

OA12ACTVSP

12-INCH ACTIVE BOX
SUBWOOFER

ADDITION



THE POWER OF ACTIVE DUTY.



As we all know Option Audio have a wide range of car audio products to suit varied budgets.

Their new active subwoofer however represents a blend of three such products which when combined solves a lot of problems all at the same time.

Once again the packaging was impressive; with no illusion as to what you were getting. Specifications and a full inventory are on the box. Enough to make me wonder if Option Audio are once again going to come up with a product that punches way above its weight...

THE SKINNY

The package includes a wiring kit, the subwoofer driver already installed into a ported enclosure which also houses the built-in digital amplifier already pre-wired to the subwoofer.

Unpacking shows the enclosure and a cardboard box labelled "Cable Inside". While the outside was nothing to write home about the contents definitely are! The wiring kit is more than ample for the amplifier and includes every possible ancillary item you're likely to need. Plus they are of a high standard and appearance. The list of everything that is included is on the outside of the box for easy reference. The enclosure is a good looking

piece of kit and is obviously built well – 15 mm thick and no over-runs with decent quality carpet.

While the enclosure is ported it doesn't actually look like it – the port moulds seamlessly with the curve of the right hand side of the subwoofer and would look magic with an LED or two hidden inside. As a side note, when it comes to all pre-fabricated enclosures it's always a good idea to re-tighten all external screws. I found a couple that had somewhat loosened (no biggie – happens in transit) and you may as well get all of the bass that you paid for. It's also a good idea to re-tighten them from time to time but only ever do it by hand.

The box is a mixture of black and silvery/grey so it will suit any colour scheme inside your vehicle. The overall size is about average for a 12-inch ported enclosure

which is surprising due to the elegantly built-in amplifier. That's right – the amp is flush mounted into the left hand side of the enclosure so that installation requires wiring to the enclosure itself only.

We were impressed by both the looks and specifications of the subwoofer; a high gloss gun metal grey poly-cone that handles 500 watts RMS that goes down to 34Hz; very handy indeed.

INSTALLATION MATTERS

The installation is quite easy, particularly if you have an older vehicle with an aftermarket head unit (RCAs). If this product is to supplement an OEM system it's probably wise to have it professionally installed so that a safe remote turn-on can be found. All of the wiring is good looking stuff; I particularly like the fuse holder which also includes rubber soft collars

“CALIFORNIA PROJECT” BY THE BEACH BOYS, WHICH IS A VERY HIGH QUALITY AUDIOPHILE RECORDING, PROVIDED A REALISTIC PRODUCTION, BASS DID NOT SOUND PLASTIC OR OVER THE TOP..”



for extra water resistance. Unlike speakers which generally fit where the manufacturer wants you to put them; placement of the subwoofer can be anywhere but some careful thought is crucial to good sound. We used a small hatch for this test and, as usual, furthest front and facing rear was best, a few different spots were tried but dead centre seemed to yield the flattest response. We zeroed the bass boost and set the crossover to 120Hz in order to set the gain (which is another article). Once done we set the LPF and then the bass boost; because I like a flat response the setting was minimal; however a fair amount of boost is available for those into that sort of thing.

TO THE LISTENING TESTS!

As per usual, the system was burned in for at least around 25 hours on a variety of music and white noise for differing amounts of time.

OPTION AUDIO OA12ACTVSP

TYPE: 12-inch enclosed subwoofer with built-in 500W nominal RMS amplifier and full wiring kit

POWER HANDLING: 500 watts RMS continuous, 1000 watts maximum

FREQUENCY RESPONSE: 34Hz - 250Hz

SENSITIVITY: 90dB

COST: \$449

CONTACT: Option Audio on 07 3805 5112

WEB: www.optionaudio.com

- All bass solutions in one package
- Great sound
- Wiring kit provides for everything

- Physically large
- No option to seal enclosure if desired

Then it was time to break out the trusty test music (all original CDs).

First up was the Sheffield Drive a very high quality test disc for car audio systems. Being an all-round compilation of well recorded music the OA12ACTVSP was tested here; and passed with some decent grades. The result wasn't mind boggling; but one would be hard pressed to get a better result from a mash-up sub/box/amp/wiring kit at a similar price.

Our Telarc copy of "California Project" by the Beach Boys, which is a very high quality 'audiophile' recording, provided a realistic production, bass did not sound plastic or over the top (although that does have something to do with the tuning). The bass was fast and furious with only a slight tinge of overhang.

Santana's "Put Your Lights On". This song is not really the best test for a subwoofer however it did give an indication on response for everyday type music. Again it wasn't over the top nor was it tiring to listen to. We remembered how the car sounded before

the OA12ACTVSP and it was nowhere near as good. In fact with the added bass a lot of the other frequencies were accentuated also.

Next, the Robert Miles "Children" release where the bass sounded great. This is where the OA12ACTVSP is in its element; providing strong thumping bass that never slows down half a beat halfway through the song. And also in its element was the Option Audio sub with moderately compressed MP3 - Beastie Boys "So What'cha Want". No lag with loads of presence but not overbearing. This could quickly be boosted with a tweak on the bass boost for Cruise Nights.

A couple of final points regarding the subwoofer in general. Always keep any leftover bits and pieces from your wiring kit - you never know when you may need to change vehicles! The OA12ACTVSP is a great first upgradeable step into car audio; don't forget they are modular - want more bass? Well, add more OA12ACTVSPs!

And lastly, and most importantly, re-tighten the screws every month or so to keep the system operating at optimum.

CONCLUSION

For the dough the OA12ACTVSP is right on the money at the recommended retail price of \$449. It would be extremely hard to find a composite system built of bits and pieces that would cover all installation types so comprehensively (vehicle, colour, style etc.) and give you a sound anywhere near this good.

Being an active subwoofer means the amplifier is already provided but its flush-mount-installed which lends style to the overall look and saves you money if you are not doing it yourself. And to flush mount an amp on its own would cost what this whole system does! A similar sound could possibly be achieved at a similar price point but when you factor in the overall finish, ease of installation and time saved the OA12ACTVSP represents great value. <<<



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