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Manufacturer: [Swan](#)
Model: Diva 2.1 Bookshelf, C3 Center Channel and R3 Surround Speakers
Suggested Retail Price: \$1497.00
 Diva 2.1 - \$399
 C3 - \$499
 R3 - \$599

Rating:

Swan Diva Surround System

The Swan Diva speakers come in boasting impressive looks that everyone raves about. With a higher price tag than all other speakers systems we've tested to date, we wondered how they would fair in our price/performance rating system. Their stunning looks and elegant performance quickly turned us into believers.

Look and Feel

Unpacking the Diva speakers brought back memories of Christmas past. We were amazed at the incredibly intricate shipping packages the Diva's arrived in. One note of warning, these things come in huge boxes, so be prepared to make some room. Once you get through the double boxes, and huge foam packing inserts, you'll come to find a speaker tightly wrapped in a soft, white [corded bag](#) to further protect them.

Once we let the speakers out of the bag, we were instantly impressed with the incredibly glossy, piano-

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like finish on top and bottom of the speakers. With a look similar to a B&W Nautilus speaker, we were impressed. The sides of the 2.1 bookshelf speakers are slightly arced, giving them a little different appearance than most square bookshelf speakers. The rosewood sides are as attractive of wood grain we've seen on a speaker in this price range.

The grills tuck nicely under the shiny, black top and bottom plates, giving them an expensive recessed look. With the grill removed, you'll immediately notice the front firing port under the unusual looking woofer. The woofer is an inverted cone style speaker with a yellow/orange color. The color and shape are just enough of an eye catcher, but not too unorthodox.

Of course, the first thing most people notice is the "eyeball" looking tweeter that protrudes over the top of the speaker. Even the tweeter has smooth, ergonomic lines. This tells us the attention to detail of the design of the speakers was impressive. The tweeter does feature a metal guard to protect the tweeter from damage.

The [C3 Center Channel](#) and [R3 Surround Speakers](#) are very similar in looks to the 2.1 bookshelf speakers. Featuring a nice blend of piano black finish and rosewood sides they form an elegant set. The C3 is a rectangular shape and features the tweeter extended above the cabinet much like the 2.1 bookshelf speakers.

The R3 speakers, however, do not have extended tweeters above the cabinet. They feature very nice, tight fitting removable grills that cover a recessed tweeter above a aluminum woofer. They are a dipole design, featuring two sets of woofers and tweeters facing different directions. What you'll immediately notice about these, is their sheer weight. You'll definitely want to anchor these into studs in your wall. Claimed weight is almost 26lbs, which is considerably heavier than most rear speakers we've seen.

The looks of the Diva speakers really struck a chord with us, and pictures did not do them justice.

Look and Feel - 5/5

Features

The 2.1 bookshelf speakers feature metal alloy woofers a 1" silk dome tweeter. As mentioned above, there is a single front firing port, located directly below the woofer. The claimed frequency response is all the way down to 48hz, although no +/- db figure is given, we found this number to be pretty close. Claimed power rating is between 20watts and 100 watts. Like the all the Diva speakers we reviewed, these bookshelf speakers are considerably heavier than most speakers in this price range, weighing in at about 27 lbs. This actually works to your advantage when using stands, as the added weight helps make the speakers even more secure and stable atop the stands.

Our review unit also featured a set of M1 stands for the 2.1 bookshelf speakers. The stands are nice looking with a sloped angle from the bottom to the stand's top. They work well with the Diva 2.1 speakers. The one point worth mentioning is the stands we received are all black, without the wood touches as shown in some [pictures](#).

The speakers all feature incredibly nice bi-wire and bi-amp capable binding posts. These are by far the nicest we've seen on speakers we've reviewed. While testing, we used a speaker cables from



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BolderCables.com and never had to worry about any connection problems at all.

The C3 Center Channel adds a feature we haven't seen in any of our previous reviews, a separate 2" midrange driver. This driver lies between the two 6.5" woofers and almost directly below the tweeter. Giving bass response all the way to 68hz and highs to 20khz, this is certainly a full range center channel.

