



BY TIM THOMAS
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Superyacht audio: let's hear it for speakers

Why settle for second best when your superyacht could benefit from ultra high-end loudspeakers and custom installations?...



“My father was always keen on listening to music,” Dickie explains, “and he really believed in the importance of high quality reproduced sound, so that was the environment that surrounded me.” It led Dickie on a career path from tinkering with old TV speakers in his early teens, through working at loudspeaker specialist B&W, to founding Vivid Audio in 2004. His signature Giya range of speakers incorporates stunning styling with acoustic magic and custom designed technology to create a listening experience that is second to none.

It’s a similar story for Kwak, who worked as a director of commercials and in film visual effects before realising that audio was being left behind by advances in video. His answer? To develop his own extraordinary speaker system based on the science of psychoacoustics. “Read a HiFi magazine and they’ll talk about minuscule distortion figures in an amp, for example,” Kwak explains. “But the brain doesn’t care about that – it’s more interested in the linearity of the distortion. If the distortion is moving in time, it is more difficult for the brain to understand the instrument. So it’s better to work on the real linearity of the component rather than working on the distortion.”

The result for both men has been to create a listening experience – for those who can afford it – that money can’t buy. Kwak’s large Origin loudspeakers feature cabinets that were designed using Formula 1 aerodynamic technology. Dickie’s curvaceous Giya speakers feature sculpted exteriors that – while a visual focal point in themselves – have actually been designed with acoustic science first and style second. Either sets could form a stunning focal point on a superyacht, and it rather suggests the question – why do we not use these exquisitely designed and exquisite sounding systems more often on board our yachts? Perhaps its because most audiophile loudspeaker companies focus on domestic environments and rarely turn their attention to marketing to the superyacht industry. But Kwak’s presence at the Monaco Yacht Show in 2016 shows that things are perhaps starting to change. He’s not the only one considering this new opportunity.

“The yacht installation side has been on my mind for three or four years,” says Raymond Rowles, whose company – Six Audio – is the distributor for Vivid Audio in the UK. “When the opportunity to exhibit at the London Yacht, Jet and Prestige Car Show in 2016 came up, we knew it would be a different audience to a normal Hi-Fi crowd. Putting loudspeakers on a yacht is something we have looked at closely, and with the custom designed fixing plates that Laurence has now developed for the Giya range we can actually achieve that.”

Indeed, embracing the custom ethos is something that both Kwak and Vivid are keen to do, from offering custom colour matching for the speaker cabinets themselves to – in the case of Vivid Audio – even offering the possibly of custom built additional components. “We don’t have a dedicated subwoofer in the Vivid range at the moment,” offers Rowles, “but we had a UK client recently who wanted another manufacturer’s sub replaced by something from us, so we went to his home, measured the room and produced a custom sub for him. We also provide solutions to most people’s wants and desires – for example, we have a C1 centre channel speaker which, with our G1 and G4 speakers as fronts and rears [and a custom sub], you could run as a 5.1 cinema system.”

Having listened both the the ASKJA Origins and the Giya G1s I can attest to the astonishing quality that high-end loudspeakers deliver. Perhaps it’s time we listened to what these manufacturers have to say, and began to consider them as real alternatives for our superyachts.

This article will be published in full in issue 175, the first edition of The ‘new’ Superyacht Report, published in January 2017. The magazine is available free for VIP subscribers. To apply please [click here](#)