

Klipsch

R-610F £535

Klipsch refuses to pander to convention, and so has something of a cult following. The R-610F shows why

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Klipsch R-610F

ORIGIN
USA

TYPE
2-way floorstanding loudspeaker

WEIGHT
16.3kg

DIMENSIONS
(WxHxD)
240 x 940 x 384mm

FEATURES

- 1x 25mm horn-loaded aluminium dome tweeter
- 1x 165mm IMG mid/bass driver
- Quoted sensitivity 94dB/1W/1m (8ohm)

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Of not quite the loftiest tower in the group, the R-610F is certainly the deepest and so has quite a chunky physical presence. Suffice to say, the big, bulky and black floorstander from the company's entry-level 'R' lineup isn't the kind of speaker that dissolves into the décor. And, sans grille, the spun copper finish of its mid/bass driver is arguably even more eye catching than Monitor Audio's three-driver orange array.

The R-610F's Tractrix horn features a circular throat around an aluminium diaphragm that fires into a square 90° x 90° mouth. The tweeter's so-called Linear Travel Suspension uses Kapton, an extremely light and rigid material claimed to improve resolution and detail. A matching horn-shaped bass reflex port on the rear claims more powerful low end with reduced port noise and distortion.

Teamed with the 25mm aluminium dome is that softly gleaming 165mm mid/bass driver. The copper-coloured cone is actually Injection Molded Graphite, which Klipsch says delivers "remarkable low-frequency response, with minimal cone breakup and distortion" while contributing to the speaker's impressive 94dB efficiency – comfortably the highest of the group.

Sound quality

While startlingly bold and projected well into the room, Lizz Wright's vocal acquires a slight bloom at some frequencies that detracts from the purity of the production. On the other hand, there's an immediacy and palpable physicality to the ensemble's performance that's powerfully engaging and thrillingly steps up a gear when the gospel choir joins in, though the slightly grey, grainy and opaque hue of the recording of massed voices isn't as sympathetically handled as it is by the Oberon 5.

It isn't hard to appreciate why the Klipsch sound has such a loyal following. It may not be the smoothest or most refined, but that's kind of the point. It isn't very 'hi-fi' in the polite sense of the term, eschewing neutrality and evenness in pursuit of believable dynamics and drama, which some would argue contributes more to the enjoyment of music than a ruler-flat frequency response.

As you might expect, *Propaganda* all but explodes into the room, spraying EDM machine gun bursts across the soundstage with such gusto, you almost feel the need to duck. It's much the same deal with Lump's *Late To The Flight*, which has a marginally larger than life feel to it here, especially apparent in the track's generous low-frequency content. The key word here is 'life', which the Klipsch grants the track in spades. No, it isn't a speaker that feels entirely comfortable with Krall or Wright, though that palpable, in-the-room quality has its moments. Rather, the R-610F is determined, dynamic and dangerous to know, and there are some definite upsides to that ●

AMERICAN PIONEER

Paul Wilbur Klipsch was an American audio pioneer and arguably the guy who made the greatest contribution to music reproduction from his shed. It's where, in 1946, he designed and built what was later to be called the Klipschorn speaker with the goal of bringing live music into his living room. The shed is now a fully fledged factory with its own production line and the company's headquarters have moved to Indianapolis. During his service at the Southwest Proving Grounds, Klipsch refined his design. The story goes that visitors to his quarters were amazed by the lifelike sound and encouraged him to start his own business. He received a patent in 1945, registered the name Klipsch & Associates in 1946 and began making each speaker with his own two hands until he hired his first employee in 1948. The rest is history and the Klipschorn is the only speaker in the world that's been in continuous production for over 70 years.



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OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★
LIKE: Bags of clarity and dynamic headroom that's enormous fun

VALUE FOR MONEY
★★★★★
DISLIKE: Female vocals can sound a little coloured

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★
WE SAY: A speaker of uneven abilities, but additive if you 'get it'

EASE OF DRIVE
★★★★★

OVERALL

