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Polk Audio db104 Review

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for everyone**Category:** Other

A friend of mine asked me, "What upgrade can I do to improve the sound of my car (CR-V)? I have a couple of 12" subs at the back and a BIG ASS enclosure. It sounds okay but I want something different!"

I started mentioning about a change the box and sub since it was part of his problem (imagine, having a box in the boot of a CR-V and you'd be pressed hard to find space for a couple of overnight bags and a set of golf clubs).

He asked, "What size of a sub would you recommend?"

"A 10" sub would fit the bill." I said back.

"Wouldn't it be lacking, I mean in terms of size and output?", was his quick reply.

And I go, "Nah, it'll be just right. You're not planning on annoying your neighbors or competing in SPL events, are you?"

He thought for a couple of seconds and goes, "Nope. I just want something clean sounding and I'd want to have my cargo space back. But, it can't be expensive and hard to drive, just a simple sub that can perform decently. A 10" sub would be okay, I guess. Oh yeah, I'd like to have something that's not too common."

I told him, "I've wanted to try out those Polk Audio stuff, you up to it? It's not too expensive, at P4,750.00 a pop for a 10" and I can have it over by next week. In the mean time, I'll lend you one of my old 10" subs so you can take a look see if you want one. It's just easy enough to get a 12" over. And at least you'll have enough time to think things through."

He agrees and after hooking up the 10" sub at the back of his "Vee", he was instantly sold on the idea and I go on ahead and ordered his Polk Audio db104...

Our sample is the SVC kind and Polk offers most of it's subwoofers in both SVC and DVC. The db104 is the medium size in db line of subs which has cone options of 8" (db804) to 12" (db124) the only 15" sub in Polk's sub line-up is the MM2154 (Polk/MOMO). Anyways, the cone of this beauty is made up of what Polk calls, Dynamic Balance Polymer Composite dish cone. Finished in silver with Polk Audio and db series logos screen on the cone (yep, no dust caps, so nothing can come flying-off during those lunatic high volume levels). Mounting depth is about 6.25" and a standard mounting diameter for 10" subs or about 9".

The db104 came packed from the factory with Styrofoam top and bottom packaging plates (?) that fit snugly around the perimeter of the cone and at the base of the magnet. Allen mounting screws came with the package negating the need to use woodscrews. It should be noted, though, that the screw hole for this sub is small and will fit screws with dimensions similar to the ones it came with. Not bad actually in terms of cosmetics, pain in the arse though when mounting or removing the sub. An owner's manual came with the packaging but a mounting template didn't. I would assume that Polk Audio wanted their drivers to be installed by a professional rather than a DIY'er since most installers have some sort of template for different speakers that they carry, though as mentioned, the mounting diameter is a standard 9".

For this install, it's actually for a friend's CR-V. He wanted something balanced because of his music preference. With a VERY wide array of music anywhere from Joe Satriani to David Benoit to Kaskadee to Maxwell and sometimes, DVD concerts. We ran the T/S parameters in my trusty Bass Box Pro 6, though the factory already recommended a box roughly .7cuft, to achieve a QTC of <.707 to give it a bit of flexibility. The outcome was a 1 cuft gross internal volume with a QTC of .68 and an F3 of 57Hz. After finalizing the proper volume and box design, we went through the course and made the box using .75" MDF, glue and screw. No fiber-fill inside.

The system consisted of a Pioneer DEH-5750 deck with signal wires running underneath the driver seat where the 4 channel Alpine giving it about 170 watts bridged into the 4 ohm load. 4ga power wire was run through this as well. We crossed it over at 80Hz 12db/oct for LP and HP was also at 80Hz 12db/oct. Sub orientation was at the center of the rear seat backs facing the back of the cab firing towards the tail gate. Not much EQing was done so as to let the sub play in its unaltered form. We let the sub burn in using normal listening levels and material for about a couple of weeks. After which, we cranked up the tunes and away we went.

Anyway, first thing we noticed when we played a percussion CD (Sheffield), the transients in between the pounding of the kick drum and toms were fast, tones were clear which you can differentiate them from one another, though there was a peak somewhere in the upper bass range which pulled the mid-bass somewhere towards the back. Need to tweak that part out later. On cueing some house music, the sub could easily keep up with the mid-bass mounted in the doors, though again, there were some peaks in this range, it some how emphasized the mid-bass too much, making it a bit too punchy but played transients from mid-bass to bass pretty well. We got stunned by how much bass extension it let out too. You can feel the rumble throughout the entire car. Almost too much for my taste, but shook the CR-V nonetheless. Not bad for a 10" sub! The db104 actually reminded me of the old-school JL 10w1-4 sub that we used to play around back in the day.

Just on a note, we weren't doing a SQ listening session here but just sizing up what the sub is capable of. I didn't get to do a critical examination on it because we were listening on the side of the street in front of my shop (garage). The SQ part would be done in another chapter of this and that would be in a couple of weeks or so. Don't worry I'll keep you guys posted.

If you're looking for alternative car audio equipment at a reasonable price and reasonably sized box, you may want to check out the db104. It's a very good alternative to add-on to your choice of sub-woofers locally available and with the growing number of dealers (me included, yeah I know, nasty plug! Nyahahaha!), I'm sure it won't you won't be disappointed, I wasn't.

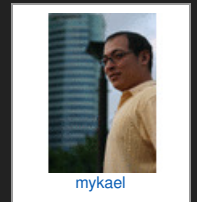
Another note: I wasn't paid by the local distributor to do this. I was just happy with how it sounded and decided to share it with you guys. ☐ :D

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