

## Atlantic Technology Delivers Freestanding Sound in In-Wall Closed Box Speakers

New IWCB line delivers affordable performance to homeowners who desire more than sound solutions.

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06.12.2007 — For a loudspeaker company, the guys at Atlantic Technology (AT) can sometimes be the quietest members of the custom-installation industry.

But with the launch of the In-Wall Closed Box (IWCB) Theater speakers, the company is finding it hard to contain itself. The newly launched line of products has been designed to provide predictable in-wall performance, affordability, wide dispersion characteristics and versatility.

Thankfully, those same engineers haven't forgotten about the installer that has to set up and integrate these products into a client's home. Building upon tried-and-true installation technologies, the IWCB-52, IWCB-525 and the top-of-the-line IWCB-626 install through the same dog ear-based rough-in methods that installers have been using for years.

The end result is a sealed-box, fully enclosed loudspeaker that employs MDF enclosures, AT's new Directional Vector Control (DVC)—which enables installers to electronically manipulate the dispersion of the speakers' output—and newly-designed Low Resonance Tweeters (LRT) that are capable of handling more power and wider frequency bands.

### Thinking Outside the Box

Atlantic Technology's engineering staff wanted to step outside of the box when dealing with the inherent compromises of an open-back loudspeaker. "We looked at the biggest problems of in-wall speakers and we designed [the IWCB speakers] with these factors in mind," says Steve Feinstein, director of marketing for Atlantic Technology.

Some of the problems they focused on include the variables of placing an open-back speaker in a drywall environment, the diffraction problems of pivoting tweeters and the soundstaging and lobbing problems of higher frequency sound reproduction.

To address these needs, the company developed the LRT tweeter, the MDF enclosure and the DVC option that contours the frequency response of the tweeter's output and relationship with the speaker's woofer. Feinstein says that this element took the longest to develop because all of the work needed to figure out what would essentially end up as two crossover points for the crossover to handle.



It was worth the work, he says, because installers can now place the speaker in locations above the listening plane without worrying about narrow off-axis performance drawbacks of traditional designs.

“Proper speaker design is proper speaker design,” says Feinstein. “We made enclosed speakers and it’s not a new idea, but we think that with these products we have gone a few steps above what most people have done.”

## The Sound Test

After completing a tour of AT’s engineering department, Feinstein and Jason Marcure, product development engineer for Atlantic Technology, decided it was time for the fun part of my visit by bringing me into a demo room to hear the speakers.

Using a rack of modest electronics and cabling, we listened to some jazz and choral music through a pair of IWCB-626s. I found the speakers to deliver a good amount of low end for an in-wall product, along with an airy midrange and extended top end. I was quite surprised that the speakers were able to produce a soundstage similar to a freestanding option.

I wanted to check the dynamics of the speakers, so we played John Petrucci’s “Glasgow Kiss” and Monte Montgomery’s version of “Little Wing.” Both of these tracks showcased the speakers’ ability to produce a wide, detailed and extended soundstage. In particular, I listened for space between the bass line of Dave LaRue’s playing on “Glasgow Kiss” against the ghost notes of drummer Dave DiCenso. During the song’s “clean” section, I noticed the space the speakers created for the guitar parts’ clean and crunch tracks underneath Petrucci’s melodic, bluesy solo.

The only thing I could nitpick was a hint of compression in the upper bass/lower midrange on DiCenso’s snares and mounted toms. In fairness, the song’s dynamics and transients are a monster to recreate and I have a suspicion that the amp may have been running out of the juice needed to effectively drive the speakers to their full capabilities.

We wrapped things with Steve Morse’s cover of Steve Howe’s of “The Clap.” The speakers shined on acoustic stringed instruments, as the 626’s frequency extension produced an image ringing with depth as it played back Morse’s chicken picking, pseudo classical take on this classic Yes song.

All-in-all, I was impressed, especially knowing that the electronics were quite modest. At the price points that AT hits with these speakers, you wouldn’t expect this complete of an audiophile experience.

Based on my experience listening to the speakers, I would recommend that installers swing by the AT demo room in Denver this fall at CEDIA Expo. I am sure that after the demo you’ll be as impressed as I was at these room-friendly speakers’ ability to deliver freestanding performance while remaining out of sight within a home’s décor.

MSRPs for the line check in at \$600, \$800 and \$950 for the IWCB-52, IWCB-525 and the IWCB-626, respectively.