



ADAM F5

Choice
9/10
MusicTech

Adam's F-Series hits a price point below the successful AX-Series, but can it still do the business? **Huw Price** is all ears...

Details

Price **£349/pair**
Contact
Adam 0207 737 3777
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Key Features

- Input connectors: XLR/TRS & RCA
- Frequency response: 52Hz–50kHz
- Woofer: 25W RMS
- Tweeter: 25W RMS
- Weight: 6.8kg

Adam's new F-Series comprises a pair of two-way ported nearfield monitors, the F5 and F7 (we reviewed the bigger F7 in Issue 120, March 2013, and it scored a very respectable 9/10), plus a dedicated subwoofer designated the SubF. We're informed that the F-Series "is designed in the tradition of the legendary Adam professional monitors. The aim is to focus on the essence of Adam speakers at a new, lower price point".

Retailing for around £155 each, the F5 makes the ambition to own a set of Adam monitors a more realistic prospect for project studio owners. Measuring 290 x 185 x 230mm (HWD) they're compact enough for smaller environments yet at 6.8kg they're reassuringly weighty. Other suggested applications include desktops, mobile facilities, post-production edit bays and connection to MP3 players and gaming consoles.

Adam speakers wouldn't be Adams without the company's signature X-ART tweeter aka Air Motion Transformer. It is slightly smaller than the X-ART tweeter

used in the AX series, and described as "the next step in this continuous evolution in tweeter design". A 5-inch woofer made from carbon and paper and a 25mm voice coil handle the lows.

Input connections can be made via an XLR/TRS socket or an RCA. Power switching is located on the rear panel but the F5 automatically switches to standby mode after a short period of inactivity and switches back to operating mode when it receives an incoming audio signal.

Setup can be horizontal or vertical and the rear panels have M6 screw threads for wall/stand-mounting. Controls are fairly minimal, with plus or minus 6dB adjustment at 5kHz and 300Hz. There's a centre-detented Level control (-∞ to +6dB) plus a high-pass filter switch set at 80Hz that should be activated when the F5s are being used in conjunction with a subwoofer.

Given its very competitive price point, the F5 is a **remarkable and accomplished** monitor

Despite the fact that Adam is trumpeting the affordability of these monitors, their appearance is so consistent with many of Adam's other monitors that you can't tell their price point just by looking. Of course this is a good thing, but the crucial test is whether you can tell by listening.

Great expectations

The answer to that has to be 'not really'. Having become very familiar with Adam monitors over the last few years we tend to expect a relatively bright tonal characteristic with impressive clarity and sharply defined imaging. So we're pleased to report that the F5s fully lived up to expectations.

Our previous experiences with Adams has also led us to expect a certain degree of 'port-chuffing', which is the sound generated by air turbulence at the opening of the cabinet ports. To be fair this was absent from the last set of non-F-Series Adams we reviewed (the A77X) and chuffing is absent again. Perhaps the waveguide and oval port have helped in this regard, but whatever the cure, it seems Adam has overcome this issue.

For a long time now the Focal CMS 40 has set our benchmark standard for small nearfield monitors. They score

Alternatives

Competition in this area of the active nearfield monitor market is fierce. By and large, all of the options are two-way units with magnetic shielding and ported cabinets. Here are some examples (detailed specs are easy to find online): Yamaha HS50M (£127), Mackie MR5 MK2 (£140), KRK RP6 RoKit G2 (£151), Monkey Banana Turbo 4 (£162).



over the F5s in terms of smoothness, refinement and low-level detail, but it's a close-run thing and it's also worth bearing in mind that the F5s are not far off half the price.

So, Brownie points are awarded for clarity, imaging and bass extension – just make sure that the high-pass filter is switched off if you're not using a subwoofer. By comparison to some monitors the F5s may seem a bit lean in the midrange. Having said that, however,

it could be attributed to the fact that lots of small-box nearfield monitors tend to have relatively forward mids.

So it's more an observation than a criticism, but a familiarisation period may be required before you can judge snare and vocal levels with precision. However, we also noticed that very low-frequency dubby bass lines tended to drag a little with the F5s. The frequency content is there, remaining strong down to around the 50Hz mark, but the rhythmic integrity of fast, low-frequency parts does become a bit lost. Even so, given its very competitive price point, the F5 is a remarkable and accomplished monitor. **MT**

MT Verdict

- + Very transparent sound
- + Excellent imaging
- + No port-chuffing
- + Auto standby mode
- + No bass hype

- Slightly slow low bass response
- Power switches at rear
- Not magnetically shielded

Adam looks and Adam sound quality at an entry-level price. We expect the F5 will be a big success.

9/10