

Destination Audio

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Review: Credo EV 1202 Ref. Loudspeakers



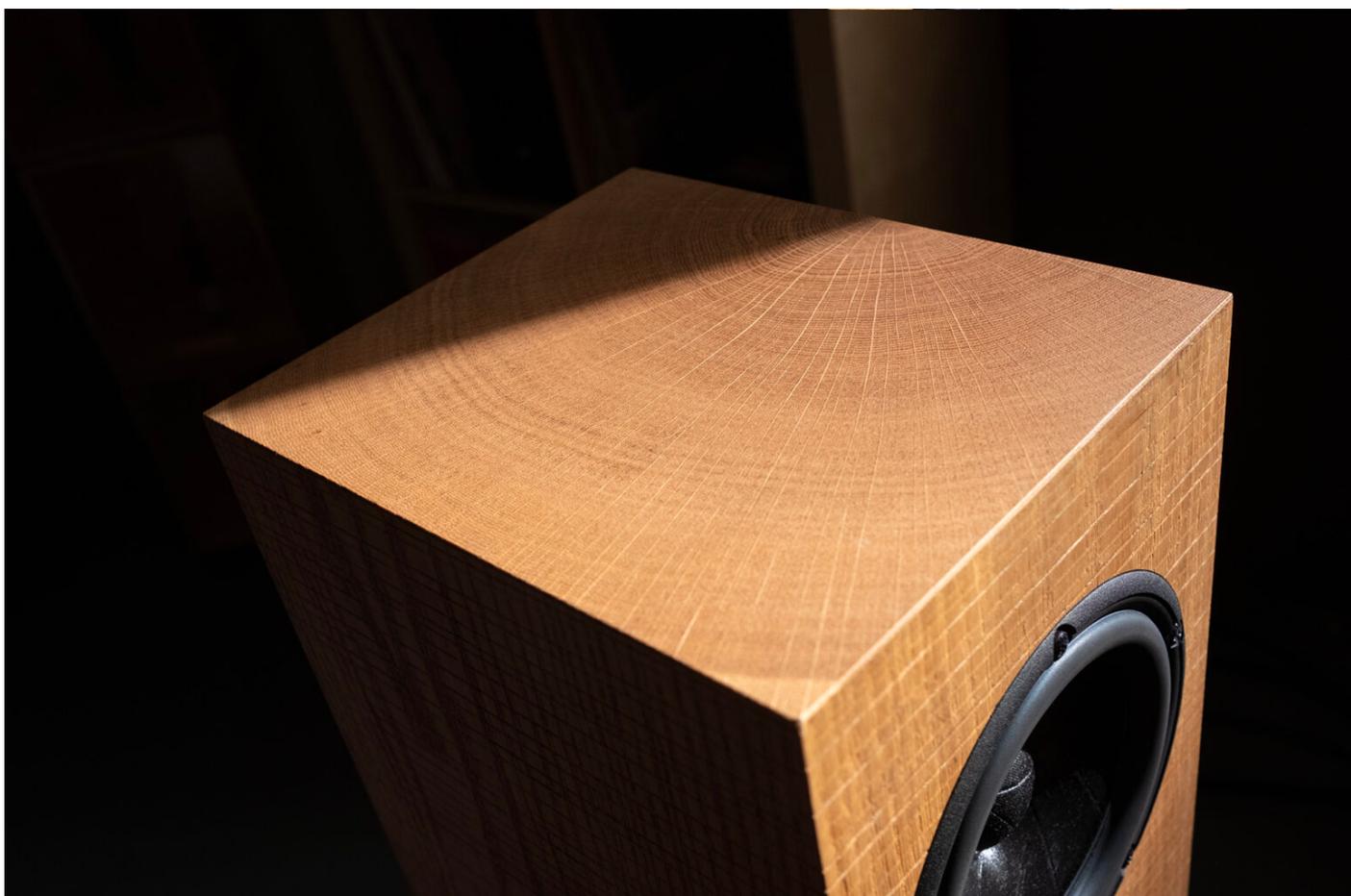
If you're looking for a sleek, slender amp-friendly tower speaker that serves whatever music suits your fancy, read on.

