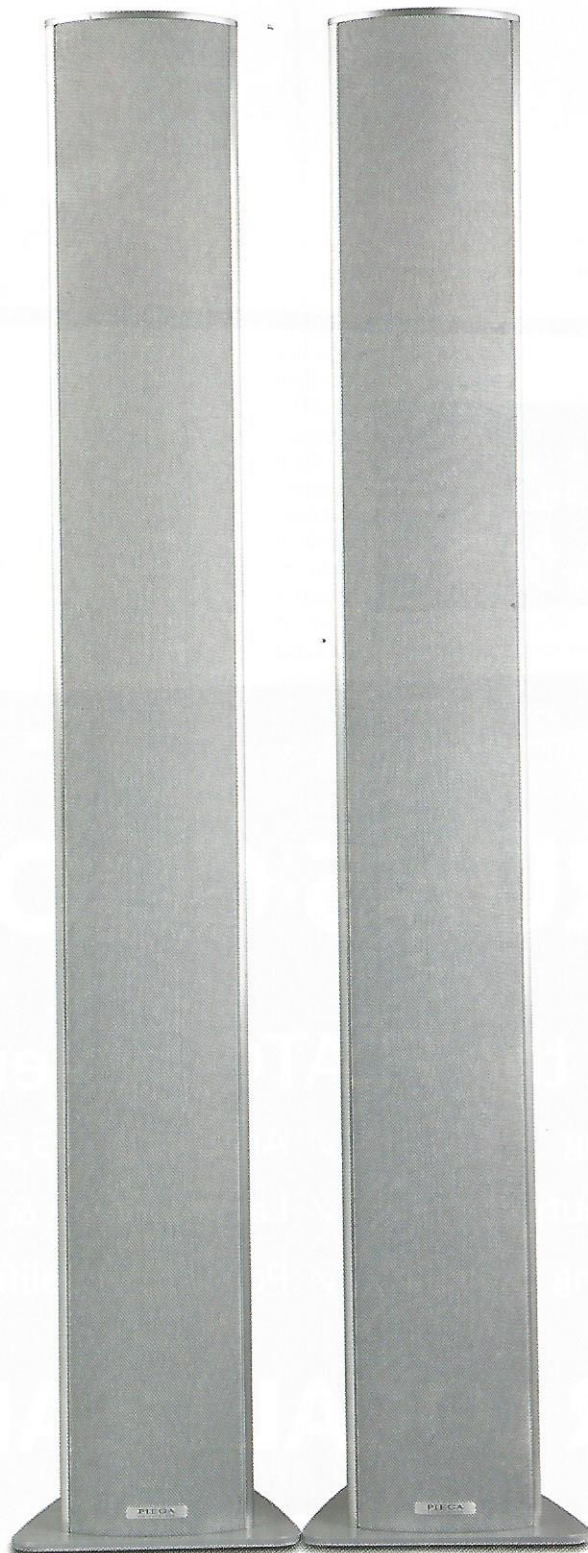
Piega Loudspeakers (UK) Ltd

### TELEPHONE

01344 893932

### WEBSITE

piega.co.uk



**W**hen it comes to hi-fi floorstanding speakers, bulky cabinets with six flat sides have traditionally outnumbered willowy catwalk models. But that may not be the case for very much longer as the market's appetite for skinny designs that subtly enhance rather than self-consciously dominate their surroundings continues to grow. It certainly seems as if the once cherished idea that dynamic driver speakers inevitably have boxy enclosures is under attack.

Not only is Swiss speaker manufacturer Piega an avid proponent of the style-without-compromise offensive, a number of its up-market model lines give MDF and wood veneers the heave ho, too. Take a good look at its newly updated TMicro 60 AMT. It is, quite simply, gorgeous – a gleaming brushed aluminium column with the kind of impossibly sleek proportions celebrity architects often invoke in their dreamier moments to illustrate a futuristic, cloud-scraping city skyline. The height-to-width aspect ratio is extreme, even by narrow baffle

**It's impressive the way things stay controlled as the volume rises**

design standards, the TMicro 60 AMT measuring just 140mm wide, and it's barely any deeper. Yet, at 1,060mm tall, it casts a slim shadow over my resident large listening room DALI Rubicon 6 floorstander (HFC 399). But whereas the twin rear-ported Rubicon needs to be kept well clear of boundaries if the bass isn't to become boomy and overpowering, the Piega's enclosure has a single front-firing port so that it can be placed much closer to walls without unduly augmenting and bloating the lower frequencies.

