

HIFI EXCLUSIVE FLOORSTANDING LOUDSPEAKER

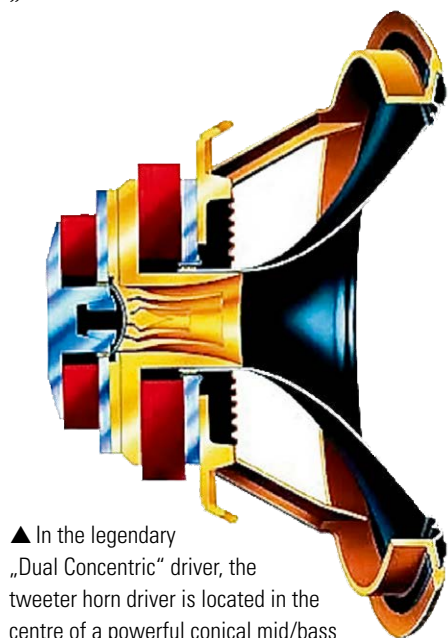
TOP CLASS COAXIAL



With its new Prestige GRF, created for its 90th anniversary, Scottish manufacturer Tannoy presents the most modern version of a living legend, combining enormous dynamics with a natural presentation of even the finest tones.

At 90 years old, Scottish company Tannoy is not only the world's oldest and most traditional loudspeaker manufacturer, but also possesses a technologically remarkable arrow in its quiver with the coaxial „Dual Concentric“ driver. Used for the first time in 1947, this driver, which consists of a powerful, long-throw cone paper cone with impregnated textile surround for the bass, and a centered mid-treble horn, is closer to the spatially temporal ideal of a point source than almost any other speaker driver system. The offset sound generation centers are synchronized by the pressure chamber behavior and the longer path of the mid-tweeter at a listening position of about three meters.

And the directional effect of the horn prevents the comb filter effect caused by the 'funnel' effect of the surrounding membrane, the „Pepperpot“ version used here getting its name from the well visible and precise perforation at the horn opening. This minimizes phase errors due to „atomization“.



▲ In the legendary „Dual Concentric“ driver, the tweeter horn driver is located in the centre of a powerful conical mid/bass driver and thus comes close to a point source of sound.



▲ Depending on the room and taste, this „control panel“ allows considerable sound adjustments.



▲ Even the type plate is something special on the top Tannoy models.

In addition, the „Pepperpot“ design also brings into play a particularly powerful (and expensive) Alnico magnet system, in contrast to the more conventional magnets used in the „Tulip Waveguide“ version of the Tannoy coax used in other series.

Memorable experience

I have unforgettable Tannoy memories: when the STEREO invited the company's huge Prestige Kingdom for test almost 20 years ago, the outdoor facilities of

Burg Veynau were not quite finished, meaning the two loudspeakers, each of which weighs over 210 kilograms gross, had to be loaded one by one from the 40-ton truck into an excavator for transport over the drawbridge to the castle gate, and thence into the building by means of an external pulley block to the listening room level.

With the GRF, which – thanks to the extremely stable high-density fiberboard/birch plywood/walnut cabinet – achieves a net weight of more than 62 kilograms, and a modern publishing building with its internal elevators, the whole thing is simpler today.

The GRF, which was originally planned in small numbers as the anniversary model GRF „J“ and then put into series production, appears to be a decidedly domesticated variant within the Prestige series. The housing appearance has also been modernized considerably, and while it may be an ideal match for glass/aluminum, it's still well-suited to many warmer living environments – such as ours.

In the minds of Tannoy fans circles, the 30cm coax driver is considered to be the most balanced, yet it goes deep enough, offers spectacular dynamics and embeds the lower tweeter horn in a „environment“ that is perhaps a bit less compromised than that in a 38cm driver. A second-order softness with low-temperature treated components ensures perfect coupling, and Tannoy attaches great importance to the possibility of bi-wiring and bi-amping, along with a fifth terminal to enable to speakers to be grounded to the system with which they are used.