Every hifi system has character. As system builders, we get to choose where that character comes from and how much of it we want. Some people like the full technicolor light-show, others opt for a cooler more restrained kind of sound, with the majority of people living somewhere in between. If we choose to live with loudspeakers that have a lot of character of their own, that imprint their sound on all the music that goes through them, changes upstream become less significant seeing as the speaker's sound will stifle subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, changes.





I personally prefer a speaker that lets the entire system shine through, a speaker that retains its core strengths of reproduction but one that can be colored to taste with the associated equipment. This is where the Credo EV 1202 Ref. excel.



The EV 1202 Ref. loudspeakers don't sound how you'd expect them to sound based on looks alone.

Standing a mere 7" across and 8.6" deep, these 48" tall mini-monoliths feature a pair of 5.5" sliced paper cone mid-woofers over and under a 1" coated textile dome tweeter. The company claims full-range performance with a frequency response from 32Hz – 20kHz (+/- 3dB), a 86.6 dB efficiency (@ 2.83V @ 1m), with a nominal impedance that gets down to 2.1 Ohms @ 40 Hz (4 Ohm nominal impedance).



The Credo speakers sit on their own isolation bases that give the speakers a bit of room to sway if gently pushed. I'll let Credo's Michael Kraske explain why this is important:

Decoupling a speaker from the floor. The Credo Audio "isol...



The EV 1202 Ref. have a single port around back, sitting directly over a single pair of binding posts. The

review pair are wearing the optional Rough Cut finish which suits my tastes to a T but they also come in Gloss Black and other wood finishes. While the company recommends at least 50 Watts to drive 'em, I went off road with a bunch of amps ranging in from 25 Watts per side up to 150 Watts of solid state, tube, hybrid, and Ncore power. I will tell you up front that the Credo EV 1202 Ref. seem to enjoy different amplifiers about as much as I do, as they sounded at home with all of my favorite partners.



To be more specific, I spent listening time with the Credo paired with the lovely Linear Tube Audio Z40+ Integrated Amplifier ([review](#)), a combination I got to hear again at CAF 2022, the muscular PrimaLuna EVO 300 Hybrid Tube Integrated Amplifier ([review](#)), the sublime Soulnote A-2 Integrated Amplifier ([review](#)), the smooth Bel Canto e.One C6i DAC Integrated Amplifier ([review](#)), the sleek and sexy Mola Mola Kula Integrated Amplifier ([more info](#)), and the stunning, stunning (sounds so nice I had to say it twice), Riviera Labs APL10 Preamplifier & AFM25 Monoblock Amplifiers ([more info](#)).





If you're wondering about favorite mates, I enjoyed them all but spent the most time with the Riviera separates driving the Credo because the Riviera gear does things I've not heard other amplification do, except for the Riviera Levante Integrated Amplifier ([review](#)), and those things make we want to listen to music more (and even more). One important takeaway, however, is that every pairing produced a completely engaging musical event, from the \$3195 Bel Canto Integrated, to the \$50,300 Riviera stack.



Front ends included the EMM Labs DA2 V2 Reference Stereo DAC ([review](#)) / NS1 Streamer ([review](#)) combo, totaldac d1-tube DAC/Streamer ([review](#)), Bel Canto e.One Stream2 Network Bridge, and the internal streamer in the Mola Mola Kula Integrated Amplifier. All cabling was from AudioQuest, with the superlative Firebird Interconnects connecting source to amplification and pre to power in the case of Riviera Labs.

