

Klein & Hummel O 300D | £3,245/pair

Delivering top-flight performance with a price tag to match, these monitors get a *Jon Musgrave* once-over

WHAT IS IT?

Active three-way reference monitor

CONTACT

Who: Sennheiser UK
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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Compact, three-way design
- 2 Digital inputs
- 3 Impressive bass delivery

SPECS

Free field frequency response 1: 40Hz to 20kHz +/-2dB

Free field frequency response 2: 35Hz to 24kHz +/-3dB

Drivers: Eight-inch woofer, three-inch midrange one-inch tweeter

Max SPL in half space at 3% THD in 1m: 112.8dB

Woofer amplifier: 150W (continuous, THD<0.1%)

Midrange amplifier: 65W (continuous, THD<0.1%)

Tweeter amplifier: 65W (continuous, THD<0.1%)

Digital input: XLR & BNC, (AES, S/PDIF)

Conversion: 24-bit, 32kHz to 96kHz

Dimensions: 254 x 384x 290mm

Weight: 14kg

Once you get beyond the pile-'em-high monitor market, things take on a completely different perspective where

even £1,000 a pair looks like small beans. Last year Klein & Hummel (now part of Sennheiser) re-marketed their O 300 three-way tri-amplified monitor, first with digital inputs (the O 300D, which we have on test here) and then without (the slightly cheaper O 300). Both designs are uncompromising reference monitors designed to pack a serious punch.

They're a three-way design, which is certainly less common for nearfields, and with three amplifiers and three drivers (including an eight-inch woofer) squeezed into the reasonably compact cabinet, the O 300 certainly looks impressively engineered.

The science

On the specifications front, the three amps (65 Watts, 65 Watts and 150 Watts) deliver a maximum level of just under 113dB. Onboard EQ is 3-band, and all drivers are protected by electronic limiting. As you may have

noticed, the baffle features moulded wave guides (using their low resonance integral moulding), and the remainder of the box is made from MDF.

As I've already said, the O 300 comes in two forms – the one we have on trial here is the digital version. Ostensibly this adds digital connectivity (AES or S/PDIF) via a BNC digital input. But it also adds the facility to access the power amps directly (via a seven-pin XLR), and it can be hooked up with K&H's C28 speaker management controller. All this points to the O 300D finding its place in a surround set-up as much as a standard stereo one.

From a purchasing perspective, it also means that if you don't need the extra bells and whistles of the O 300D, then the simpler (and cheaper) O 300 might just be more up your street.

Because it's worth it

The O 300 is clearly a tidy slab of speaker, and at around 14 kilos apiece it feels like it should be brutish in delivery. But once plugged up its refinement is obvious. I'm initially impressed by the sizable bottom end,

and realise that for nearfield (and near-wall) use this is too much. The low-frequency trim is in 3dB steps up to -9dB. I go for the -6dB option.

The overall balance feels pretty flat, and the mid range competes well with the bottom end. With the crossovers positioned at 650Hz and 3.3kHz, it also means that the three-inch mid-range unit is handling all of those critical middle frequencies. The result is a very detailed sound, especially for vocals.

But even allowing for my -6dB LF setting, the O 300D still packs serious punch for its size. What's more, it delivers a sense of scale and separation that other monitors this size struggle to do. Most importantly, it genuinely shows up the shortcomings in many sources. I struggled with this at first, and it took a lot of listening to appreciate how accurate these monitors are.

Not all users will want a monitor this revealing, opting for vibe over accuracy. Lucky for them as they can put the bank loan on hold. However, if critical delivery is what you're after, the O 300D has plenty of that and is well worth checking out, if only to see what a truly expensive monitor sounds like. **FM**

FutureMusic	VERDICT
BUILD	████████████████████
VALUE	██████████████████
EASE OF USE	██████████████████
VERSATILITY	██████████████████
RESULTS	██████████████████
Very revealing monitors with lots of power for their size, but unfortunately a price tag to match.	

