

# SVS Prime Tower **£1,049**



This mid-sized tower from across the pond opts to sidestep high style in favour of higher-fi

## DETAILS

- PRODUCT**  
SVS Prime Tower
- ORIGIN**  
USA
- TYPE**  
3.5-way floorstander
- WEIGHT**  
18.2kg
- DIMENSIONS**  
(WxHxD)  
203 x 930 x 295mm
- FEATURES**
  - 25mm aluminium dome tweeter
  - 114mm polypropylene midrange driver
  - 2x 165mm polypropylene bass drivers
  - Quoted sensitivity: 87dB/1W/1m
- DISTRIBUTOR**  
Karma AV
- TELEPHONE**  
01423 358846
- WEBSITE**  
karma-av.co.uk

**A**dhering to the idea that a three-way, bass reflex design navigates the least hazardous path through the room type/music genre/listener taste minefield, that's what the Prime Tower is. Actually, SVS calls it a 3.5-way setup, which is fair enough as each of its four drivers handles a different section of the frequency range – although the two 'woofers' are both identical-looking 165mm polypropylene units. They're joined by a 114mm poly-coned midrange unit and a 25mm aluminium dome. The tweeter handles everything north of 2.1kHz (up to a quoted 25kHz), while the midrange driver's domain is 350Hz to 2.1kHz. The larger bass drivers hand over at 165Hz, while the lower unit reaches down to a claimed 30Hz.

In the company of the style-conscious and fashionably slim Monitor Audio and Quadral and

tech-chic KEF, the SVS looks a little straight laced and decidedly old school, while the black oak finish is a tad drab (black gloss costs more), but the build quality is reassuringly meaty and neatly executed.

## Sound quality

There's an instinctively likeable and even-handed generosity about the sound of the SVS – a musical surefootedness that quickly puts me at ease. It doesn't make a big deal of the overly plump and glossy production values that permeate the Jarreau/Cocker duet, merely presenting the music with a warm, natural balance that's strong on intelligibility and focus.

It can be affectingly intimate and tactile with simpler acoustic material, too. Randy Newman's unashamedly sentimental but inescapably moving *Wandering Boy* is laid bare, the earthy quality of his vocals melding beautifully with his expressive ivory tinkling, the speaker's assurance and dynamic freedom allowing the song's plaintive power to swell and ebb with ease.

Perhaps what's most impressive of all is the sense of balance and control. David Gilmour's exhumation of Pink Floyd's *The Great Gig In The Sky* maybe doesn't sound quite as airy and ethereal as it does with the KEF, nor the Pompeii venue quite as expansive and atmospheric as portrayed by the Mission and XTZ. But when Marshall, Jules and Chambers let it all hang out, it's the soul in their voices that really connects, less obscured by the harsh metallic zing of mics on the ragged edge so explicitly exposed by the Monitor Audio offering. As for the dark and rather murky but insidiously seductive Lewis Taylor cut, the SVS refuses to get bogged down, delivering a presentation that's finely revealing, harmonically rich and rhythmically tight.

The longer I listen to the Prime Tower, the more I appreciate its ability to walk the line between resolving detail and embracing the bigger picture. It's a sound blueprint for long-term satisfaction ●

## PRIME TIME

SVS, or SVSound, was founded in 1998 by a group of audio enthusiasts. From the beginning, the ambition was to make audio products that out-performed competing brands at every price point. The advertised methodology cites leveraging advanced technology, using the highest quality components, and applying rigorous engineering and design principles – all at affordable prices. The company makes SB compact sealed subs, PC powered cylinder subs and PB maximum performance ported subs, together with Ultra and Prime loudspeaker ranges. This Prime Tower is said to benefit from lessons learned developing the flagship Ultra Tower. It has a completely new 3.5-way crossover that claims a full, flat and seamless frequency response from the tweeter to the midrange driver and through the two individually tuned and isolated 165mm mid/bass drive units.



Don't be fooled by the rather basic design

## Hi-Fi Choice

### OUR VERDICT

- SOUND QUALITY**  
★★★★★ **LIKE:** Great balance and integration; fine bass; musically honest
- VALUE FOR MONEY**  
★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** No style icon
- BUILD QUALITY**  
★★★★★ **WESAY:** Not quite king of the hill sonically, but only a hair's width off
- EASE OF DRIVE**  
★★★★★

### OVERALL

