



Owner's Manual and User Guide - v1.2

Arx High-Performance Loudspeakers

Dear Arx Owner:

Thank you and congratulations! High performance Arx loudspeakers represent a number of bona fide advances in affordable loudspeaker design and construction: Your adventure in affordable great sound begins now.

As a new Arx owner, I wish you years of enjoyment from your purchase – I'll go into why Arx is so special in just a moment. If you have any questions about Arx, please contact us:

Web: www.TheAudioInsider.com
Email: support@theaudioinsider.com
Phone: 800-992-7252

Every Arx loudspeaker is backed by The Audio Insider's lengthy experience, hours of professional CAD and fine tuning, and seasoned production facilities, which you may have discussed with us prior to making your decision to own Arx. I have personally assured that each Arx model includes exceptional components and the purist design and engineering philosophy we've built into this product category for the last four years.

As of 2010 only new Arx technology and design provides such a high standard at such a low cost of acquisition. New Arx loudspeakers are the result of decades of experience combined with expert engineering and thoroughly professional manufacturing.

Every Arx loudspeaker is also backed by The Audio Insider's 30 Day In-Home Trial Guarantee. If you're not completely delighted with your Arx purchase, simply return it to us for a prompt refund*. The Audio Insider's Internet-direct distribution allow users access to unique, high value audio products without the usual dealer mark-ups that may double the cost of competing brands.

Arx owners are also secure knowing they may thoroughly evaluate their purchase for 30 days in their home at our risk. With Arx you get a direct conduit to some of the most advanced technology ever seen at such low cost but you also enjoy plenty of time to evaluate your purchase where it counts: in your own home.

Why is Arx so unique? There are a number of reasons why Arx delivers such a high level of performance at such modest prices.

First, every Arx model includes an advanced "planar magnetic" high frequency transducer. Unlike conventional tweeters, the Arx tweeter uses a thin-film thermoplastic diaphragm onto which electrical voice coil is directly deposited. There are no other soft parts: No cone or dome, no glue joints, no suspension or acoustically problematic moving parts. Commonly called a "ribbon", the Arx tweeter connects most directly to the signal and transfers more musical detail to the listener.

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Second, every Arx model also includes special XBL² SplitGap[™] low frequency drivers. Unlike all conventional woofers and unlike virtually all common speakers on the market at Arx's low cost of ownership, SplitGap[™] provides a dramatic and audible improvement in bass fidelity and power. SplitGap[™] slashes woofer distortion by up to two-thirds and increases bass output by nearly twice, speaker for speaker, brand for brand, and dollar for dollar.

Third, while modestly styled for lowest possible cost, Arx includes the internal quality you expect from an expensive major loudspeaker brand from a reputable manufacturer. For Arx we provided very high grade manufacturing, quality control, and testing. Every Arx model is professionally made from precision, computer mill-cut panels of internally-braced heavy stock for strength, acoustical inertness, and long life. Arx's black ash PVC jacketing is seamlessly applied to the finished enclosure without visible joints or breaks.

Arx quality extends throughout the loudspeaker. Arx driver frames and bezels are electrostatically powder-coated and baked, and all woofer frames are heavy cast alloy for maximum precision and lowest distortion. Arx crossover networks use premium film capacitors, non-inductive resistors, and low-loss inductors placed on glass-epoxy component boards for transparency and responsiveness you can hear.

Lastly, as a final step, every Arx model is tested before being packed carefully in heavy-duty cartons. From design inception to your door, literally every component in every Arx loudspeaker is designed, built, and assembled to high industry standards – unlike some competitors, we never use unskilled design or labor at any point in the Arx process, and the finished Arx loudspeaker clearly shows this attention to detail.

Arx is a thoroughly professional brand. Should any aspect of your new Arx loudspeakers not live up to your expectations, let us know and we'll make it right. From carton to your musical enjoyment, Arx really is a precision device produced by industry professionals but at an unprecedented low cost to you.

Thanks again for trusting Arx and the team at The Audio Insider. Arx has been a long term project for us and we're proud we could serve you.

