

Vandersteen Model 2ce Signature II Review

ReviewerOuter Audio 2018-08-14



If you are an audio connoisseur, aka audiophile, you will likely have heard of [Vandersteen Audio](#). Founded by Richard Vandersteen around 40 odd years ago, Vandersteen Audio is on the forefront of ultra-high-end consumer audio products. Vandersteen Audio push the bounds of what's possible to produce speakers the way they SHOULD sound – as if you are sitting in the recording studio listening to each element being recorded. The company has produced several patented audio technologies which form the signature sound of Vandersteen Audio.

In 2017 Vandersteen launched the Model Seven Mk II which retails for \$62,000 per pair. So when we say ultra-high-end, we mean it. A different league. Today we're looking at a speaker, far more affordable and possibly one of the most popular Vandersteen speakers, the Vandersteen Model 2ce Signature II. The original Model 2 was actually the first speaker Richard Vandersteen released in 1977. While there have been almost no changes to the speakers' exterior design, the internal elements continue to evolve and improve over time.

When you first look at the Model 2ce Signature II, you get the feeling that they are ordinary looking. That is until you hear these speakers perform. When you first hear the breathtaking detail and clarity, you instantly fall in love and no longer see an ordinary speaker, but a beautiful work of art. You will be hard pressed to find a speaker that matches the price and audio quality.

First-Order Crossover Explained

To truly appreciate the Model 2ce Signature II or any Vandersteen speaker, you need to understand what's going on under the hood.

A crossover distributes audio frequencies to each speaker driver. Most common are 2-way (high frequency, low frequency) or 3-way (high frequency, mid-range frequency, low frequency) crossovers. In most crossovers, the crossover frequencies are out-of-phase. The treble, mids, and bass arrive at your ears at different times. While the sound won't necessarily sound different, whatever you are listening to will lack detail and clarity.

Audiophiles consider first-order filters to be the perfect crossover for speakers because the first-order is 'transient perfect'. Both the frequency and phase are matched with the speaker drivers moving in unison. This means that you hear every frequency of audio arriving at your ears in unison. This greatly increases the detail and quality of the audio produced making for a superior listening experience. It's almost as if you can hear the space between each frequency. It's difficult to explain in words but you

will understand what I am saying the moment you hear a pair of Vandersteen Model 2ce Signature II's (or any Vandersteen speaker for that matter).



Vandersteen Model 2ce Signature II Specifications

The Model 2ce Signature II is made up of the finest Vandersteen parts and craftsmanship. Here is a breakdown of the specs:

Drivers

The Model 2ce incorporates four drive elements; a 10" active acoustic coupler, 8" woofer, 4,5" midrange and 1" tweeter. When you read each driver's specs you get a true sense of the detail and craftsmanship each element goes through to become a Vandersteen speaker.

The tweeter is a dual-chamber, transmission-line loaded, ceramic-coated alloy dome with Ferrofluid voice-coil cooling. This means the driver is

ultra-responsive and robust with improved cooling technology. First-order crossovers exert higher pressures on high-frequency drivers.

The midrange and woofer use a high-grade cast-metal basket -superior to the standard stamped baskets found in most speakers. The cast-metal basket is rigid which offers more control over speaker movement to deliver a cleaner, smoother sound. The midrange and woofer also use filled polycones to improve dampening and stiffness.

These are features not found in your average speaker. Let me briefly explain what this means. An audio wave originates from the acoustic center of the speaker cone. In a normal stamped basket, the speaker vibrates and the acoustic center moves around slightly. This causes some phasing which results in a sound considered “not true”. The rigid basket of the Model 2ce decreases movement of the acoustic center and thus the result is a controlled, detailed audio signal. This control, paired with a first-order crossover, is just one of the elements which give Vandersteen their signature sound.

Lastly, the acoustic coupler is a critically-damped long-fiber cone. The coupler fires out the back of the speaker housing to improve low-end performance from the 8” woofer operating at between 28Hz – 35Hz.

Crossover & Frequency Response

The crossover is a first-order filter 6dB per octave crossed at 80Hz, 600Hz, 5kHz. The Model 2ce produces an outstanding frequency response of 29Hz – 29kHz +-3dB.

