



TEST: Velodyne WI-Q10 - room measurement, wireless connection + performance & control

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editor

The WI-Q10 from Velodyne Acoustics is a subwoofer that is particularly suitable for use in modern-style living rooms. It can be connected wirelessly to the AV receiver or hi-fi amplifier and also comes with an automatic calibration function. This makes it highly flexible and easy to set up even for beginners. And also in the disciplines of sound and power, my testing guest knows how to convince.



A subwoofer should be part of every home theater system. Especially when it's as flexible and easy to set up as the WI-Q10.

(This review of the Velodyne Acoustics WI-Q10 subwoofer appears in the 19 June 2020 issue of German magazine lite and is translated here to English.)

The reputation is almost legendary: Velodyne has been one of the most established and best-known subwoofer developers in the world for more than three decades. The legendary reputation is based on the presentation of the world's first active membrane controls in a subwoofer, a technology that the company, which was founded in the USA—and is now managed from Hamburg—continued to develop in the years that followed. The resulting room correction is now representative of the brand and implemented in almost all Velodyne products. This cool extra doesn't have to be expensive. With the WI-Q10, the bass specialists have a highly attractive solution in their portfolio. It comprises a powerful subwoofer with wireless signal transmission and, of course, with an automatic calibration function.



With the cover attached, the Velodyne looks more pleasing.

Intended use

In times when we have to do without extensive visits to the cinema, the home surround system regains attention. We don't watch the coolest new action adventures in town, but stream them to our living room via Netflix and Amazon. So that the audio feeling really impresses, a very good front-surround system or a dedicated multi-channel system including a powerful subwoofer is required. This is where the Velodyne WI-Q10 comes into play: It promises to get the blood of every home cinema enthusiast flowing, and also to delight the music-lover's heart, whether it's presenting that spacious sensation of a classical music concert or concussively staging the explosions in a blockbuster.

This compact ten-incher descends deeply into the bass cellar, constructing a solid foundation of well-defined fundamentals and a real cinema atmosphere. The sub can be flexibly positioned and takes up little space. Let's see how it tested!

Simple design, well made

The housing of the WI-Q10 is finished in matte black and its rounded edges blend well with furniture. The curving front cover also adds some stylish pep. The thick rubber feet keep the sub at a good distance from the floor, but at the expense of some of its elegance. The IR receiver is located on the front, next to the woofer. The display, which is quite bright in normal conditions, can also be switched off using the remote control. There is also a connection for the directional microphone. The bass reflex tube embedded in the bottom of the housing extends the volume and bass range. On the back, the phase and volume can then be adjusted using the rotary and pressure switches, and the auto-on/off function activated. In addition to two RCA-type inputs and outputs, there is also a set of high-level inputs and outputs. Operation with amplifiers and receivers lacking a dedicated subwoofer output is also possible.



All controls, switches and sockets are located on the back of the sub. Among other things, there are also two low-level inputs. This means that the WI-Q10 can also be operated with a wired connection.

Lineup

The WI-Q has a lot of technology that makes it easier for the user to set up. Nevertheless, it is important to find the right location for the sub. Of course, it depends on individual preference, but a few standard rules should also be observed. Especially in the living room, you might like to push the subwoofer against the wall, into the corner, or sometimes even behind the couch. Although the lowest frequencies cannot really be located by our ears, it does matter where the sub is placed. In a confined space, its sound quality can quickly thicken. The best place is usually between the center and one of the front speakers or behind the listening position. However, these positions often fail due to the cable route. The WI-Q10 has a practical solution for this. Due to the wireless connection option between the AV receiver and the sub, the Velodyne is highly flexible in its setup. Only an outlet should be nearby.



The transmitter is included and enables wireless connection between the AV receiver and the subwoofer.

Don't be afraid of the settings

The second practical extra with the Velodyne is the automatic calibration. Not every home theater or music lover is so tech-savvy that they can independently find the optimal settings for greatest listening pleasure. With the WI-Q10 this can be done quickly and easily by anyone.

The measurement microphone is clicked into the small stand base and placed at the listening position. Then the sufficiently long cable is plugged into the microphone connector on the subwoofer and the Velodyne is supplied with power. The calibration is then started using the remote control. To do this, press the EQ button for about 2-3 seconds. The subwoofer now reproduces sweep tones in the range from 20 to 150 Hertz. Meanwhile, the LED display shows "AU". The WI-Q10 then analyzes the data obtained, stores it as playback modes and returns to normal operating mode. Now disconnect the microphone cable and the process is complete.