Jon Lane
The Audio Insider

*subject to conditions; please consult our website for details.

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Arrival

Each Arx package is designed to protect the precision loudspeaker inside from the rigors of ground delivery throughout North America. Every loudspeaker ships in heavy duty packaging consisting of a strong outer carton enclosing rugged closed cell foam cradles that encircle the loudspeaker at ends, corners, and in some cases, at points along the length of the speaker.

Upon your receipt of the carton, it is important that you perform a complete inspection, preferably in the driver's presence. Check each of the carton's six sides for crushing, perforation, and water damage. The carton must be intact and should not have evidence of trauma.

(If you find what appears to be significant damage, note this to the driver and ask that he or she allow you to open the package to inspect the contents. If the speaker itself is damaged, note this to the driver, refuse delivery of that package, and contact The Audio Insider.)

Unpacking

Carefully unpack your new Arx loudspeakers:

- Slit the tape holding the cartons closed.
- Provided you are sure you are physically capable of doing so, lift or slide the speaker from the carton, including their foam carriers
- Remove the foam carriers from the loudspeakers
- Carefully unwrap the speakers from their poly dust covers
- For storage, shipping, or return warranty service, keep the packing materials, including cartons

Inspection

- Inspect the speakers for any physical blemish or damage. All surfaces should be clean, unmarred, solid, and true.
- Note any shipping damage and report it to both the shipper and The Audio Insider. Remember that while we will assist a damage claim and will arrange both the replacement shipment and the pickup of the damaged product, you are the legal owner and we'll need your assistance. Keep a record of your tracking number and provide it to both the shipper and The Audio Insider as we claim the damage.

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- Components – bass drivers, midrange drivers, planar magnetic treble drivers, all faceplates and chassis, ports, input terminals, grilles and badges – must be in perfect condition
- The speaker's outer surfaces should be straight, flat and unblemished
- Verify that the loudspeaker's port is loaded with a charcoal-ester foam port plug
- After reading this user guide and implementing any necessary steps, move the speakers to their final destination and connect to your amplifier or receiver
- Turn your system on at a low level and verify that all the drivers in each speaker are audible

Model-specific instructions

The Arx A1. The smallest Arx loudspeaker has only one setup variable, which is its bass alignment. Please read [The Arx Bass System and Tuning](#) in this user guide.

For high output in a multi-channel system with subwoofer, we recommend that the A1 be used as a satellite, effects, or surround speaker with the processor set to “small speaker” and with its bass reflex port blocked with the foam plug included. For a richer sound at more moderate levels, the A1 is suited for use as a main speaker with its port open and with the processor set to “large speaker”.

The Arx A2. The A2 model has the same convertible bass system as the A1. Please see [The Arx Bass System and Tuning](#) for information on how to use this feature. The A2 is designed as a Left/Center/Right speaker (LCR), meaning that it can be used horizontally as a center channel speaker, or vertically as a left and right front main loudspeaker.

For high output in a multi-channel system with subwoofer, we recommend that the A2 be used as a front satellite or center channel speaker with its bass reflex port blocked with the foam plug included. For a richer sound at moderate to loud levels, the A2 is suited for use as a main speaker with its port open.

To use the A2 as a front main loudspeaker, please rotate the tweeter 90 degrees so that its long axis is reoriented vertically. A corner of the A2's tweeter mounting area is shown on the next page. Because it is scalloped along both the vertical and horizontal axis, it will accept the tweeter either vertically or horizontally. Ensure that the tweeter is always aligned vertically, regardless of speaker orientation.

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To rotate an A2 tweeter back to vertical:

1. Remove the grille and lay the speaker on its back on a carpeted surface
2. Using a common screwdriver, remove the four screws that hold the tweeter plate to the enclosure and set them aside. **IMPORTANT:** Remove only the four outermost screws at the extreme outside corners of the tweeter faceplate. Do not remove the four screws at the corners of the copper-colored diaphragm's window nearer the center of the tweeter – those four screws attach the tweeter to its faceplate.
3. Gently lift the tweeter an inch free of the front face of the speaker and rotate it 90 degrees either clockwise or counterclockwise
4. Place the tweeter back into the enclosure, taking care to ensure that the sealing gasket is in place and aligned
5. Replace the four mounting screws and tighten them gently, using a back and forth pattern to snug them all up uniformly. Take care to not overtighten, bend the faceplate, or tighten unevenly.

