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### Wharfedale Diamond 8.2 Pro Active Nearfield Monitors

Every now and then you run into a product that is just an amazing value, the Benchmark DAC1 D/A converter comes to mind, along with microphones that keep popping up at preconception-destroying price/performance ratios. The Wharfedale Diamond 8.2 monitors are just such a find. Wharfedale has a long history in consumer audio and sound reinforcement, staking a claim as the largest selling loudspeaker in Great Britain, and bringing their lines to the US just a few short years ago. The Diamond 8.2s list for just \$400 a pair (yes, a pair) and street for significantly less. At that price point, one wouldn't expect the premium components used--a 1" textile dome, Ferrofluid-cooled tweeter with a neodymium magnet, a 6.5" woofer with a "bi-directional weave" Kevlar cone and a dual wound voice coil, biamped with 40W and 60W amps, respectively. Wharfedale's Tom Linklater comments: "The reason the Diamonds are such great performers at their respective price points is the fact that Wharfedale is the only manufacturer of under-\$500/pair NFMs (Near Field Monitors) that actually does design, tool, and manufacture--in our own factory--every transducer that goes into every NFM we make. The Diamond system performance was a clean-sheet design goal as opposed to an OEM sourcing exercise." Input is either RCA phono (let's see, iPod here) or balanced pro line level on a Neutrik XLR-1/4" combo jack (DAC1 there). The front ported, shielded cabinets are built from hefty laminated ply weighing 17.6 lbs for a relatively small footprint of just over 14"x8"x12.5"--they give a good first impression by "feeling" serious. For mounting near a wall, a 6 dB per octave bass rolloff can be kicked in, though I'll confess to not trying it--I dropped the Diamond 8.2s on Auralex mo-pads on my desk and they stayed there for well over a month. The Diamond 8.2s are rated for a frequency response of 45 Hz to 24 kHz (I'm assuming from a plot of the low end in the manual that those are meant to be the 3 dB down points). The low end is surprising for the LF component's size, but not really approaching "full range." That said, the LF performance is solid within the woofer's capability. The monitors are tight with plenty of punch and volume. In a nearfield situation, there's plenty of level available, and I have a feeling that they would work well in a 5.1 configuration with a sub. The high end is crisp, perhaps a bit bright, but not strident. The most commonly heard description of their performance in the hands of a local engineer was that the Diamond 8.2s "sound like a really great set of NS-10s." Like that ubiquitous monitor of legend, the Diamond 8.2s weren't prone to flattering bad material. I wasn't fatigued by the monitors playing at moderate volumes for long periods. They also were efficient, thus satisfying at low levels. Did I mention that these monitors street for well under \$400 for the pair? Once our student listening sessions were done, with the Wharfedales holding up fairly well in a midfield situation against stiff competition, we ended by identifying models then price. The Diamond 8.2 Pro Actives' price vs. performance really turned some heads--"can I hear those again?" Yes, for an extremely modest investment, you can.

**Diamond 8.2 Pro Active: \$399.99 pair**

**Wharfedale Pro**

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