



Bringing The A Game

ADAM Audio's revolutionary A4V speakers adapt to your listening environment

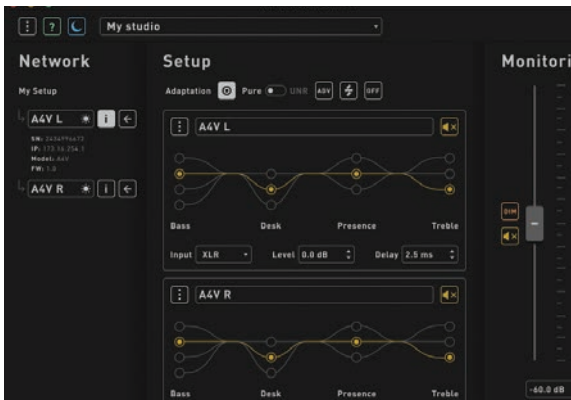
If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find them... maybe you can hire The A-Team. ADAM Audio, that is! The company's new A4V speakers could be the perfect solution to an unruly room. ADAM Audio is a firm favourite with the electronic music production community; its speakers have been found in studios at every level, from bedroom to pro. The original A series units have become ubiquitous thanks to their excellent clarity of sound, and the ability to deliver a true account of the audio passing through them, which is ideal for music production duties.

We took a look at the new A4Vs, and the fresh advancements introduced to the speaker range. The A4Vs are the smallest set in the AV family, and are designed for smaller studio spaces, near-field listening and immersive multi-speaker configurations. The A4Vs are compact speakers that bear a resemblance to the A3Xs, which they are replacing. However, gone are the front power and volume controls that adorned the AX range; all the controls are now on the back of the speakers. In fact, it is the backs of the speakers

that we are going to focus on from the get-go, as there is quite a bit to be said about them. First up, you'll be presented with the Room Adaptation controls. These controls are there to fine-tune the speakers to your listening environment. There are four push buttons for Bass, Desk, Presence and Treble, and each of these push buttons can change the characteristics of the speakers and provide a number of calibration settings for different listening conditions — i.e., if the speakers are placed close to a back wall or on a desk, that sort of thing. The combination of these buttons allows for many different adaption curves and settings to be adopted, and thus provides a better listening environment for the user. Below the Room Adaptation controls is a remote control connector port (ethernet variety); next to it, a push button for voicing, where users can select between 'Pure', which is the starting point for calibrating the speakers, 'UNR', which mimics the voicing characteristics of the original A series, and 'Ext', for when you start using a Sonarworks Sound ID calibration curve. Rounding off the controls is the overall volume-level knob, and XLR and

RCA inputs, with selector button. The majority of these buttons at the back allow the user to fine-tune the speakers to the surroundings manually, but in addition to this, there is the new A Control Remote feature, that allows users to go into more detail and really dive deep into calibrating the speakers. This is the big news surrounding the AV speaker range, and has been developed in collaboration with Sonarworks, which has worked with ADAM Audio so that its Sound ID technology is hardwired into the DSP features of the AV speakers. Users can now import a Sound ID calibration curve directly into the speakers (once worked out on the Sound ID Reference software) using the A Control Remote software (via laptop). Producers can even go into the Advance mode, and tweak up to six EQ bands to create the optimum listening curve for the speakers in their environment. A Control Remote and the A Control Software are the new aces in the pack, which take the latest AV range into a new dimension in terms of how these speakers perform.

What's the fuss? Many people — engineers and studio professionals —



will talk about getting the speakers calibrated to the room in order to create the best listening environment for your productions. In previous times, this would mean having to get a professional in to take the readings and then add acoustic panelling around the room to treat it, so that as a listener, you're exposed to as near as neutral sound as possible. A few years back, this process was (slightly) simplified, with software that anyone could use to create a sound map of the room and then out of this create a correction curve that would run in the background on accompanying software or as a plug-in in your DAW, in order to create a better listening environment. Now, with the new AV Series, the calibration software is built into the speakers.

With A Control, producers and engineers can now also adopt a novel way of thinking about their monitors, as different sound curves can be introduced into the speakers. So effectively, as a user you could have a curve that is neutral and tight for mixing and mastering purposes, and then also have another preset curve that mimics the sort of sound that you'd get from a "main room speaker", allowing you to switch between the two (or three), and test out your track on the same speakers, but with different playback characteristics. The method of having multiple monitors in a studio was designed to allow engineers and producers to go back and forth between the different speakers, to get

a feel for how the audio translates in various playback environments. By creating different curves, this can be achieved from one set of speakers. This will be especially handy for producers on a budget, or artists who don't have the space for multiple speakers. Was this an intentional part of A Control and ADAM Audio's thinking, or a happy coincidence? Well, whichever it was, the result is a handy, innovative and cost-effective way for users to reference their mixes and tracks in different listening stages.

All this can be considered a game changer, as it now means that the A4V speakers (and the rest of the AV range) themselves become directly calibrated to the room, and the user doesn't have to rely on engaging a plug-in or background software when using them.

We've spent a lot of time talking about the A Control and calibration aspect of the A4V speakers, and we suppose the real test is in how they sound. Of course, the calibration feature is pure gold for improving the overall and final sound, but from a starting point of view, what have we got with the A4Vs? Well, for compact speakers, we have to say they really do put out more than their petite size would suggest. The base audio delivery is, as would be expected from ADAM Audio, really good. Ahead of diving into the A Control and Room Adaptation modes, we were pretty impressed with the neutral quality of the speakers: nice,

tight bass delivery coupled with clear and defined mids and tops. We are fans of ADAM Audio here at DJ Mag Tech, and have to say that the audio quality is a step up from the original AX series — and moreover, the A3Xs, which it replaces. We think with this new generation of speakers, ADAM Audio has definitely brought its A game to the table.

At a glance

ADAM AUDIO A4V NEARFIELD MONITOR

£316.66 (per unit)
• adam-audio.com

BUILD QUALITY	9.0
EASE OF USE	9.0
FEATURES	10
VALUE FOR MONEY	9.0
SOUND QUALITY	9.0

Hype

The ability to load the speakers with calibrated sound curves to improve the listening environment is killer.

Gripe

Using the Sonarworks Sound ID software to create your curves does take a bit of time investment.

Summary

The new A4Vs sound great, but the added A Control calibration features put them yards ahead of the competitors.

Verdict 9.2/10