

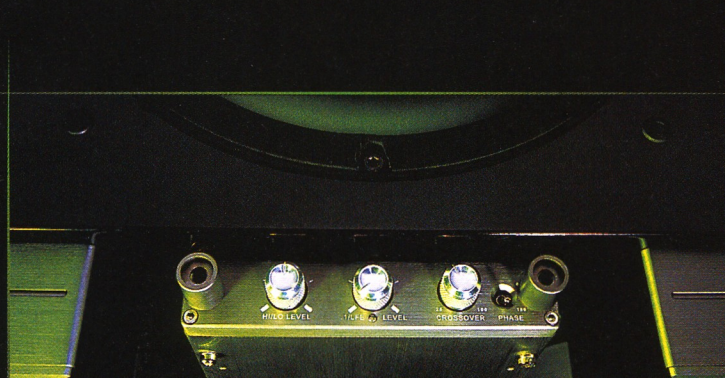
New-look REL ready to rumble

Subwoofer specialist REL is preparing to launch an all-new range of bass boxes. Hang on to that sofa...

FOR OVER A decade, REL has been one of the world's leading subwoofer manufacturers, so when we first heard that company founder Richard Lord was planning to sell out to an overseas buyer, we'll confess to being concerned. Surely, with his retirement, things would never be the same again?

As the dust has settled, it seems we've little cause for concern. REL has been bought by US-based audio distributor Sumiko, but the American company aims to retain both REL's cabinet factory in Sheffield and its Bridgend design HQ. It also plans substantial R&D investment and an overhauled model range – of which this, the R-Series, is the first to break cover.

A three-strong line-up, with models ranging from £595 to £995, the R-Series subwoofers use potent Class D amplifiers and forward-firing 25cm or 30cm forward-firing drive units in sturdy sealed-box enclosures. Build quality – which has long been a REL strength – looks impressive, while the cabinet finish is, if anything, even better than of old. Of course, the proof is in the listening – you'll have to wait until next issue for that – but it looks like there's life yet in Britain's best-loved bassmeisters.



REL SUBWOOFERS WERE always 'over-engineered': legendarily tough, they could resist even the most madcap bass tomfoolery. The new R-Series has a lot to live up to, but the effort poured into its finish suggests that Sumiko takes the REL legacy very seriously indeed. The piano-black gloss cabinet features no less than eight coats of hand-rubbed lacquer, while machined aluminium feet add both stability and style. Most thoughtfully, the subwoofer's set-up controls are mounted on the fascia, below the drive unit, allowing for easy access – yet an 8mm frosted glass 'security' plate means prying fingers won't be able to dabble with your preferred settings.

