



## Field Report: Magico S3 Loudspeaker

Don't Look Back

Wayne Garcia

About a year ago, I was invited by Alon Wolf—founder, CEO, and pulse of Magico—to visit his 30,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art research, design, and manufacturing facility in Hayward, California. On that occasion I was lucky enough to be the first member of the audio press to audition Magico's flagship speaker, the \$750,000-per-pair, nearly 7'-tall, one-thousand-pounds-apiece (in weight, not British currency) M9.

Proximity has its advantages, and so it was that Wolf recently invited me to visit again, this time to listen to Magico's latest incarnation in its S Series, the S3.

As anyone familiar with Magico and Wolf well knows, the man is fanatical about all he approaches (I apply that word as a compliment). So, before even getting into his latest design, he proudly led me into the company's lunchroom to show off his recently arrived, direct-from-Italy, La Marzocco Leva espresso machine, a sexy beast of a thing if there ever was one. But I'd have to wait until after the audition to enjoy my shot.

The S3 is Magico's first design to incorporate technologies developed for the M9. The drivers, for example, are the fruits of three years of research. The 5" midrange cone "features an advanced material formed of a honeycomb aluminum core sandwiched with outer and inner layers of graphene and carbon fiber."

The newly developed 9" woofer benefits greatly from Finite Element Analysis (FEA), which "provides Magico engineers a single platform to assess acoustical, mechanical, electromagnetic, and thermal properties. This meticulous testing helps minimize distortions in the frequency and time domains." The cone is an enhanced version of Magico's Graphene Nano-Tec, "a hexagonal lattice of carbon that achieves 50 times the tensile strength of high-carbon steel... formed using a honeycomb aluminum core sandwiched by outer and inner layers of CF Graphene."

FEA also helped to optimize geometry for the S3's newly designed, 28mm, dia-

**The S3's new enclosure is a beauty to behold.**

mond-coated beryllium-diaphragm tweeter, allowing Magico "to increase the dome diameter from 26mm to 28mm, improving many aspects of performance and allowing even greater power handling and vanishingly low distortion."

The S3's new enclosure is a beauty to behold. Measuring 12" (17" with outrigger base) x 44" x 17" and weighing in at 222 pounds, it's fabricated from four separate extruded aluminum panels ranging in thickness from 1/2" to 2" and measures 30 percent quieter than the cabinet of the previous model.

These brief descriptions aren't intended to touch on all that's gone into the intense design work behind the S3. For a more thorough look, I encourage readers to visit Magico's website: [magicoaudio.com/s-series-s3](http://magicoaudio.com/s-series-s3).

When it came time to listen, Alon and I settled into the company's custom-built, no-holds-barred listening room where he played me a series of tracks, including the gorgeous *Hands*, a duet featuring bassist Dave Holland and flamenco guitarist Pepe Habichuela; Bach's Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue from pianist Christian Grovlen's *Inside Polyphony*; a jazz duet from *Impromptu, Live at Rhapsody*, with Tony Overwater (bass) and Bert van den Brink (piano), and "Autumn Leaves" from Rickie Lee Jones' live *Naked Songs*.

As was the case with the M9, it doesn't take long to hear what the S3 delivers. One



# Industry News

## Field Report: Magico S3 Loudspeaker

### Specs & Pricing

**Price:** \$45,500 (M-Cast finish), \$52,500 (M-Coat)

#### MAGICO

3170 Corporate Place  
Hayward, CA 94545  
(510) 649-9700  
magicoaudio.com

#### Associated Equipment

Antipodes Oladra server  
MSB DAC  
Pilium pre/amps  
VYDA and Stealth cables

immediately senses its purity, remarkable lack of smearing or mechanical noise, top-to-bottom coherence, and completeness of presentation. With your eyes closed, there is no audible evidence that the music is emanating from two relatively large enclosures; rather, it is simply *there*.

**There's an exceptional ease to the sound, a kind of poetic delicacy combined with power I rarely hear from any speaker.**

Moreover, there's an exceptional ease to the sound, a kind of poetic delicacy combined with power I rarely hear from any speaker—an amazing sense of detail and interplay between musicians (nicely illustrated by Alon's musical selections) that never sounds analytical or cold. Indeed, at least in this setup on this day, I would say the sound was

beautifully warm without being colored—just natural. As we were discussing this, Wolf suggested the word “sweet” to describe the S3's sound, and I wouldn't disagree.

After listening, over a perfect macchiato made by his new La Marzocco, Wolf proffered opinions on everything from the state of the audio press to his relentless drive for greater and greater technical innovation. But one thing is inarguable: In the nearly 20 years since founding Magico, “standing still” is something one could never say about Alon Wolf. **tas**