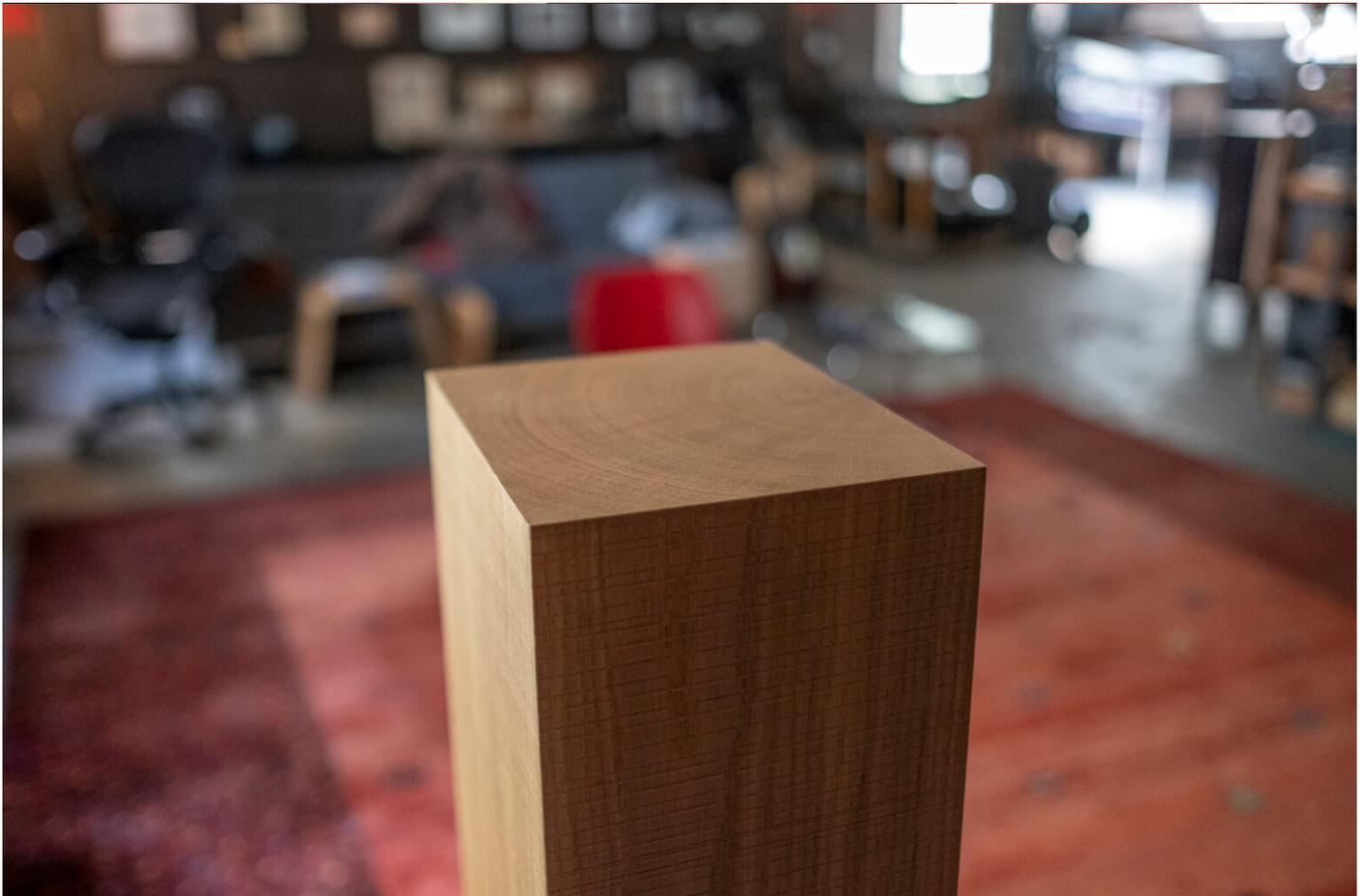




If your TM memory reaches back to September, you already know a lot about Credo from my [review](#) of their flagship Cinema LTM Speakers with EMM Labs gear and the associated [video interview](#) with Credo's Michael Kraske. A relevant takeaway point is the Credo speakers are very much science-based in their approach to speaker design and performance, with the ear being the final arbiter.



The Credo EV 1202 Ref. strengths include crystalline clarity that never gets edgy, a delicacy to detail, suppleness, a huge and very well defined sound image, and the ability to completely disappear leaving the physical presence of music in their place. If you want the Credo to tilt toward higher resolution and tightly controlled bass, the Mola Mola Kula gets you there and then some. Looking for a bit more richness and fatter sounding fun? The PrimaLuna EVO 300 works wonders with the 1202s as does the LTA Z40+ that leans a bit more towards detail and delicacy, and if you want the best of all worlds with a holographic sound image that's flat out spooky in its *thereness*, Riviera has your ticket.