When complete, the A2's tweeter will be positioned so that the long axis of the copper-colored diaphragm's "window" is aligned vertically, or along the long axis of the speaker itself when that speaker is used vertically.

An A2 used *horizontally* as a center channel speaker should also have its tweeter aligned *vertically*, meaning that it's tweeter will be perpendicular to the speaker's long axis. This is how the A2 ships from The Audio Insider.

The Arx A3. The A3 also uses the convertible bass system. Please see [The Arx Bass System and Tuning](#) for more information. For high output in a multi-channel system with subwoofer, the A3

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may be used in “small speaker” or “large speaker” mode, with its bass reflex port blocked with the foam plug included or left open, depending on processor settings. For a big, full-range sound at moderate to high levels, the A3 is suited for use as a main speaker with its port open.

The A3 ships with its base platform detached to facilitate packing. To attach the base platform:

1. Set the entire speaker upside down on a firm surface covered so as to protect the top of the speaker
2. The A3's platform “foot” has a curved front edge and is bull-nosed around its upper circumference. Place the platform so that the curved edge faces the front of the speaker, and the bull-nosed edges are facing down toward the inverted speaker. Firmly tighten the three screws that attach the base to the speaker. Do not overtighten.
3. If desired, insert four threaded feet into the base and tighten
4. Carefully invert the speaker back to upright and install for use

The A3 has a mass-loading option built into its base. A small plug seals a chamber beneath the bass enclosure and this chamber may be filled with a granular material that lends the speaker mass and stability. Loading this chamber may also improve bass definition and is recommended for best sound.

To fill the Arx A3's mass-loading chamber:

1. Invert the speaker as before, taking care to protect its top.
2. Remove the screws attaching the base platform to the speaker and lift it off.
3. Remove the plug sealing the lower chamber.
4. Carefully fill or partly fill the chamber with a dry, clean, inorganic and inert material such as dry, washed sand. We recommend white silica or plaster sand, available at any building supply outlet. Use such materials with due care and observe the manufacturer's safety instructions, including clean up procedures.
5. Firmly replace the plug and ensure that it is fully seated.
6. Replace the base platform, using the instructions above.
7. Invert the speaker back to normal and install for use. Take great care with this step as the speaker will now weigh more than it did when you first inverted it for this step.

NOTE: using the mass-loading function may add appreciable weight to the A3. Do not attempt this option if you are unable to manage and move a heavier speaker. Please do not attempt this work alone.

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About the Arx Loudspeaker

An Arx loudspeaker houses an impressive array of technologies – Arx's low cost is a testament to excellent design choices, no-frills styling, high-value professional manufacturing, and direct distribution.

Arx loudspeakers use a special "SplitGap" low frequency system coupled to a radical "planar magnetic" high frequency transducer technology. Some upcoming Arx models may also include dedicated midrange sections. Arx SplitGap low frequency drivers incorporate two voice coil gaps, doubling the cone's linear excursion limits, and making Arx among the most musically powerful speakers even at a number of times their cost.

Arx also includes adequate "diffraction step" compensation in the crossover filtering between its multiple drivers. Diffraction step compensation means that each Arx speaker is suitable for main channel use away from boundaries like walls.

Break-in and Sources

A new, "green" Arx loudspeaker fresh out of the carton will likely not develop its full sense of depth, richness, and smooth, musical detail and life for some time. While speaker break-in is a potentially controversial subject, we've found that one must exercise the new high-excursion Arx loudspeaker extensively over a period of days to have it settle into its final sonic nature, as subtle as this effect may be to some.

