



LACQUERED, NOT VARNISHED

Making good things even better – that was the task faced
by Roland Gauder in his quest to develop the „Vescova“ as a
means of driving his speaker line forward

Since 1989, Roland Gauder has been involved in the professional development and manufacture of loudspeakers. The physicist and enthusiastic music lover began his career at Isophon, and the Avalon, Odeon, Indigo and Vertigo models, introduced in 1992 and 1993, have enjoyed a good reputation to this day.

Time for ceramics

By 1997, Isophon had long since drifted into OEM car HiFi production and Gauder decided to set up his own business under the brand name. As he used isophone drivers at that time, this made sense, but since the end of 2012, the topic of isophone has become history, both in the drivers used and consequently also in terms of naming.

These days it says on the boxes what's inside: Gauder: after all, the bass technology is not the only determinant of the sound, as many vendors have proven in the past. Gauder has long since become an ardent and committed fan of Accuton's ceramic and diamond drivers, which have made him famous for their timing and sound qualities.

And he knows how to use them more skilfully than usual, as we will see later. He is particularly enthusiastic about the ceramic transducers' outstanding impulse behaviour. He explains that soft membrane materials usually showed very good frequency response but poor impulse behaviour, and hard materials the opposite, but since music is made up of impulses he has focused his research there, leading to ceramic becoming the material of choice.

Here we take a closer look at Gauder's two and a half way speaker, the original

version of which was launched in 2008. Over the past few years, the physicist has worked intensively on the symmetry of his extremely crossover technology in the development of his top models, the Berlina RC3 and RC7. The „Vescova Black Edition“ benefits to a considerable extent from the knowledge gained, as well as using purely analog crossovers with a filter slope of 50 dB.

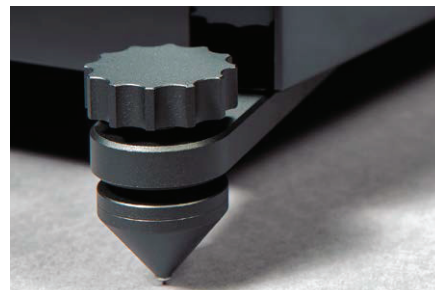
Most speakers use either sealed enclosures or a bass reflex (or ported) design, each design having its advantages and disadvantages. Gauder, seeking a way to reconcile the positive aspects of both principles, came up with a loudspeaker that had both: a closed cabinet for the upper bass frequencies, handled by an 18cm ceramic driver only working down to 130Hz, and a downward-venting bass



▲ High-quality bi-wiring connection panel with proper cable jumpers - excellent!



▲ The three-stage bass adaptation is as well-thought-through as the stabilising outriggers with their massive spikes.



▲ The „Vescova Black Edition“ underlines its claim with high quality materials.

reflex enclosure for the lower bass driver, another 18cm ceramic unit. In this way Gauder prevents the reflex tube from having an influence on the eminently important midrange, and thus coloring the sound, and there's also a three-stage bass adjustments on the crossover.

genetic material

It was decided to make the Accuton chassis black in order to emphasize the latest developments in design and not interfere with the elegant housing, which is made of several layers of slotted MDF, plywood and quartz sand, finished with piano lacquer. Even the aesthetics are only your second

or third consideration when buying speakers, they look pretty cool – that was the unanimous editorial opinion on the floor-standing speaker: completely dressed in black, they're shapely and almost dainty-looking. What you can't see is that all the drivers are strictly handpicked to an accuracy of three percent – an elementary prerequisite for convincing spatial representation, especially when accompanied by an equally strict and uncompromising crossover design process.

In this, Gauder consistently follows the path that studio equipment suppliers set out many years ago on the basis of the requirements of broadcasters: nothing beats production consistency and selection. It's worth mentioning that Mundorf's "Black Edition" crossover uses further improved components, as well as the fact that it uses a biwiring block equipped with the latest WBT 0703 terminals and high-quality cable bridges instead of cheap but widely used metal rails.



▲ Beautifully shaped and designed for sound: the cabinet with its curved walls and elegant cantilevers, including height-adjustable and fixable spikes.

