

FIRST LISTEN: GOLDENEAR TECHNOLOGY'S ASTOUNDINGLY UPDATED TRITON TWO+ AND TRITON THREE+ TOWER SPEAKERS

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If the past few weeks have proven anything, it's that it's time to drop the tired old truism that sequels can never live up to the original. As exhibit one, I present to you the latest Star Wars movie—the seventh in the series thus far, and by most accounts the second best in the entire saga. Exhibit two? The latest tower speakers from GoldenEar Technology—sequels to the original Triton Two and Triton Three.

When GoldenEar head honcho Sandy Gross first told me about the newly updated Triton Two+ and Triton Three+ a few months back, I'll admit that I didn't react with quite the same enthusiasm normally reserved for new GoldenEar speakers. For one thing, a revamped version of an older design just isn't easy to get pumped up about (on paper, that is). For another thing,

since the introduction of the spectacular Triton One and Triton Five I've kinda looked at the Triton Two and Triton Three as the middle children of the company's lineup: outshined by extreme performance on one side and extreme value on the other end.

As tradition would have it, though, I stopped by GoldenEar Technology's suite at the Venetian last night for a pre-CES first listen to these freshly revamped speakers, and I'm going to have to eat all of the words in the preceding paragraph. Every one of them. Because not only do these new speakers shine—they do so in their own right, irrespective of their spot in the overall Triton tower lineup.

The goal here—and make no mistake about it, it was a lofty one—was to bring the Triton Two+ and Triton Three+ up to the performance standards set by the Triton One. It took no more than a few seconds of listening to "Trittico: III. Allegro marcato" by Dallas Wind Symphony starting with the Triton Three+ to realized that GoldenEar nailed that goal and then some.

I leaned over to my colleague Darryl Wilkinson about five notes in and whispered, "Shouldn't we be used to this by now? Shouldn't this have stopped being such a shock?" The most surprising (not really surprising) thing was the staggering depth of the musical image crafted by the speakers. I felt like I could just crawl around inside the space they created. Once I got over that, I was taken aback by just how wonderfully balanced the Triton Three+ is. The transition from deep bass to silky smooth mids to sparkling highs was completely uninterrupted. Trying to identify where one drive left off and the next picked up was an exercise in futility.

"How much?" I asked Sandy.

"\$2500 per pair," he said with a grin. That's half the cost of a pair of Triton Ones.

"Okay, so what's the catch?"

He told me if there's one downside to the Triton Three+, it's that it's really designed for small- to medium-sized rooms, and as such the bass struggles to reach satisfying volumes in larger rooms. Honestly, I'd hardly call that a downside given the Triton Three+'s lithe design. It isn't merely sonically dialed in for less-than-palatial spaces, its slimmer, sleeker, less imposing design also makes it a better aesthetic fit for your average living room or listening room.

After a few more songs (and a lot of whispering and smiling), we switched over to the new Triton Two+, and perhaps the most shocking thing about the switch between speakers is that there really wasn't any substantial difference in their sound. Sure, bass is a little richer and more impactful on the Two+ (and the same could be said for the leap from the \$3500/pair Two+ to the \$5000/pair Triton One), but it's a little startling just how sonically similar all of these speakers are. GoldenEar has crafted a line of tower speakers that attain the near-impossible goal of delivering pretty much the same voice across a wide range of prices.

When I asked Sandy what new driver advancements went into crafting these newly updated speakers, the look on his face told me immediately that I was asking the wrong question. Yes, there are new upper bass/mid drivers, new voice coils, etc., but the biggest changes to the designs came in the form of crossover and DSP technology borrowed from the Triton One. That, plus hours of testing and fine-tuning at GoldenEar's engineering facility and anechoic chamber.

So, yes, the hardware in the new Triton Two+ and Triton Three+ is a substantial upgrade over the originals, but that's just one tiny piece of the equation. It's really the hundreds of tiny little seemingly subtle tweaks to even the most minor aspects of the Triton Two+ and Three+'s designs that have resulted in what I'm already ready to proclaim as the most exciting new speakers at this year's CES. If I were a gambling man, I'd put good money on both speakers being hot sellers when they hit authorized GoldenEar dealers this February.

But as long as we're wagering here, I'm going to go ahead and guess that the Triton Three+ is going to be even more popular than the company expects. The fact that you can get your hands on this level of sonic perfection for a mere \$1249 is just a little dumbfounding.

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