We recommend simply installing the speakers and playing them as you normally would as much as possible during the first 30 days. Do not over-drive them during this period or at any other time during the speaker's life, but do subject them to at least the average use you normally give your system. Expect them to become smoother and more lifelike after at least a dozen hours of normal on-and-off use. We recommend as much as a hundred hours of cumulative use before the speaker is assured of having thoroughly conditioned every component in the system.

A loudspeaker is also subject to environmental variables. For example, very high humidity can temporarily "load" the organic moving parts such as paper and cloth to dull the sound, whereas a moderate humidity and temperature will provide best results.

Positioning in the room is also important. Later in this setup guide we discuss how best to position your new Arx loudspeakers.

Like all performance-oriented loudspeakers, an Arx speaker will also take on the sound of the driving electronics and sources, whether LP, CD, or DVD. An Arx loudspeaker does not need a great deal of power, and we neither recommend very large amplifiers nor do we recommend a

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small amplifier driven over its limits and into audible distortion, or clipping.

We recommend “high-current” amplification, or in the case of a transistor amplifier, an amplifier whose power rating is appreciably higher into four ohms versus the usually specified eight – in some cases this difference can be as much as 100%. Such an amplifier exhibits high peak current delivery that may enhance its audible control over the speaker.

With a good quality, high-current amplifier of even 30 watts per channel, you may expect to hear a more lifelike, smoother sound, with better definition and generally more pleasant and enjoyable sonic signature. Vacuum tube amplifiers are also potentially agreeable with a loudspeaker designed and voiced for best musical authenticity. As the final stage of the design process prior to production, all Arx models are tuned using a high performance amplifier and both analog and digital sources.

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The Arx Bass System and Tuning

Each Arx loudspeaker includes a double-duty bass alignment feature. The charcoal-colored foam port plugs included with the speaker converts the speaker's bass system from bass reflex (open port) to acoustic suspension (closed port). Before you insert or remove the port plugs, let's review how each "alignment" affects your home theater or music system's setup and use.

The closed-port option provides a higher bass cutoff point (the bass frequency at which the speaker begins its gradual decline in loudness as the frequencies decrease). Removing the port plug grants the speaker a deeper bass cutoff frequency – published Arx specifications rate the speaker by this second, lower figure.

Each of an Arx loudspeaker's two bass tuning options includes a distinctly different cutoff rate. The bass reflex alignment attenuates decreasing bass frequencies at approximately twice the rate of the acoustical suspension alignment. A summary:

- Port closed – acoustic suspension – higher bass cutoff frequency – shallow cutoff attenuation rate
- Port open – bass reflex – lower bass cutoff frequency – sharp cutoff attenuation rate

How you use the Arx loudspeaker will determine which of these two options you select. We'll explain that next.

As mentioned, each Arx loudspeaker is designed to be used as a main speaker and does not need the further boundary reinforcement from a wall or large surface bookshelf and desktop speakers may be designed to require for full, neutral sound across the entire audible spectrum.

A loudspeaker with powerful bass and midbass energy may then naturally become overpowering if pressed into service against a back wall or inside a furniture unit. This variable affects all loudspeakers with flat, neutral response down to their bass cutoff frequency.

Where the loudspeaker is to be used in close quarters, to mitigate this effect the user may simply reduce the speaker's ability to plumb the lowest frequencies. Converting the speaker's bass cutoff attenuation profile to a more gradual, shallower rate further aids the goal of integrating it into such a placement with a subwoofer. Fortunately both features are achieved in one setup, which is to select the closed-port acoustic suspension alignment.

On the other hand, many Arx users will want to experience the full weight and impact of the special SplitGap low frequency drivers, and will also have the ability to use the speakers in a conventional setting, meaning with their faces three or more feet from the back wall. In this case the port plugs may be removed and stored. The Arx speaker will develop maximum bass energy and will also

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benefit from the natural, cone-limiting action of the *bass reflex* alignment – the port's reflex action actually lowers cone motion, giving the speaker maximum output at low frequencies.