What a speaker!

One can argue long and hard about details but, as soon as the GRF sends the first notes into the room, every discussion ends. The reaction is instant: „Oh my God!“

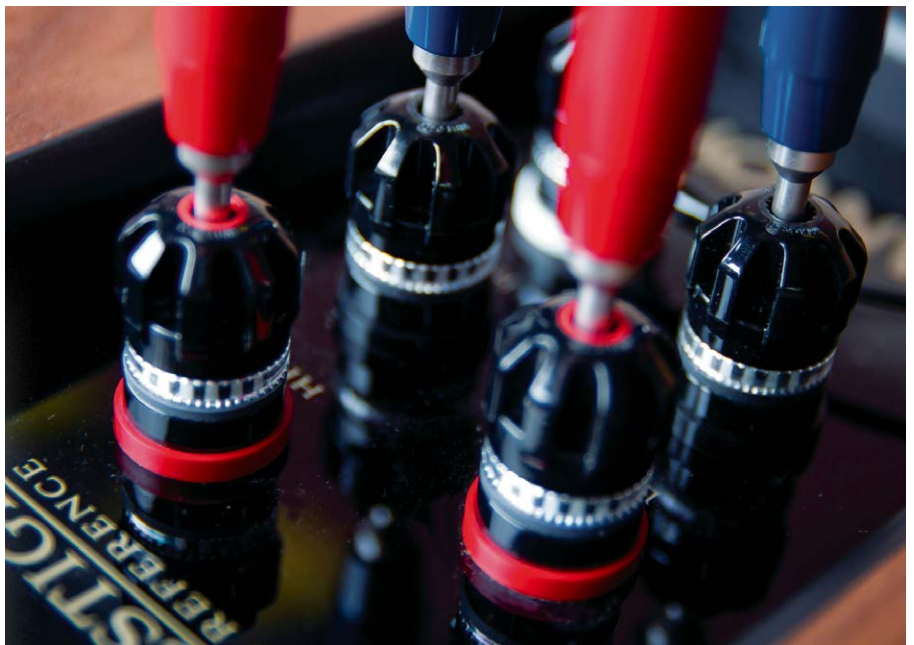
Eric Clapton, for instance, seems to have written his blues for these speakers,

to the extent that it would seem a shame if the musicians were unable to experience them for themselves.

Carolyn No, with Carolyn and Andreas Obieglo, is also overwhelming with „Still River Run Deep“ from our listening test CD VIII, especially as the low frequencies of the GRF really do make the room tremble and their temperament sweeps the listener away. Apart from the fact that I have to control my affinity for wood – and especially for the solid wood here, which matches my 50-year-old Wenge-parquet flooring, I have to say the Tannoy inspires me both visually and to the touch, not to mention sounding fantastic.

After several hundred hours of play-in time (!), it has a spectacular dynamic sovereignty that immediately leads to thought-provoking work, as one could easily imagine keeping something like this

The crossover is hard-wired. ▼



▲ The bi-wiring terminal is of high quality and even offers the possibility of earthing.



something like this on the aforementioned Wenge parquet, marriage and financial crises notwithstanding!

The Tannoy has a special status within the high 20,000 Euro class due to its optical uniqueness and the sum of its properties. In contrast to its even larger brothers and sisters, this GRF is also housed in a housing-friendly manner. A dream loudspeaker!

By the way, Tannoy recommends a free-space installation, some 40cm from the rear wall, to achieve a balanced frequency

response – not least due to the two large-caliber bass reflex ports to the rear of the speaker. Not only does the Tannoy reach down below 30Hz, it also does so quite noticeably, both acoustically and physically. At higher levels, the room shakes – on which subject, this isn't a speaker for small rooms, though the average German living room of just under 25 square meters should be enough for you to be able to enjoy its full sonic splendor. Any less space and we'd recommend you consider the smaller Stirling.