While some may find the differences each amplification partner brings to the system sound, living with and listening to the Credo go through its musical paces over a few months of time allowed these changes to sing out clearly and distinctly, especially when listening into the night with nothing but music and its mind and mood altering forces in full sway.

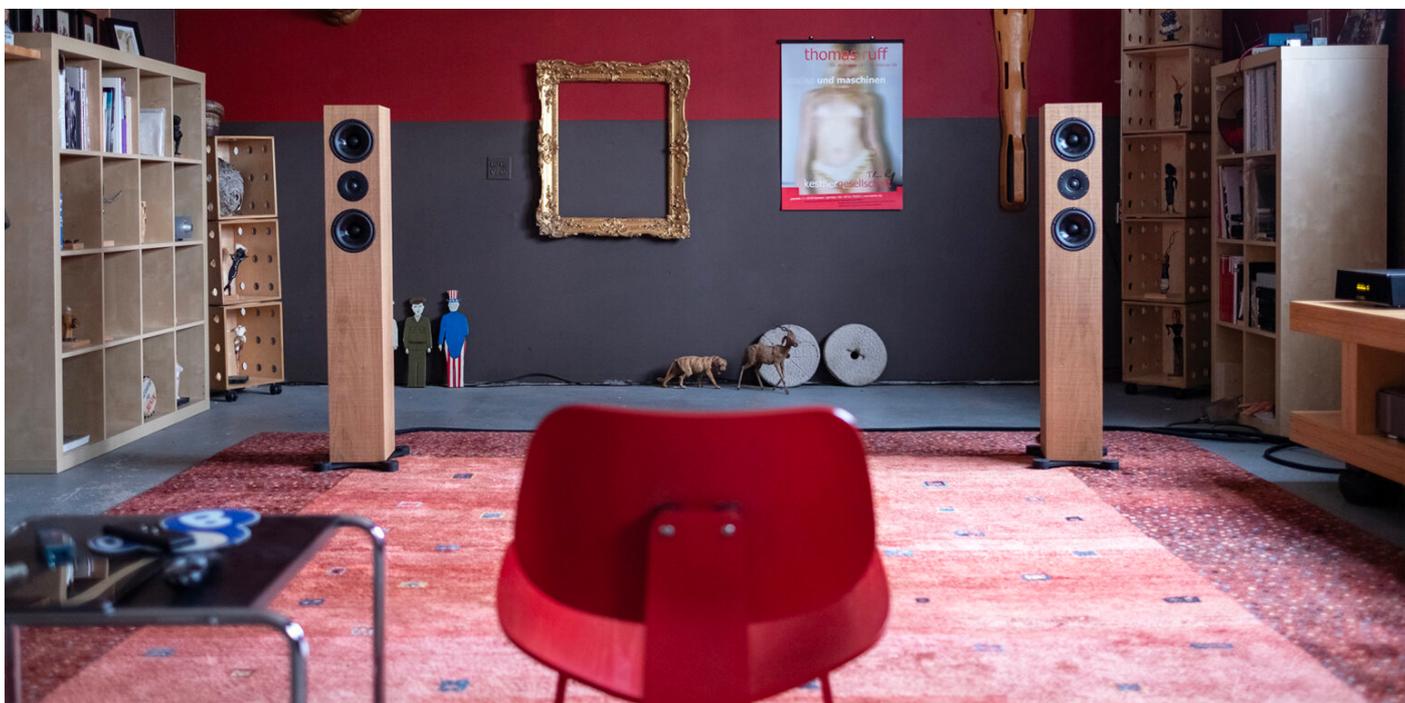
Naimi Bock's debut album *Giant Palm* from July of this year is a rich tapestry of sound woven around folk inspired roots featuring over 30 musicians. Born in Brazil and raised in South-East London, Bock spent years as part of post-punk band Goat Girl before deciding to stretch out and explore on her own. Listening through the EV 1202s, this wonderfully intricate music with all its varied voices rang out true, with a cohesive sound world ripe for exploration. Compared to a speaker like the Perlisten S7t, which I **reviewed** and enjoyed, the Credo offer a less analytical presentation, but one that is as rich and in no way lacking in detail and resolution.