Lastly, the choice of port setting offers an added opportunity to align and tune the complete speaker system when an Arx loudspeaker is used with a separate powered subwoofer. While we refer the Arx user to his or her subwoofer manual and processor manual for more in-depth setup instructions, we'll start you off with these simple tips.

- Closed-port setup with a subwoofer: If your subwoofer or processor/receiver allows, set it to “small speaker” the Arx speakers at approximately 80Hz cutoff and 12dB per octave rate of attenuation. Then set the subwoofer at roughly 80 Hz and it's likely default rate of attenuation of 24dB per octave. The combination of settings will provide the most ripple-free transition between main speakers and subwoofer. Then tune to taste using your subwoofer's or processor/receiver's instructions for subwoofer amplitude and phase. This setting is also preferred if you must use your Arx speakers close to back walls or other large boundaries.
- Open-port setup with a subwoofer: If your subwoofer or processor/receiver allows, set it to “small speaker” the Arx speakers at approximately 50Hz cutoff and 6 or 12dB per octave rate of attenuation. Then set the subwoofer at roughly 50 Hz and it's likely default rate of attenuation of 24dB per octave. The combination of settings will provide the most ripple-free transition between main speakers and subwoofer. Then tune to taste using your subwoofer's or processor/receiver's instructions for amplitude and phase.
- As a third option – which is the default for most plug-and-play setups but may not grant the flattest overall response – simply set the processor/receiver to “small-speaker” the Arx main speakers to the default processor/receiver setting of 80Hz. Doing so grants a reasonably flat, ripple-free combined response but either of the other two setup options we've presented could be an improvement, especially if your system allows measurement verification of the final setup with a microphone and analyzer.

Again, consult your other manuals and user guides for more information, and feel free to email or phone The Audio Insider for assistance. Best setup practices require a thorough knowledge of all of these variables and we're ready to help.

The combination of technologies, setup options, and design style means that an Arx loudspeaker may be used as a powerful main-channel speaker or with various adjustments, as a near-boundary “small speaker” speaker joined seamlessly to subwoofer. Where and how you expect to use your Arx loudspeaker will determine how you configure both it and your other equipment.

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Room Setup

Where a loudspeaker is placed in a listening room can have a significant effect on how it sounds. Since a room reflects sound, reflections add or subtract from the speaker's original output in complex and audible ways.

The loudspeaker's location and alignment also comes into play when we consider its relationship to the listener(s). Orienting a speaker to the listener most beneficially can pay substantial benefits.

The subject of loudspeaker placement is a big one and a large body of work exists to delve into each of the intricacies of best setup practices that we cannot cover fully here. Fortunately there are some basic tips that provide the great majority of such benefits.

- Leave sufficient room around the loudspeaker. As discussed above, a fullrange main speaker "prefers" to be placed away from major boundaries such as back and side walls. We recommend that an Arx speaker be optimally placed with its face as much as three or more feet from the wall the speaker is positioned along. We also recommend a comparable distance to the nearest side wall.
- Break up fundamental standing waves. When possible, place loudspeakers at odd intervals to those side and back walls by dividing the room's length and width into thirds or fifths and placing the speaker at those points or junctions. The rules of thirds and fifths minimize the room's tendency to create large nulls or hot spots that mar the speaker's otherwise flat, neutral response.
- Place front main left and right speakers equidistant to the central listening position. Once you've considered and selected the speaker's positions in the room per the recommendations above, ensure that when seated you are as close to centered between them as possible.
- Do not place stereo speakers – the left and right front main speakers – further apart than you are distanced from either of them. In other words, create an isosceles triangle where the short side extends between the speakers and each of the two equal long sides extend from the respective left and right speaker to the listener. We recommend a ratio of roughly 3:4.

Alternative schemes exist to establish best loudspeaker placement – The Audio Insider did final tuning to each Arx model using a high-grade audio system in a room where the speakers under test were placed for listening using the Cardas method, found online at www.cardas.com.

