

**Samson
MediaOne BT3**
£85

2

Genelec 8010A
£199 each

1

M-Audio AV32
£70

3

Tascam VL-S3
£76

4

Powered 3" Monitors

When space is an issue, it's time to think small and powered monitors don't come smaller than the 3" range. They may be dinky, but they don't have to sound that way and can provide an effective monitoring solution for a range of budgets

5 Mackie Creative Reference CR3
£79

6 Eve Audio SC203
£389

1 Like the Eve Audio SC203s, the low-end extends further than you'd imagine, though it seems more like a psychoacoustic trick on the Genelecs. Plenty of power, but it is the sound that makes these the clear winner. The stereo imaging and sound staging is a cut above, revealing a dimensionality that makes mixing easy. Transients are clear, the bass is tight, and the mid range is well articulated and free of phase shift problems. They sound like a much larger nearfield monitor. Overall the voicing is better to my ears than the Eve Audios. They are also individually powered, making them useful for surround set-ups too.

genelec.com

VERDICT 9

2 Like the M-Audio and Mackies, these have 3.5mm aux and phones sockets on the front, and like the M-Audios this is my favourite part. They lack any real presence in the 7kHz-10kHz range, though there is some airy hiss audible higher up. They have that 'in-a-sock' sound and battle the M-Audios for last place.

samsontech.com

VERDICT 5

3 These are not really suitable for music production. The low frequency range is dominated by a hump around 120Hz that effectively masks all around it making the low mids hard to discern. The high frequency range is narrow and equally misbalanced.

m-audio.com

VERDICT 5

4 These are the smallest of the 3" monitors, and in many ways they sound it, but this is not a criticism; they are

realistic with regard to size and price. The best sounding of the sub-£100 models by far, with good mid range articulation and a well detailed HF/transient response. They roll off significantly below 100Hz, but there's no compensating low/low-mid bloat as exhibited by some of the others. There is also plenty of volume for the size.

tascam.com

VERDICT 8

5 These are a powerful pair with a reasonable MF to HF response, and their small box 'boom' is nowhere near as pronounced (bad) as the M-Audio AV32s. The bass-end may be larger than the Tascams, but the overall sound stage is less realistic or pure, with more audible resonant peaks (poor phase response). They've got plenty of SPLs before cracking up.

mackie.com

VERDICT 7

6 Do you get what you pay for? Hell yeah! Quality transient response with a nicely balanced mid range that lets you hear what's going on, which is what you need for tracking and mixing. The bass-end is impressive, reaching down surprisingly low (thanks to the non-ported rear passive radiator design) without booming or sounding boxy. The front mounted rotary switch opens up a good range of functionality that is normally accessed via fiddly rear panel DIP switches, which makes set-up and adjustment easy. There are USB and optical digital inputs, besides the RCA analogue, as well as a Sub out. These are nice to work on, with enough adjustability.

eve-audio.com

VERDICT 8.5

FM VERDICT



THE BEST VALUE Tascam VL-S3: A compact powered monitor that eschews artificial low-end bloat, focusing instead on a well-balanced frequency response.



THE STAR PERFORMER Genelec 8010A: Excellent soundstaging and clarity make these ideal for tracking and mixing in small spaces or on the move.