Adam F Series Monitors | from £339

Adam are no strangers to quality monitoring, but the F Series are their most affordable Pro Series monitors to date. Jon Musgrave listens in.

WHAT IS IT?
Two new affordable near field models

CONTACT
Who: Adam UK
Web: www.adam-audio.com

HIGHLIGHTS
1. Excellent modern sound
2. Great value
3. Good bass extension in F7

PRICING
F5 £339 per pair
F7 £509 per pair
F-Sub £259

Adam are one of the world's top speaker designers, best known for their bespoke 'ART' ribbon tweeters and bespoke price. However, they have always embraced the more affordable end of the market, initially with their P Series and then A and AX Series monitors. The new F Series offers their best value yet, combining many of the benefits of the AX in a new, cheaper package.

As you'll have guessed, the F5 and F7 use 5- and 7-inch woofers respectively. These are a new design combining glass fibre and a paper backing. Meanwhile the tweeters use Adam's X-ART design, and at roughly 3-square inches are slightly smaller in size than the AX tweeters. The monitors are assembled in China but the tweeters are still made in Germany (see Tweeter Talk, right, for more on the tweeter design). Onboard amplification is Class AB, with twin amps delivering 25 Watts a piece for the F5 and 40 Watts plus 60 Watts for the F7 (tweeter and woofer respectively). By way of comparison the AX uses one Class AB and one Class D amp.

Both models include the same rear panel controls, which are two +/- 6dB shelving EQs at 300Hz and 5kHz and a volume control (-inf to +6dB). There's also an 80Hz high pass filter designed primarily for using with the optional F-Sub. Inputs are via either a phono or combination jack/XLR, and there are no front panel controls, although you do get twin LEDs on the logo to indicate active (green) and standby (red).

The F-Series enter a signal sensing standby mode when no input signal is present for 20 minutes or longer. As you may have spotted the Fs use a front-facing reflex port, aiding near wall use, and the port aperture is nice and broad to help reduce port noise. Finally the F series can be wall mounted using the bespoke Adam brackets and rear panel screw holes.

Eyes and ears
Out of the box these look and feel well made. Admittedly, there's nothing particularly groundbreaking in the cabinetry (MDF is the main material), and aside from some chamfering on the front panel things are pretty regular.

German monitor company
In general terms, the F7 sounds more expansive and engaging, while the F5 is a bit more precise. Often the case, unless your room is exceptionally well treated acoustically, high levels reveal more limitations of the room than the monitor.

Any other gripes?
It’s often said that ribbon tweeters result in a narrower horizontal sweet spot. This isn’t massively obvious here, and if you’re working on a DAW sat in the middle I really can’t see it as a problem. One other thing to note is they’re not magnetically shielded, although neither are the AXs for that matter and this only comes as an option for the top end S Series. Next up, although the F Series finish is very good, they don’t look or feel quite as lush as their more expensive models. Understandable I think, and certainly not something that would scare me away.

Verdict
Studio monitors vary considerably in their sound, and one learns to adapt accordingly. But to me the F Series sound exactly as a monitor should, straight out of the box. Obviously there are differences in the delivery between the F5 and F7, most noticeably in the bottom end, but careful design means both models still retain a very consistent colour. On balance I prefer the F7, mostly because the scale of the delivery is bigger and they sound more capable at high levels. Even so, the F5 would be great for smaller rooms, and although I didn’t test the F-Sub, adding that to the set-up should work very well.

By shaving things here and there from their more expensive monitor designs, Adam have managed to deliver a genuinely budget speaker with totally non budget sound. Don’t be suspicious, these are truly excellent monitors for the money and without question should be on your audition list. FM

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**Adam F Series Monitors**

**Verdict**

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Serious performance at an affordable price – you’d be crazy not to give them a listen.