This method is unique in that it pulls the speakers well out into the room and places them further from the back wall than the side walls, which is unusual for most entertainment systems. For those installations that can employ it, we suggest giving it a try. It is deceptively simple, yet works well if

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we want to minimize room influence:

- Assuming a classic rectangle, distance from the center of the woofer to side walls is room width times 0.276.
- The distance from the center of the woofer face to the wall behind the speaker is then room width times 0.447.

Either the rule of thirds and fifths or a more esoteric method can give good results if our goal is to remove the room from the setup equation to a degree. The remaining task is simply to orient the listener within the triangle that places a speaker at either end of its base and the listener at its apex.

From there we must ensure that the placement includes two final rules.

- Floor standing Arx speakers are designed so that in the vertical axis they naturally align properly with a seated listener. Smaller, non-floor standing models should be used so that the center of their faces are roughly perpendicular to the listener – do not listen to an Arx speaker appreciably above or below this axis as the treble energy will be diminished and the response altered.
- An Arx speaker used as a center channel speaker should be used perpendicular to the center listener – do not tip either end back so as to point the tweeter to either left or right. This usually means that the speaker's front baffle's long axis is parallel to the back wall.
- Arx loudspeakers typically sound best toed in. Twisting the left and right front speaker inward slightly so that they are no longer square to the room aids the system's soundstage and image focus. Toeing the speakers in all the way so that they point directly at the listener can lose this focus by overly emphasizing the stereo effect.

Care

Treat your Arx loudspeakers as you would any valued furniture. Keep them clean, dry, and at typical living temperature out of prolonged direct sunlight.

Do not allow them to come into contact with liquids, and only clean them with mild, water-based, non-volatile cleaning solutions like a few drops of liquid dish soap dissolved in warm water. Wipe dry. Occasionally vacuum the grilles with a household vacuum cleaner, and never touch the drivers themselves.

Furniture polish is unnecessary and not recommended. Keep all packing materials in the event you need to move or return your Arx loudspeakers.

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Warranty

The Audio Insider warrants every Arx loudspeaker to be free from defects for a period of five years from the date of sale, subject to the terms and conditions herein and at our website.

Should an Arx loudspeaker fail for any reason within the Warranty period, The Audio Insider agrees to repair or replace it for the original Owner at our cost. The Warranty applies to the Arx Product and/or any Arx Part or Accessory supplied with it. To obtain warranty service the original Owner must present the original invoice or purchase receipt. This Warranty is not transferrable.

The Audio Insider reserves the right to replace the Arx Product, Part, or Accessory with the same or equivalent Product, Part, or Accessory rather than repair it. Where a replacement is provided, the original Product or Part becomes the property of The Audio Insider. The Audio Insider may replace parts with refurbished parts. Warranty service does not extend or restart the Warranty term or period described herein.

The product's Owner is responsible for all costs to return the Arx Product to us for service. Owner agrees that The Audio Insider may change its address or the address(es) of its warranty repair center(s). In no way will The Audio Insider reimburse the Owner for these costs. The Audio Insider and/or its Authorized Service Center may seek reimbursement of any costs incurred if Arx Product is found to be in good working order.

To the full extent permitted by law, but subject to the terms of this Warranty, the Warranty will not apply if the Product has not been installed, operated, maintained or used in accordance with the instructions provided herein. Arx Products, Parts, and Accessories are not covered from excess audio power as determined solely by The Audio Insider's inspection, including the effects of audio amplifiers used improperly, into signal clipping, and/or beyond their rated power.

This warranty is rendered void if the Product's serial number has been altered or removed. Damage, malfunction or failure resulting from alterations, accident, misuse, abuse, fire, liquid spillage, mis-adjustment of customer controls, power supply surges and dips, storms or acts of God, tampering or unauthorized repairs, use of defective or incompatible accessories, or entry by foreign object into the Product are not covered by this Warranty.

The Audio Insider's liability to all claims under the Warranty shall not exceed the original purchase price of the Product or, at The Audio Insider's option, the cost of replacing the Product. The Audio Insider excludes all other warranties, conditions, terms, and representations whether express or implied.

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