

MB Quart

Reference RVF 216

Text and Measurements
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The MB Quart brand of loudspeakers has long been highly regarded as one of the industry's reference brands in terms of quality, construction and great sound.

Since I have been fortunate enough to visit the manufacturing facility in the lovely rolling hills surrounding Obrigheim, Germany, I can personally vouch for the care and attention to detail that goes into the manufacturing of the company's products. The people at MB Quart are proud of what they build, and it certainly shows.

DESIGN

The MB Quart RVF 216s are a convertible style 6.5-inch (160mm) speaker that allows you to use them as separates or as coaxials. The system comes in a nice matte black box with a sealed opening, which lets you know that you are the first one to touch the speakers inside since they left Germany. I thought it was a nice touch and an example of the attention to detail I mentioned earlier.

Inside the box I found a simple illustrated manual, the obligatory stickers, and a couple of mounting templates. One was for the crossovers and another nicely done peel-and-stick template for the tweeter mounting. The crossovers use MB Quart's proprietary Balanced Thermal

Technology (BTT) for optimized cooling. The housings have a unique mounting method, in that they can be mounted in several orientations by changing the position of the mounting tabs. It's a clever idea and could come in handy when trying to find a place for them in the installation. There are also connections for reducing the output of the tweeter by either 2 or 4dB, if it's too bright in a particular installation.

I removed the speaker components from the box and found a two-piece multi-fit midrange with enough holes to accommodate virtually any vehicle. The polyamide composite basket midrange is MB Quart-designed and built, utilizing a special metal plate to both control magnetics and to improve heat dissipation (also part of MB's BTT program). The speaker has nicely finished

cosmetics and heavy-duty, corrosion-resistant terminals that included screw-down connection capability. Instead of the all-too-common, fragile little push-on terminals that seem to be on everything these days, it was nice to see a robust terminal with a variety of connection options.

The 0.75-inch (19mm) titanium dome tweeters use a neodymium magnet and as you'd expect, come with a variety of mounting options allowing installation virtually anywhere. They can be coaxially mounted, flush-mounted, or surface-mounted using the various parts and adaptors furnished in the kit.

The coaxial mounts are nicely done and unlike some others, very easy to use. Removal of the phase plug is a simple twist and pull, and once the tweeters are screwed to the coaxial supports, >>

they are installed the same way. The pole piece of the speaker has a large-diameter hole running through it, so getting the tweeter wires where they need to go is no problem. The coaxial supports also allow the tweeter to be mounted on an angle, for improved off-axis performance.

LISTENING

All the technology in the world doesn't mean a thing if the product doesn't sound good, so I was ready to give the system a listen. The rest of the auditioning system was comprised of a Yamaha CD player, a Hafler preamp, and an amplifier used by many top recording studios, also from Hafler. No processing, no EQ, just as close as I can get to a straight piece of wire with gain. I prefer to do auditioning in my listening room instead of a car, so my references are always the same, and I can more easily detect small differences in equipment. So bear in mind that the comments below were noted in a very quiet room with optimal speaker placement, and may not be even noticeable driving down the road in your car.

I began with a favourite evaluation disc of mine, an old Proprius recording called *Jazz at the Pawnshop*. Recorded live using coincident stereo microphones in an old club in Stockholm, Sweden in 1976, the performances on the disc are exemplary, as is the quality of the recording.

The MB Quart RVF 216s reproduced this favourite disc very well, with very good clarity and definition. The piano and clarinet were a bit forward, but smooth and clear, and the subdued brush and stick-work of drummer Egil Johansen was right there, as were the nuances of Lars Strands vibes. The lower register sounded smooth and strong, with great definition as well. Minor chord changes were picked out easily and plucked strings sounded like they should, with good attack and controlled decay. With the exception of the slightly forward midrange and a tiny bit of hardness from the tweeters, these speakers sounded very good indeed!

Moving on to more popular music, I listened to the well recorded and pure vocals of Tracy Chapman, Norah Jones, Thursday Diva, and KD Lang as well as the amazing harmonies of Manhattan

Transfer. The midrange forwardness was equally as pronounced as before, and the top end brilliance was still there, but the speakers sounded smooth and clean, without harshness or any type of significant tonal imbalance. Horns sounded clean and well defined, and there was no trace of any honky or nasal qualities that often presents itself when auditioning lesser speakers. The acoustic guitar on Tracy Chapman's *Talkin' Bout a Revolution* sounded more Takamine than Ovation, and some of the female vocal was just slightly sibilant, bit I'm nitpicking here.

And yes Vanessa, the MB Quarts can rock too. Rush's classic, *Red Barchetta*, was reproduced with all the amazing dynamics and detail that make Rush another personal fave... Geddy Lee's vocals sounded clear and distinct, and didn't get "lost" in the band's overall sound. Cymbals sounded proper and clear without excessive sibilance or harshness. The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sum 41, Dave Matthews and Gretchen Wilson fared equally well on the MB Quart RVF 216s, with excellent clarity and definition. The MB Quarts proved to me they can handle whatever type of music you like equally well.

A look at the impedance curve of the system shows no real issues for virtually any amplifier, including the integrated amplifier in a source unit. These speakers are very "amp friendly."

CONCLUSION

I listened to the MB Quarts for a long time, playing everything from 50 Cent to Classical, and

TECH SPECS

- Power Handling**
70-140 Watts
- Crossover, Mid/Tweeter**
4,200Hz, 6 / 12dB per octave
- Frequency Range**
38-32,000Hz
- Sensitivity**
90dB / SPL @ 2.5W
- Nominal Impedance**
4 ohms

I'd have to conclude that overall, these are very good sounding speakers for the relatively modest price. The midrange is a bit "hot" and I found the tweeter just slightly bright, but it did sit perfectly on axis (which seldom happens in a car) and there are -2dB and -4dB outputs on the crossover that I didn't use.

Off axis, as in most vehicles, the additional mid and tweeter output could be exactly what the doctor ordered.

CONCLUSION

The bottom line is if you are looking for a speaker system with very good sonics, flexible installation capability, and top-notch build quality, you owe it to yourself to check these out. Till next time... Good Listening! **PAS**

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MB QUART REFERENCE RVF 216

