



# Aperion's Bravus 8D

## The Perfect Small Subwoofer

By Jeff Dorgay

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**F**or many audiophiles, using the words small and subwoofer in the same sentence doesn't resonate. However, there are many of you in the audience that require more weight at the lower end of the frequency spectrum and have a great pair of small mini-monitors, panels or even a set of single driver speakers that you don't want to abandon; you just want some more bass. If you fall into one of these categories, I submit the Aperion Bravus 8D as the perfect solution. At \$499, with shipping included, you can't go wrong. If you don't like it, Aperion even covers the return freight, so what's not to love?

When using a pair of small speakers, the spot in the room that allows them to disappear bringing forth a wonderful three dimensional image means giving up whatever little bit of bass you might have with said speaker. Those small woofers in your mini monitors are fast, so pairing them up with a big, beefy subwoofer leaves you with integration problems or it completely overloads the room. One of the most common audiophile mistakes I see is having too much speaker for the room, and it always extends to the subwoofer. Bigger isn't always better, especially if you have a small room.

There are quite a few instances where the case for a small subwoofer is a great one. The SET/Single Driver crowd can really benefit from a small, high performance sub. Yes, I know it takes away from the purist ethos, but trust me, if you are running a pair of full range drivers and add a small sub, you will never go back. Just run your single driver speakers full range and adjust the sub to fill in the gap. It's a magical experience. Same thing with mini monitors or even panels. I ran the Bravus 8D through its paces with my pair of Magnepan 1.6's and was very impressed with the combination.

Available in high gloss black or medium cherry (our review sample), the Bravus 8D only takes a 12-inch by 12-inch footprint on your floor and is 13.5-inches tall. It utilizes a pair of 8-inch aluminum cone woofers and a 150-watt BASH amplifier that allows connection to your system via high level or line level inputs.

### Smooth Setup

The Bravus manual is very well written, but if you feel the need to call the factory, Aperion offers unlimited technical support. I used my next-door neighbors phone so they wouldn't sniff me out with caller ID and acted like a blithering idiot just to test their expertise and patience. The helpful guy at Aperion did a great job of talking me through the setup process, so if you get stuck, don't waste time – give them a call. *(continued)*



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The two woofers fire on opposite sides of the enclosure, covered by black grille cloth. A tool is enclosed to remove the grilles and I highly suggest removing it and making sure the woofer screws are all tight. The review sample passed with flying colors, but it's a good idea to check these screws after you've been playing your Bravus 8D for a couple of months. Most subwoofers I've used have a tendency to loosen up a bit and a simple turn of the screw will get you back to the tight bass response you are used to.

While you might think two side firing woofers might be a little bit harder to place in a room, the Bravus 8D offers some interesting options. If you are more of a plug and play person, they offer settings for Music, Movies and Games. As always, I'd suggest that you try them all, but if you don't feel like fiddling, the music setting offers a tighter, tuneful bass response while the game and movie settings are more on the boom-boom side of the fence. This is where that remote comes in handy. If your eyesight is good enough to read the control panel from across the room, you can do this from the comfort of your couch! Should you have a giant, universal remote, you can program it to accommodate the Bravus as well.

If you are a little fussier about subwoofer setup, the Bravus allows you to set the crossover frequency from 40 -120hz. Again, this will depend on your mains, so experiment to taste. If the bass sounds too much like it's coming from a small cube in the room, you have the crossover too high. When it's just right, you won't know it's there. There is also a built in parametric equalizer that lets you boost or cut bass response, that also features a width and level control. This can be very helpful if you have a slight glitch in your room, or if you need to place your subwoofer close to a wall or corner.

Of course the Bravus 8D has a set of spikes, so that when you get everything dialed in, you can put it up on spikes to couple to your floor better. Aperion also gives you a set of hard rubber spikes and these were my favorite. Again, your preference will be the judge, but if your listening room floor is tile or hardwood, you may prefer the rubber cones. Nice touch. *(continued)*



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## Love That Bigger Bottom

After trying the Bravus 8D with my Magnepans, the next stop was my desktop system, which now consists of a Luxman L-590A II amplifier, Luxman DU-7 Universal player and a pair of Sterling Broadcast LS3/5a's. A pair of KEF XQ20's were also substituted with great results.

If you check the spec sheet, the Bravus 8D has a -3db point of 35hz, which is more than adequate and really adds life to a desktop situation, making my nearfield system sound like a giant cocoon. Now I could blast all of my favorite tunes and get some grunt, which really makes this system a joy. A few minutes of adjusting the crossover and EQ had the Bravus 8D mated with my desktop speakers, which now sounded like I put giant floorstanders on the desk!

While the 8D will not be enough for someone in a big room needing home theater bass levels, it did remarkably well in my 10 x 12 spare bedroom. So if your HT needs are modest, you might be amazed at how well this compact powerhouse can do. And if you need more bass, Aperion makes a 10 and 12-inch variety, both with dual woofers.

## With the Bravus 8D You Can Have it All

In my prior life as a pixel jockey for one of the world's most prestigious lithography firms, my boss used to say, "good, fast, cheap; pick two". The same rules apply to small subwoofers, except in the case of the Bravus, I would substitute cheap for exceptional value.

And that's why we are happy to award one of our Exceptional Value awards to Aperion for this product. If you are looking for a high performance, compact subwoofer, the Bravus 8D is the best choice for your system at this price point.

## The Aperion Bravus 8D Subwoofer

MSRP: \$499, shipping included

### PERIPHERALS

**Amplifier:** Luxman L-590A II

**Digital Source:** Luxman DU-7 Universal Player

**Speakers:** Magnepan MG1.6, Sterling Broadcast LS3/5a, KEF XQ20

**Cables:** Blue Jeans Cable (main speakers), DH Labs BL-1 (amp to sub), Cardas Golden Reference

**Accessories:** Shunyata Hydra VRay Power conditioner, Shunyata Python Alpha Helix Power cords