Sturdy so-called "spike extenders" increase the stability and provide a rigid home for the massive spikes, and the spikes themselves are easily adjustable and can also be fixed solidly. At around 25 kilograms and just under 110cm tall, the speakers are easy to move and position optimally.

What's more, should you suddenly get a tax refund, a bonus or just experience your ship coming in, Gauder offers a conversion to diamond tweeters instead of the standard ceramic fitment at a price of 5600 euros for the pair. In our test, however, we concentrated entirely on the ceramic tweeter version, its treble driver running down to 3500 Hertz, which means that the price of the speakers ends up at just under 11,000 euros a pair.

Worldwide recognition

There's the biblical saying, ascribed to Jesus himself, that 'A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house' – with 24 active dealers in Germany, that's not a problem Gauder recognises, but remarkably he sells about 2/3 of his production abroad, his creations enjoying an excellent reputation worldwide.

The Vescovas were driven in our listening room by Audionet's "Planck" and "Watt", using an SME turntable and Accustic Arts' reference phono preamplifier, and we were instantly impressed with the way the speakers were able to present Miles Davis's "Bitches Brew" – no easy fare at all – in a comprehensible way, creating access and revealing the structure of the music. Dave Holland's deep double bass sounded crisp and dry, and Bennie Maupin's bass clarinet stood freely in the room, open, airy and harmonious. That was fun!

On an analogue record by David Wilson with Julie Steinberg on the Steinway Model D concert grand and David Abel on a Guarneri violin, fluidity and warmth went hand in hand with the best impulse fidelity, while the final round was played by Queen's "Made in Heaven", released four years after the death of frontman Freddie Mercury. Nothing was annoying, the bass was tight and clearly defined, reaching deep when required without any, and Mr. Mercury was standing in the room, focused and realistically scaled. Wonderful stuff.

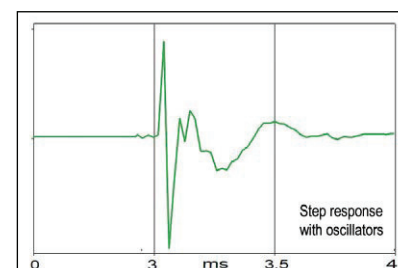
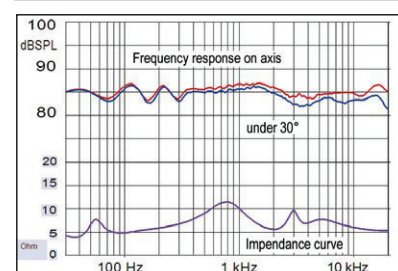
Michael Lang

GAUDER VESCOVA MK II BLACK EDITION

from 11000 €
(with diamond tweeter: 16000 €)
Warranty: 10 years
Contact: Gauder Akustik
Phone: +49 7159 920161
www.gauderakustik.info

The strictly selected ceramic drivers of the two-and-a-half-way speaker are the cornerstones of the sound experience. Despite a compact size, the speaker sounds dynamic, deep and crisp, is easygoing about placement, and delivers a solid spatial representation.

LAB MEASUREMENTS



DC resistance	8 Ω
Minimum impedance	4,5 Ω at 36 Hz
Maximum impedance	12 Ω at 800 Hz
Sound pressure level (2.83 V/m)	87.1 dB SPL
Power for 94 dB SPL	5.8 W
Lower cut-off frequency (-3dB SPL)	32 Hz
Distortion factor at 63/3k/10k Hz	0.3/0.1/0.1/0.1 %

LAB COMMENTS: 8-ohm speaker with balanced impedance response and frequency response. Efficiency average, distortion very low. Very uniform and wide coverage – toe-in to the listening position is hardly necessary. Despite its compact dimensions, the speaker goes down to an astonishing 32 Hertz. The step response shows oscillators.

FEATURES

Bi-wiring terminal, boom with height-adjustable and fixable spikes; three-stage bass response; reflex port radiates to the floor; tweeter interchangeable with diamond model

STEREO-TEST

SOUND QUALITY **92%**

PRICE/PERFORMANCE

★★★★★
EXCELLENT