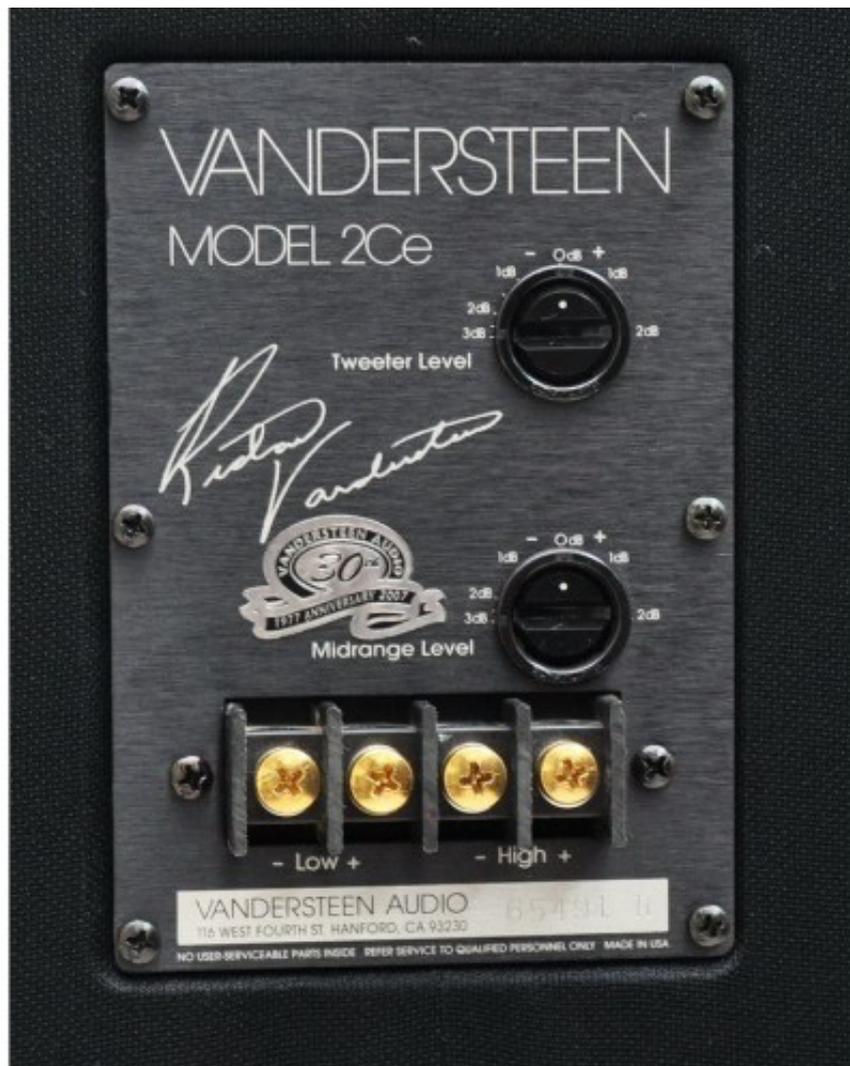
Impedance & Amplification

Recommended amplification for the Model 2ce is 40-160 Watts into 8 Ohms. Impedance is rated at 7 ohms nominal and 4 ohms minimum.

Setting Up

Getting a pair of Vandersteen Model 2ce Signature II speakers in the room is just the beginning. Positioning, toe-in, speaker height and contour control all need to be considered to get the perfect Model 2ce sound. All of these details can be found in the Model 2 user manual. However, don't be fooled into going into too much detail with speaker placement. Get a decent, symmetrical left/right speaker placement and you'll enjoy an incredible listening experience with the Model 2ce.

One thing I will agree with the user manual is amplification, wiring, and cabling. Vandersteen recommends using the same gauge of speaker cable for each channel and to try to keep the cables as short as possible. Keep all the cables the same length to ensure you achieve a true balanced sound profile. Wiring and amplification are explained in great detail in the Model 2 user manual.



Complete Home Theatre Experience

One of the things I love about Vandersteen is they are not as stuck up as many niche audiophile speaker manufacturers can be. Vandersteen manufactures all the elements you'll need to make up a home theater system. The VCC-1 is a compact, 2-way center speaker built using the same technology as the Model 2ce. The VSM-1 are a pair of wall mount speakers optimized for rear channel positions. This complete system will mean you can enjoy music in stereo while movies, games and other TV in surround sound through some of the most advanced speakers in the world.

Conclusion

If you have never listened to or owned a pair of ultra-high-end speakers, then a pair of Vandersteen Model 2ce Signature II is a good place to start. At \$2,700 a pair they are affordable (this affordable in Audiophile circles) and the unassuming design will suit most decor. All Vandersteen speakers and components are also designed and manufactured in the USA.

The Model 2ce is not just for listening to your favorite records. These speakers will deliver a superior listening experience for your favorite movies and other TV applications. I believe Vandersteen have priced the Model 2ce at this price to give everyone the opportunity to enjoy a superior listening experience.

Review Summary

Review Date

Reviewed Item

Vandersteen Model 2ce Signature II

Rating

[Vandersteen](#)

Matt has worked as a sound engineer and tour manager since 2003. His work as a sound engineer includes both live production and venue

installations. With a passion for the industry, Matt shares his knowledge and expertise with us.