

Bon Anniversaire

As part of its 40th Birthday celebrations, Triangle has upgraded its iconic Antal floorstander. **Ed Selley** crashes the party



DETAILS

PRODUCT
Triangle Antal 40th Anniversary Edition

ORIGIN
France

TYPE
3.5-way floorstanding loudspeaker

WEIGHT
27kg

DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)
300 x 1,128 x 429mm

FEATURES

- Magnesium horn loaded tweeter
- 2x 135mm pulp/carbon fibre bass drivers
- 135mm untreated cellulose midrange driver
- Quoted sensitivity: 92dB/1W/1M (8ohm)

DISTRIBUTOR
SCV Distribution

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Triangle loudspeakers actually hit the big four zero back in 2020, but, given that wasn't a terribly celebratory year has waited a little longer to celebrate with anniversary versions of key models. The Antal more than meets the definition of a 'key model'. In production since the Nineties, it's one of the archetypal Triangle designs and it's contextually important to understand that the basic shape and layout of the Anniversary Edition is unchanged.

This is still a 3.5-way floorstander over a metre tall. What Triangle has done is take the constituent parts of the design and improve them where possible. This means there is still an example of the trademark horn tweeter, but instead of the titanium of the standard Antal here it has been revised and has become a composite of magnesium and rose gold. The company says the new combination offers advantages over both raw magnesium and titanium and improves consistency from driver to driver.

This hands over at 3.9kHz to a 135mm untreated cellulose midrange that appears identical to the one used in the standard Esprit range (of which the



Triangle's Antal 40th Anniversary Edition is a whole lot of speaker for the asking price

Antal is a member). Internally though, it has a reduced number of filtering components for a more natural and linear overall performance. The midrange crosses over at 185Hz to a pair of 135mm bass drivers made from an interesting (and not entirely explained) combination of wood pulp, flax and carbon fibre. The crossover that ties the three drivers together has also seen improvements, principally in the components used in the signal path. Fairly unusually in this day and age, it supports bi-wiring via a quartet of upgraded terminals.

The last major revision is significant but tricky to spot. The Anniversary is the same size as the standard Antal, but the cabinet is made from boards with a higher-spec density making it 2kg heavier. Then, because it is a tradition to dress up for your birthday, the Anniversary models have been given some specific finishes. Rosewood and Sycamore are available but the review sample is Golden Oak, which is a deeply impressive bit of veneering and complements the rose gold detailing very well. For an object built



in the EU, this floorstander feels like a lot of speaker for the money. The levels of build and finish are excellent.

The Antal 40th Anniversary Edition is front-ported but does its best work kept away from both rear and side walls, so you will need a fair bit of room for the cabinets. A degree of care needs to be taken on partnering too because their fundamental characteristics remain unchanged from the standard Antal. The Triangle combines a high claimed sensitivity (no less than 92dB/W), but this has to be judged against the minimum impedance of 3.7ohm. Sensitive or not, the Antal 40th Anniversary Edition will need a reasonable amount of power to drive it.

Sound quality

Given that power, there is a great deal to like about the way the Triangle makes music. For starters, it takes the joyous, retro-tinged rock of The Sheepdogs' *Outta Sight* and delivers a genuinely invigorating performance. There is always a danger when trying to integrate four drivers into a cohesive whole that the result will sound like four drivers in close formation instead, but that really isn't the case here. Instead the Triangle's performance of *I Wanna Know You*

sounds like two single points of sound creating a convincing stereo image.

This speed and cohesion is achieved in part by prioritising speed and rhythmic agility over out-and-out bass depth. The claimed low-frequency roll-off of 37Hz doesn't feel too far removed from reality, but this speaker is more concerned with getting the head nodding than delivering a punch to the ribcage. This feeling is further enhanced in part by the upper registers. That horn-loaded tweeter gives an airiness that very few rivals can challenge and the effect feels impressively unboxy.

The caveat to this liveliness is that the Triangle always feels like it wants to be energetic even when the material being played doesn't need such propulsive force. *To Build A Home* by The Cinematic Orchestra is tonally believable and the manner it handles Patrick Wilson's distinctive vocals is impressive, but the speaker itself feels like it's waiting for something more energetic to happen. My personal listening preferences tolerate this over a speaker that struggles to sound together when tempos increase, but others may find it a little restless – something that's further exacerbated by poor-quality recordings.

HOW IT COMPARES

The Triangle is £500 more expensive (and rather larger) than Bowers & Wilkins' 705 Signature (HFC 466); another superb special edition speaker. Both exhibit upgraded components and a lovely wood veneer, but it is interesting how much they differ. The B&W takes the virtues of the existing 705 and brings a greater level of energy and fun to its presentation. Without alienating existing fans of the brand it successfully broadens the appeal. The Antal 40th Anniversary Edition is a present to those who love the brand, but not a way of tempting new owners in. This gives it a character that the more consistent 705 sometimes lacks.

The Antal 40th Anniversary Edition's wood veneer is lovely

This should not overshadow some of the other useful attributes it possesses, though. While that stiff minimum impedance requires a little care, its sensitivity translates to a feeling of effortlessness that is unusual at this price. It also pulls the neat trick of sounding big and full even when being used at low levels. It might sound counter intuitive to look at this burly floorstander as a solution for systems that cannot be run at high levels, but it is rather good at it.

Used in this fashion, there is always the temptation to let the Antal go because this is a glorious listen when you ask for more level and particularly with music that has a bit of energy to it. Kamasi Washington's *Humility* has the energy that the Triangle craves and in return the Antal 40th Anniversary Edition is able to ensure that this complex recording has the space and tonal realism it needs to be completely convincing. The orchestra is relayed as a body of individual musicians rather than a single dense mass and the scale that they are delivered with is entirely believable. More than all of this, though, there is a fundamental joy to how it performs that means you stop listening to the mechanics of the performance and just enjoy the music.

Conclusion

The Antal 40th Anniversary Edition is the sort of present that a company wholly content with how the last 40 years have gone would choose to build. If you have not been a huge fan of the Triangle sound up to this point, this is unlikely to change things. If you are a fan, however, the Antal 40th Anniversary Edition is a very tempting prospect. It takes everything that the basic Antal does so convincingly and improves the performance, makes it look smarter and keeps it at a price that, in the volatile times we currently live, feels usefully terrestrial. The result is a distinctive but charming speaker that will find many happy owners ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★	LIKE: Lively and spacious sound; build; looks; price
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★	DISLIKE: Can feel a little relentless; needs careful partnering
BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★	WESAY: Impressive enhancements to an old favourite make this an attractive and entertaining speaker
EASE OF DRIVE ★★★★★	

OVERALL