Measurement made easy. The microphone is simply plugged into the sub, set up at the reference location and the measurement is started. That's it!

WI-Q10 with four presets

Of course, it is also possible to re-adjust manually in order to adapt the sub to individual listening taste. Velodyne also offers four pre-installed presets on the remote control. These default settings can be worth gold, especially for beginners. One push of a button is all it takes to create a completely new sound. You can't do anything wrong. Any change can be quickly undone. Depending on the genre currently being played, other equalizer settings can be activated. "Jazz-Classical", for example, goes really deep into the basement, and the others include "Movies", "Rock" and "Games". Depending on the application, they can be less well coordinated.

To avoid any misunderstandings: The measurement described only refers to the subwoofer. All other speaker settings are made through the AV receiver. However, this also works automatically in most models today.

Everything stowed away well

You don't have to worry about damage during shipping. The WI-Q10 is fully protected in a double cardboard box with thick styrofoam parts. After lifting the compact, 18,5 kg, 10-incher out of the box, the accessories also come to light: there is the power cable for the sub, the power supply for the remote transmitter, the transmitter itself, the small infrared remote control, the calibration microphone and small stand. The mic and stand are well protected in the styrofoam buffers.

Adjustable spikes are not included. The solid rubber feet offer good shielding from the ground, but cannot compensate for unevenness and do not look quite as chic. If you prefer to put your sub on spikes, you can find these in our article on the HS spikes from VIABLUE that offer a good solution.



Thanks to the wireless connection, the subwoofer can also be placed on the side of the room or behind the listening position. Only an outlet should be nearby.

Wireless connection

Now we come to the WI Connect transmitter: It is connected to the sub-out of the AV receiver using an RCA cable. For the AV receiver, it is just as if a classic, wired subwoofer were connected to it. It passes its signals to the transmitter, which converts and sends them to the Velodyne via one of four possible radio channels. The signals pass to an integrated receiver and are converted back. In theory, wireless parallel operation of up to four subwoofers is possible. After switching on the transmitter and the WI-Q10, the connection is established within a few seconds. The Velodyne can then be freely positioned within a radius of 15 meters. During my entire test, the radio connection was stable, with no interference or interruptions. Thanks to this wireless link, the subwoofer can now be positioned anywhere in the room and without limitation by cables. It could hardly be more flexible!

The most important thing from a distance

The audio signal is transmitted by radio frequency. The most important settings can also be made conveniently from a distance using a remote control. I find the volume control and night mode to be very practical. The bass intensity can be dampened at an advanced hour using night mode. In this way, the neighbors are not shaken out of bed, nor are the sleeping children awakened.



The small remote control also offers remote access to all important functions.

The light button is also important. It can be used to switch off the LED display, an advantage in a darkened home theater room.

In addition there are the four presets Jazz, Movie, Rock and Game and the phase is adjustable in four levels. Now that the WI-Q10 has been measured and I have familiarized myself with the remote control, everything is ready for first use: I have linked the Velodyne to the Yamaha RX-A820 Aventure AVR.

Clean thing

"Terminator - Genisys" on Blu-ray and in Dolby Digital 5.1 starts again: The year 2029. The rebel leader John Connor is fighting against the superiority of the Skynet machine empire. In order to protect his mother from a killer robot, he sends his friend Kyle Reese back to 1983. When Kyle arrives there, he realizes that the past does not exist as expected. Sarah's parents are dead, a T-800 Android then protected and raised the nine-year-old girl. Kyle finally tracks Sarah down and explains what will happen in the future. The power of the WI-Q10 is proven several times in the first 20 minutes. During the numerous flashbacks, up to the exit of Kyle from the time machine, all bass effects are reproduced clearly and without hum.



The base reflex port sits in the underside of the housing and ensures, among other things, minimum structure-borne noise.

The grand finale

The scene ends with a typical terminator theme. Bass produced here by the WI-Q10 goes through my marrow and bones. That makes every fan's heart beat faster. Sarah and Kyle are now in 2017: There they meet John Connor in the hospital. The subsequent escape builds up tension again, supported by gripping film music with its deep passages. When it finally comes to a fight between John Connor and the Terminator in the underground garage, the sub gives it all again. Strikes, shots and other effects are reproduced with strong bass and with a lot of structure-borne impact. Now the WI-Q10 really gets going and fires all low-frequency components cleanly into the room. Every time a door is breached, a shot fired and a character morphed, the sounds are rendered precisely.