The one feature that had us a bit concerned was the somewhat low sensitivity rating of the 2.1 bookshelves, a 87db rating. While theoretically a concern, our real world tests showed this wasn't much of an issue as reference levels were easily reached when using budget receivers. The C3 Center has a claimed sensitivity rating of 89db and the R3 sport a rating of 90db, so there is even less concern about them.

Features - 4.5/5

Performance

After we got done talking about the good looks of the Divas, we were anxious to see if these speakers offered more than just good looks. For home theater testing, we used the Onkyo 595 receiver and the Outlaw Audio 1050 receiver. For music testing, we used only the Outlaw Audio 1050 receiver. For break in purposes, we let the Diva's play on a continuous CD loop for 48 hours.

After break in, we began the normal process of watching all our demo material with the new speaker system. We were immediately impressed by the vocal clarity of the C3 center channel. To date, the nOrh speakers we reviewed produced the clearest vocals we had heard. While our review staff was split as to which speakers vocal characteristics we preferred, we all agreed that both the nOrh and the Swan Divas produced crystal clear dialogue that can be heard even at very low volume levels.

For our music testing, we rarely used a separate subwoofer, choosing to just focus on the bass provided by the Diva speakers. The combination of the big center channel and front ported woofers on the 2.1 bookshelves provided very enjoyable bass response that filled our large room. The Diva's shine on vocals in music too. The Diva speakers create an expansive, deep sense of sound that really encompasses the listener. Off-axis sound was very good, but probably not quite as good as the unbelievable off-axis sound created by the unusual nOrh speakers. Bass response was as good as we've seen in a bookshelf speaker, comparing favorably with the Home Theater Direct Level III bookshelf speakers.

We were a little concerned with how the front bookshelf speakers and the C3 center would integrate together, but pink noise testing and real world testing both showed seamless integration. A slight transition could be detected when using pink noise in a circling pattern (left to center to right to right surround to left surround) when the noise was between front and rear speakers, but we were never able to detect this in real world situations, only when using pink noise. Placement may have also been a factor in this, but we weren't able to verify this.

Transitions between the two rear speakers was fantastic, the dipole speakers spread the sound out very well over the entire listening area. The THX Trailer "Tex II" illustrates this transition beautifully.

In home theater usage, the Divas performed very well with both of the receivers we used. Even when using the Onkyo 595 (rated at 75 watts per channel), we reached reference levels without pushing the

receiver at all. In fact, we reached our reference levels at approximately the same settings we have used on other speaker packages with higher claimed sensitivity ratings.

Once again, the incredibly clear vocals were a main point of interest to us. Our listening area has various seating positions, many that are not in the "sweet spot". Even in the areas that are to the sides of the sweet spot, imaging was very good and a sense of depth was evident. We really like the wide dispersion of the R3 rear speakers.

In home theater, the center channel is by far the most used speaker. Having a good center channel is absolutely critical, and the C3 fills that spot very well. We've often criticized systems for having a weak center channel, but the Diva system earns praise for this area. While sporting a higher price, \$499, than most center channels we review, it does perform well enough to justify the higher price tag. Many systems don't shine until the left and right main speakers begin producing effects, but the C3 center may be the best part of the entire system. Even though the C3 was rated to 68hz, we actually got decent response all the way to 54hz in our room. The combination of good bass response and the silky, smooth vocal characteristics we loved this center channel. Our only concern was its heavy weight making the particle board case of our Toshiba rear projection TV sag, but we haven't seen any signs of this happening.

Performance - 4.5/5

Overall

We always are looking for the great deal, well if you can afford the price of the Diva speakers, you've found one. Without considering price, these are the overall best sounding speakers we've reviewed. Add to that the fact we think these are also the best looking speakers we've reviewed it makes for a powerful combination. Our review staff agreed, if it was our money and we had this size of budget, this is the speaker combination we would go with.

Overall - 4.5/5

Have Questions or comments about this review? Post them in our [Forum area](#) and a member of our review staff will address them.