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Alpine SWE-843E

Feb 01 2008 08:47 | Guest in Subwoofers

From the Type E series, this subwoofer also comes as a ten inch and twelve inch. All single four Ohm voice coil products. The tinsel wires are insulated with black silicone from where they exit the back of the gunmetal coloured 4mm binding post terminals on the pressed steel chassis to where they enter the base of the paper cone. The chassis is Titanium powder coated. The front of the driver's cone is a parabolic dished-in layer of Polypropylene that has a standard cone of 'drenched long-fibre pulp' or paper behind it that between them give the cone assembly some real pistonic rigidity.

The magnet is handsomely decaled around the edge and there is a clear wrap of plastic you remove once all the install work is done. For most installs this means it'll look smart in the dark inside the enclosure but these are attractive enough to mount butt-out as well as to use boxes with clear windows to show them off.

The top sports a rubbery surrounding frame cover that you peel back to reveal the mounting holes for the supplied fixings to go through. You must be careful when holding this back as it is easy to deform the real Butyl rubber top roll surround suspension to the cone itself which is soft, by catching it and stretching it. I did do this slightly and so it easy to do. No damage was done, nor any changes made to performance. The bottom spider is made of carbonised Nomex. The voice coil is dual layer and the magnet although big has been beefed up in 'shove' by it being a 'Rare Earth' type, containing Strontium.

- Frequency response: 34Hz to 1.5kHz
- Power Handling: 120w RMS (400w peak)
- Drenched long-fibre pulp, Polypropylene reinforced cone made in two pieces, conical and parabolic
- Pressed Steel chassis
- Large rubber top gasket and cover surround
- Gunmetal plated 4mm binding post terminals
- Voice Coil Diameter: 1.5 inch (38mm)
- Actual impedance at rest: 3.6 Ohms
- Mounting depth: 111mm
- 1,620 Gram magnet
- Efficiency: 87dB 1w/1M
- Xmax: 8mm one way, peak to peak mechanical excursion 38mm
- Fms: 34Hz
- Qes: 0.46
- Qms: 5.1
- Qts: 0.42
- Vas: 33.4 Litres

Review by Adam Rayner

A lot of bass buyers discount the eight inch woofer size as being piffing, yet in home hifi, having eight inch bass drivers in your main speaker cabinets labels you a potential hooligan. There used to be a famous eight inch car woofer made and sold by Denon that was awesome way back in the mid nineties. (If you recall these you are both hardcore and getting on a bit.) This woofer is from the Type-E series of Alpine woofers and was sent to me by choice of the astute marketers at Alpine. Yes, I could have tested either a twelve or a ten but they sent me an eight.

The reason why became clear as soon as I fired this small yet punchy driver into action. First I fitted it to a lovely plywood box I was given by Auto Audio (boxmeisters of the CNC machine) and screwed its frame snugly down into the squidgy top rubber gasket. This is a full surrounding cover over the top and bottom of the speaker's upper circumference and acts as practical gasket and neat styling item too. It has holes in the underside for the screws to go through and yet on the top you have to hold it back like a foreskin to achieve self-tapping penetration. This gives a neat visual transition to the Butyl rubber top roll suspension of the driver but was a little difficult to do as I'm no skilled installer. Anyone who isn't Dyspraxic should find this no problem.

I had fitted and screwed down some nice fat 12Ga speaker wires into the push terminals and noting how well the tinsel wires were silicon-tube protected I figured it could take the power it said, quoted at a relatively sane 120w RMS and 400w peak. I married it to the Alpine PDX-1.600 monoblock power density amplifier which I was testing alongside it and figured that as long as I was sensible, it would be a better match than hanging it on the stupendous PowerBass XA3000D amp I had been using for the big ones.

The subwoofer is delightfully pistonic in this size and as is often the case with small cones, it made bass that was as tight as a small cat's bum. (As I once heard a VERY famous 12V professional being called by a shop-stand maker.) Thing is, the magnet that looks so 'normal' is actually bloody huge as it is a Strontium job with a lot more Tesla, Gauss, BL shove, call it what you will it has more of what a magnet does in its voice coil gap and the serious Butyl and carbonised Nomex (sounds like something you make Terminators out of) bottom spider suspension allow for a huge mechanical travel or excursion, so the woofer can track even Bass CD's low tones. Rising and falling in pitch, intensity and speed like a limpet. Perfect for that under seat eight inch location in posh Mercedes minibuses and also for adding bass that can really work in tiny cars, this woofer is small but perfectly formed.

It does unload if you over power it but mostly by way of the suspension finding it's ultimate limits and it isn't meant for 'winders-dahn' use. Yet the pistonic rigidity of this woofer, combined with the magnetic flux to mass of cone ratio makes this a very musical and pleasant experience.

It isn't for nutters but if you get any exotic car owners on your case, this is one heck of a speaker for going in small spaces. The manual shows some lovely box designs. There's designs shown for all three sizes in sealed, ported and single and double vented bandpass, with options, where appropriate for 'loud', 'normal' or 'low/definition'. This woofer thus comes with ten design choices and a serious set of advice about enclosure wall thickness, calculating the woofer's own displacement and so on. It can live in a sealed box of between ten to nineteen litres (0.35 to 0.67 cu ft) and worked a treat in mine. All I would remind you is to use some poly-wadding. Lastly at £50 less a penny it really does represent terrific value for money.

- Sound Quality 9.0
- Build Quality 9.0
- Power Handling 7.0
- Efficiency 8.0
- Value For Money 9.0
- Overall rating 8.4**



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