Emotion plus dynamics

What the Tannoy does in an inimitable way is to capture and support moods and atmosphere. Of an evening, with an open fire in the living room grate, one might

◀ Two bass reflex ports equalize the pressure and a special knob makes it easy to remove the cable.

not want to listen to any other transducer. The sound is pleasant, clear and yet warm, extremely confident and effortless. Even the tweeter of the latest design looks refined and golden, as a colleague called it: in the past, such tweeters went beyond „tinselly“, and simply sounded biting not here, helped by a front terminal panel allowing some tuning of the treble to the space and personal preferences.

We were slightly amused by the strange feel of the handle - or nipple - for assembling and dismantling the front cover: although we would remove the grille permanently for optical reasons and only install it if we had expected a more violent visit, we might hope for a less pragmatic, but definitely more attractive solutions. But that's just a minor point.

Back to the listening test, and rarely have we developed such curiosity about how the coax reproduces the music. Of course, this exceptional driver with an internal horn is not free from coloration, but it is quite far ahead in terms of timing and positioning, and its character such that you hardly notice it.

The musical presentation is extremely rich and spatial, with an effortless, casual superiority, creating a three-dimensional sound with an abundance of filigree details. These are maintained at low levels, and not lost even in widely dynamic music.

The Tannoy kicks into Michael Bubl 's „Feeling Good“, complete with big band, with almost 93 dB of bouncing liveliness, supported by an abyss-deep, rhythmically springy bass able to leave some of its rivals helpless, while the time errors of many other horn constructions, which disturb many sensitive listeners, are completely eliminated. It all fits together precisely and four-dimensionally.

This loudspeaker is certainly not a sensible choice, even though it is the softened version of the even more voluminous Tannoy Prestige models, and neither is it cheap, but it has its own peculiarities – in the form of pure emotion, fun and enjoyment! And that's what this is all about, isn't it?

I could live very, very well with this dream speaker.

Tom Frantzen

The accessory box in the same veneer contains no cigars, but the paperwork, feet and good cable links. ▶



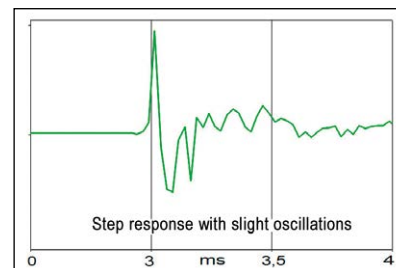
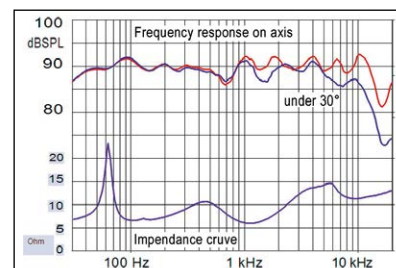
TANNOY GRF



at 21,000€,
Warranty: 6 years, Contact: Tannoy
www.tannoy.com

Tannoy's GRF is basically the living room version of the Prestige legend. With the 30cm coax driver and the latest generation of tweeter horn, this dream loudspeaker plays and grabs the listener's attention emotionally in an almost irresistible way. Great - listen!

MEASUREMENT RESULTS



DC resistance	6 Ohm
Minimum impedance	5.8 Ohm at 1100 Hz
Maximum impedance	23 Ohm at 62 Hz
Sound pressure level (2.83 V/m)	93 dB SPL
Power for 94 dB SPL	4 W
Lower cut-off frequency (-3dB SPL)	27 Hz
Distortion factor at 63/3k/10k Hz	0.3/0.1/0.1 %

LAB COMMENTS

The frequency response is generally balanced, even if it also shows typical horn ripples. The efficiency of the Tannoy is above average at just under 93 dB at 2.83 V. The impedance is good-natured; the step response shows small oscillations.

STEREO - TEST

SOUND QUALITY	97%
PRICE/PERFORMANCE	
★ ★ ★ ★ ☆	
EXCELLENT	