British funksters Sault released a quintet of free digital albums on November 1, 2022 and *11*, their 7th studio album, ranks among my favorites. Within a few seconds of opener "Glory" the hooks come hard with a bass line fit enough to raise the dead and the 1202s delivered a healthy helping of its whomp and soul. Once again, the sound image exploded well beyond the speakers, filling the Barn with funk of epic proportions. The Credo are an exceptionally clean sounding speaker, as if music pours through them with ease untouched and uncolored. With the Riviera Labs separates in charge, *11* bloomed and blossomed into a dimensional realm of earthly delights sounding rich, powerful and oh-so-groovy. This kind of quality in reproduction easily obliterates the barrier to entry for a direct connection to the music in play, turning the Barn into night club, jungle, concert hall, and more with worries of the day vanishing in sound. Nice.

The Modigliani Quartet recently took on Schubert's *Complete String Quartets* resulting in a 6 hour+ deep dive. I spent a number of years during my NYC days listening to nothing but contemporary classical music and the string quartet was a welcome friend for this challenging music. With Schubert at the helm, we're talking the dearest of dear friends united in the splendid sound of strings. While I'm partial to the later works, who isn't?, I fell into the intricate sound world of the Modigliani Quartet as presented by the Credo speakers, as if wood, strings, bows and bodies were swaying but a few feet away. The 1202s are super smooth in the upper registers, avoiding any sense of unnatural screech or sharpness in attack while conveying its rich delicacy. I found myself preferring the more saturated sound of the LTA Z40+ or Riviera separates over the controlled preciseness of the Mola Mola for this music, but this is simply a matter of taste and opportunity—there are times, and this was one of them, when the rewards of this work is nearly too good to be true and I could easily live with any of these pairings.

Over the course of their two-month stay, I put the Credo through all kinds of musical workouts, guided by my meandering mood(s). I also went through a few hours of 'test tracks', songs and sounds I know better than well, having listened to them through countless systems over time. It's here, spending time with the familiar, that I get dialed into the character of the thing under review and it was here that I found the Credo EV 1202 Refs to be among the breed of loudspeaker that allow the recording, the music, and the associated gear to shine through. I called up an old friend and one of the most masterfully understated debuts to see how close I could get to John Prine, the *humanness* test, and I am happy to report that the Credo/Riviera Labs combo brought Prine's gentle wit and kindness within reach. Touchingly close.





The Credo EV 1202 Ref. proved up to the task of carrying me along to the farthest corners of music's long reach, filling the Barn and me with effortless beauty that conveyed the full voice of every song and album I sent their way. If you're looking for a sleek, slender amp-friendly tower speaker that serves whatever music suits your fancy, you may have found your perfect mate in the Credo EV 1202 Ref.

Credo EV 1202 Ref.

Price: \$16,995 in Piano Black, starts at \$19,995 in Custom Finishes with Custom Shop Internal Upgrades as reviewed

Company Website: [Credo Audio Switzerland](#)

US Importer Website: [Audioshield Audio Distribution](#)

Specifications

Tweeter: 1 x 1" Coated textile, neodymium magnet, symmetrical drive motor

Mid-Woofer: 2 x 5.5" sliced paper cone, large ferrite magnet symmetrical-drive

Tuning: Bass reflex (back)

Crossover: 2-way proprietary filter-design

Frequency response: 37 Hz – 20 kHz, +/- 3dB

Roll-off: 36 Hz -2dB, 33 Hz -10dB

Sensitivity: 86.6 dB @ 2.83V @ 1m

Linear impedance: nominal 4 Ohm, min. 2.1 Ohm @ 40 Hz; max. 10.4 Ohm @ 1.2 kHz

Recommended amplifier: 50 W RMS

Weight: 20.0 kg p.p. without packing

Size:(HxDxW): 123.4 cm x 22 cm x 18cm

Including the "isolation-base"

Hand-crafted by Credo Audio Switzerland

**DeVORE
FIDELITY**

*Endorsed by cats
on the internet*