Piega has plenty of form with metal cabinets. Back in 2007, I reviewed a *Beautiful System* that featured its TC 10X standmount model, noting that it was hard to appreciate the true aesthetic and tactile beauty of the cool-to-the-touch aluminium enclosure without cradling it out of its carton. Piega designer Hannes Wettstein reckoned this was how a hi-fi speaker should be: a feast for all the senses, not just the ears.

It's true of the TMicro 60 AMT, only with vastly more vertiginous real estate. Unchanged, though, is Piega's contention that its implementation of the shining alloy (also available with



a black anodised or white lacquer finish) ensures “absolute consistency in resisting resonance while ensuring fine frequency linearity”.

The other feather in the Swiss operation’s cap is its long experience and expertise with folded diaphragm tweeters, both full-blown ribbons and, in this case, the less expensive Air Motion Transformer type realised as its AMT-1 design. It consists of an extremely light, 24 x 36mm folded diaphragm and a powerful magnetic drive that’s made from high-purity neodymium. AMTs typically confer many of the benefits of a pure ribbon (that’s: speed, crisp transients, detail resolution, low distortion and openness), but with production costs closer to that of a dome tweeter.

As the slim column obviously needs to be able to move some air at lower frequencies, it has no fewer than three 120mm long-throw MDS-coned mid/bass drivers to complete the three-way system configuration. Just single, good-quality binding posts, though, so no bi-wiring option offered. They’re mounted low, near the speaker’s base plate, keeping the overall look neat and tidy.

## Sound quality

I’m not quite sure where we are with the deep pile carpet versus hard flooring décor debate right now, but Piega clearly believes that any home stylish enough to host the TMicro 60

should have the latter. Thus parked, the rather dainty footprint provided by the baseplate and its four rubber pads ensures the 16kg floorstander stays stable and perpendicular. Squidgy carpets are a different matter, adding a worrying amount of wobble factor which will require an after-market remedy in the shape of a solid platform for each speaker to sit on or, indeed, the Townshend Audio Seismic Podiums I use (*HFC 426*), to which the Piega’s baseplate mates securely, the amount of controlled wobble being entirely down to the Podium’s acoustic decoupling regimes. Townshend DCT Isolda speaker cable and F1 interconnects make the other links between a Yamaha CD-N301 CD network streamer and an Arcam FJM A29 integrated amp (*HFC 420*).

The TMicro 60 AMT isn’t very sensitive – subjectively the claimed 90dB seems a little wishful to say the least – but, kicking off with an hour or so of Jazz FM to warm things up, it’s clear that smooth and refined are comfortably within its compass. In fact, I could imagine it gracing the minimalist foyer of a West Coast radio station, treating waiting visitors to a live feed of, say, Lionel Richie with just enough detail, warmth and texture to encourage a polite foot tap here and there, but also an over arching sense of poise and decorum unlikely to see it dancing on the table, let alone up there on the ceiling.

**The baseplate is ideal for hard floors, but those with carpets will need to invest in a platform**

All right, I’ll cut to the chase. This is an unerringly nice-sounding speaker, and I do mean nice. It has a tonal naturalness that’s easy to get along with and a very even balance top to bottom that serves most genres of music well, but especially any material with massed strings or, as I just hinted, that archetypally smooth, laid back, full-fat West Coast sound. Eagles fans will love the TMicro 60 AMT. Also impressive is the way things stay composed and controlled as the volume rises. The bass has weight and extension, the soundstage appropriate scale and imaging is solid and well focused. The Arcam amp is an effortlessly muscular performer with great stereo and these strengths are well conveyed.

## It’s clear that smooth and refined are comfortably within its compass

But, perhaps surprisingly given the AMT tweeter, it isn’t the airiest or most open of speakers. Even with a robust injection of Arcam watts (other brands are tried), it has a tendency to sound a little opaque and bottled up. If your idea of musical communication is speed, grip, agility and loads of dynamic expression, the TMicro 60 AMT will definitely sound a little dull and off the pace and nothing I try – even slotting a Chord Hugo (*HFC 386*) and ATC P1 (*HFC 397*) power amp into the system – seems to make it truly come to life.

## Conclusion

This sublimely elegant column almost pulls it off. As things stand, it has plenty of classy, easy-listening appeal and it looks terrific in just about any room. With a little more bite and brio, the combination of style and sound would be very hard to resist ●

## Hi-FiChoice

### OUR VERDICT

#### SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

#### VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★★

#### BUILD QUALITY

★★★★★

#### EASE OF DRIVE

★★★★★

#### OVERALL

★★★★★

**LIKE:** Looks superb; smooth and refined sound; build

**DISLIKE:** Wobbly when placed on carpet; sound lacks some excitement

**WESAY:** High on style, easy on the ear, needs more mojo

