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## Sound that moves mountains

**JBL's new high-end speaker C2 S9900 promises the experience of sound and music to a new level, and gets most of the other hi-fi to sound dull and lifeless out.**

[Audun Garden](#)

09/09/2010

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At JBL, they like to make speakers for old school way, and they take no shortcuts when the goal is optimal sound reproduction. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Project series, which is the name of their most exclusive speaker family. Top Model Project Everest is actually rather large even for the U.S. market, but sell like hotcakes in Japan, where JBL has its largest high-end clientele. It is no coincidence that the newest member of the Project family from JBL, C2 S9900, was launched recently here.

In Japan is already a man of the house for the last Project model, but it's only now we get to experience it here at home. K2 is the world's second highest mountain after Mount Everest, and thus appropriate name for his little brother,

who is still larger than most manufacturers' top models. Here is the good old fashioned American cubic applicable, and in this case we are talking about a big block Chevy with dozens of forces ...

### C2 S9900

The new JBL speakers took us somewhat by surprise: Delivered in two relatively small and anonymous, but admittedly insanely heavy (82kg per piece) boxes stamped with JBL Professional, there was not much on the outside that could reveal that we had a genuine high-end speaker to do. But the family board, there is nothing to say on: The predecessor C2 S9800 was JBL's most expensive and best speaker until Everest was launched in conjunction with the 60-year anniversary in 2006. S9900 is just as much a brother to Everest as a successor to the S9800, with a lot of technique and design elements taken from the top model.

### Practical Wildlife

To be named after a mountain and the little brother of one of the world's most awesome speakers, K2 is surprisingly compact and easily placed. One might go so far as to call it a practical high-end speaker. It does not mean they are subtle or easy to hide away. They are, after all, broad as a refrigerator. The special curved cabinet, which comes from the furniture factory Hornslet in Denmark, however, very shallow in depth, and this makes it much easier to place than the majority of high-end speakers. This is no coincidence. The largest market for JBL's high-end speakers are Japan, where it is known that quite crowded. To use these speakers in a small apartment, however, not recommended, unless you own the entire apartment building or floor to yourself. JBL K2 is designed to play LOUD, and to exploit them fully, you should preferably have a secluded house in the country ....

### Hi-Fi with hurricane force

When describing the sound of K2, it is tempting to go out terms like "crazy" and "death fats" from their vocabulary. But a more accurate description would be that the speakers sound very effortless. They have so much energy and power that is usually difficult pieces of music is a breeze, and they are rendered with a clarity and intimacy that can only be experienced.

Audio performance of JBL K2 is able to give you your life mesmerized. Forget everything you thought you knew about horn speakers - here you get a glass of clear, transparent and silky-smooth sound reproduction combined with a powerful and dynamic that is shocking. All this leads to a realism and a live feel that is almost unparalleled, and comes close to the approximately 200,000 million more expensive JBL Everest. JBL K2 is able to reproduce music with a realistic size, scale and authority that it simply is not possible to achieve with smaller speakers. Most speakers will lose dynamics and goes into screaming distortion as the volume increases. JBL K2, however, is almost better and better the more you turn the volume knob to the right. Even at a level that would get regular high-end speakers to melt, they have plenty of profit left to reproduce the music's dynamic swings with undiminished force.



## Results

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Sound quality  
 Functionality  
 Ease of use  
 Quality Impressions  
   Enormous energy and live feeling  
   Extreme dynamics  
   Functional design

Stiff price  
 Fussy at rest  
 of equipment

## Facts

1 "super tweeter in the Horn 4" midrange in the horn 15  
 "woofer 33Hz-50kHz frequency response (-6dB) 93 dB  
 sensitivity 8 ohms impedance

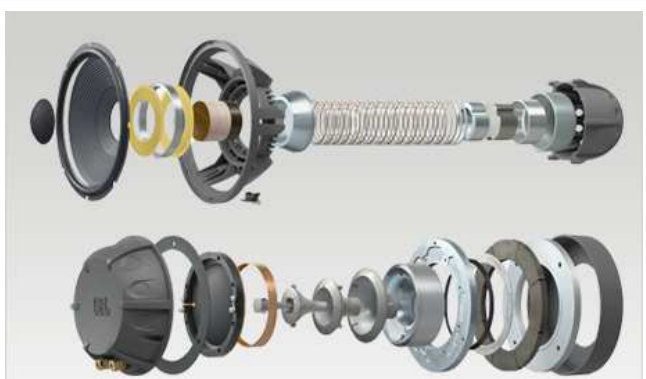
Manufacturer: JBL  
 Price: 250.000, -  
 Import: [Harman Nordic](#)



Bass reproduction is powerful, and provides a rock solid foundation. The powerful 15-inch model delivers a pressure that blows all other high-end speakers over. Drums and bass are reproduced with cash estimates of the diaphragm, and brings to mind the live concerts. Electronic music with synth bass sends pulses through the air that makes the whole room to vibrate. But even the impressive bass response is, is K2s largest forces upward in frequency. Most impressive is the reproduction of vocals. Hornet follow the small changes in tone, strength and pace of lynhurtig and precise manner, without the dynamic constraint is perceived by ordinary dynamic elements and domediskanter. A common prejudice about horn loudspeakers is that the high playing and jagged edges, without sophistication one associates with traditional hi-fi speakers. But JBL K2 is so much more than a rock speaker on steroids. One of the best features is the effortless reproduction in the top, which preserves the freshness and openness of sound levels normal speakers can only dream about. Yet there is no doubt that they have a more direct and energetic style of play than many other hi-fi speakers. C2 caress no ears with soft overtones of such a Dynaudio or B & W speaker can do. Believe not the JBL one lacks the sophistication to render classical music, on the contrary. There are many good speakers that sound clean and clear as long as the music consists of a few instruments, but as soon as the sound filled with multiple sound sources fall often and getting muddy and indistinct. K2-one has a unique ability to maintain focus as more instruments are added to the sound, and each instrument stands out as clearly even more going. This micro-dynamics is something that characterizes the horn speakers in general, and K2 is especially good in this discipline.

#### Requires quality

Favourable physical dimensions and high efficiency must not fool yourself into thinking that this is an easy and forgiving high-end speaker with mild requirements on the rest of the equipment, so you can experience with the affordable LS series and partly also the more expensive Array Series from JBL. Project class, you can definitely forget about everything called discount electronics. Equipment of the highest class is not only an advantage but a necessity with the JBL K2. After various attempts with Rotel and Hegel, I ended up with the baddest of the company owns Harman own stable, more specifically, Mark Levinson amplifier sets No.326S/No532 (100.500/kr £ 175,000), who had smuggled out of the editor's own listening room while he slept afternoon. Levinson kit has a superior power, and vice control in the bass was much more speed and life of JBL speakers. A complete set of CD player, preamplifier and power amplifier ends light up costing even more than the speakers, but you are not prepared to give the C2 one the signal source they deserve, the question is rather whether one should not consider other combinations. The large speakers swallow namely away more power than you think, but unlike many inefficient high-end speakers, they also back in full measure sound.





### Construction

JBL has since its inception in 1946 based on the use of horns to achieve clean, powerful sound. C2 is no exception, and although the structure is very reminiscent of the classic JBL speakers from the 50's and 60's, it uses modern technology and high quality components. The "heart" of the speaker is the great treble horn, and just like on Everest is housing form an extension of the horn, giving the speakers is both distinctive and functional appearance.

C2 is designed as a two-way speaker with horn loading the tweeter / midrange, and a conventional cone bass. The large horn tweeter uses a 4-inch compression driver of magnesium, and covers a very wide frequency range from 900Hz and up to 22kHz. The foundation provided by a powerful 15-inch, Alnico-magnet, while the small UHF (Ultra High Frequency) horn first come in from 15kHz and up. In this way JBL to have some crossover in the midrange, which is the most sensitive part of the frequency. One of the main criteria in the development of C2 has been to achieve a speaker that maintains the same lydkarakter regardless of volume.

### Competitors

Just as with sports cars, there is no perfect speaker. One must choose the one with the right qualities. Market is around 200,000 dollars and up is full of good speakers (it was the only fair), which plays even more "correct" than the JBL K2. But those who have the means to buy the speakers in this price range are not necessarily interested in "high fidelity" and which brand it is on the microphone to Kari Bremnes - they'd rather have the guitar to Hendrix before him in the living room. One of the worst that could happen after having blown a quarter million on the speakers had to be to end up with thin, delicate sound that for some reason fail to engage. Such issues do not you are guaranteed with the JBL K2. Here's a sound that sets your adrenaline boil every time you press the Play button and drag up the volume, and most high-end speakers are like a stale breeze compared to the JBL K2. The only speakers I've heard that matches or exceeds the dynamic of the big JBL's are big brother Everest, and the swine animal KEF Muon to around million. The tall columns from Adyton, which ends up in roughly the same price as C2 with matching subwoofers, is also a worthy challenger. A great speaker that this is of course

not without weaknesses. With a frontal area the size of barn doors reflect the C2 one natural NOK some more sound from the front baffle than the typical sleek hi-fi speakers will do. C2 can not exhibit the same precision in the sound as the best speakers in this area, and both the Vienna Acoustics Die Music (£ 170,000) and the Dynaudio C4 (£ 120,000) has a better ability to reproduce the musicians' position in the recording room.

#### Conclusion

They are large, dominates the living room and looks like something Darth Vader would use to play the Imperial march on. But JBL K2 is a true reference speaker, precisely because it represents one of the most extreme in its genre. K2 has given me some of the most soul-defining musical experiences I can remember, at the very height of live concerts of my absolute favorite artists. With a vast musical drive, dynamism unparalleled ability to reproduce music clock clean even at extreme sound levels, this is one of the most compromise the speakers I've heard. The price is stiff, and the requirement for other equipment is so high that the JBL K2 remains a dream speaker for most people. Fortunately, there are considerably less expensive speakers out there with the unmistakable JBL lydskarakteren. And thus may the dream come true anyway?

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