A tingle in the belly

And the Velodyne has a decisive part in that. "Terminator" seems to me to be good food for the WI-Q10 anyway, which is basically required here non-stop: Sometimes gently, sometimes quietly and sometimes loudly, whether low-frequency, mechanical movements of the robots or the numerous fight and shooting scenes.



The display in the front provides information about the currently selected volume. If necessary, it can also be dimmed or switched off completely.

The optimal interaction between the home cinema system and the subwoofer keeps me getting intently into the story. The sub's modest appearance has nothing to do with the performance I'm experiencing. The WI-Q10 does its best in every area. It clearly masters this action blockbuster, dynamically and powerfully, and is therefore easily recommended for use in rooms up to 20 square meters and also a bit more. Here it provides appropriate structure-borne sound reproduction for proper vibration in the sofa and a certain tingling sensation in the stomach area. This is how home theater should be—all without an awkward placement procedure and tedious fine tuning.

Stadium feeling

But that's not the end of it. After the imposing performance in the film playback, we now go to the live concert. "Queen Rock Montreal + Live Aid" is coming, again on Blu-ray and in DTS-HD: The intro is already impressive. When the fans cheer in the stadium, the lights go up and "We Will Rock You" begins, I get a real live feeling. The sound is right, the stadium is shaking and I'm right in the middle of it. Drums and electric guitars come from the front, the roaring crowd cheers around me. The WI-Q10 sets the pace and nothing keeps me on the couch. The bass goes straight into my blood and seduces me to turn-up the volume. In the title "Get Down Make Love" this feeling returns with full intensity. The featured electric bass is imposingly presented by the Velodyne,

Under pressure

My favorite has been and remains "Under Pressure", a classic that Queen once produced with David Bowie and that has long held legendary status. As soon as the play button is pressed, it says: Stand up and rock with the bass drum. Even now, nothing keeps me on the sofa. The WI-Q10 impresses across the board with its speed and consistently accurate reproduction. It will be really great at the end of my test with "Bohemian Rhapsody". Regardless of whether Freddy kicks-back gently, or he rocks-out vigorously and dynamically, the support of the subwoofer consistently turns this sledgehammer title into an impressive live experience. The stage is boiling, the floor is shaking and the Velodyne brings on the rich bass. And without distorting or humming. The WI-Q10 not only succeeds in staging all the film effects, shots and explosions in action-adventures, but also pulls-in music fans under its spell.



The large 10-inch woofer in the front ensures a strong output, but also plays surprisingly fast for its size.

Conclusion

With the WI-Q10, Velodyne supplies an integrative subwoofer that is extremely flexible thanks to wireless connectivity and remote control. With its automatic room correction, this is a sub that's quickly and easily set up by home cinema beginners, and integrated into their existing systems. The Velodyne WI-Q10 convinces without restrictions in terms of sound. What is remarkable is the enormous output with, simultaneously, volume and full control. By the way, not only are the tones low, the price of the subs has also dropped. For just under 500 euros, it is difficult to find a similarly equipped subwoofer with comparable performance. In my view, the WI-Q10 is therefore a real highlight and a very hot recommendation for home cinema fans who have their surround setup in the living room.

Test & Text: Andreas Hohn
Photos: Philipp Thielen

RATING

Overall grade: highlight
class: middle class
price / performance: excellent

sound	<div style="width: 79%;"><div style="width: 79%;"></div></div>	79
practice	<div style="width: 80%;"><div style="width: 80%;"></div></div>	80
Furnishing	<div style="width: 80%;"><div style="width: 80%;"></div></div>	80



Technical specifications

Model:	Velodyne WI-Q10
Product category:	Active subwoofer
Price:	around 500 euros
Guarantee:	3 years on electronics, 5 years on drivers
Versions:	- Black
Distribution:	Audio Reference, Hamburg Tel .: 040/53320359 www.audio-reference.de
Dimensions (HBT):	440 x 387 x 432 mm
Weight:	18.6 kg
Woofers:	- 200 mm (active)
Power:	- 390 watts dynamic - 195 watts RMS

Technical specifications

Design / principle:	Frontfire, bass reflex
Low pass switch:	40 - 135 Hz
Phase adjustment:	0, 90, 180, 270 degrees
Scope of delivery:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- WI-Q10- radio transmitter- instructions- power cord- cover
Pros and cons:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">+ automatic room measurement+ radio connection+ flexible setup+ quick setup+ crisp basic tone+ decent low bass volume+ high level connections - no spikes
Grading:	
Overall grade:	Highlight
Great:	Middle class
Price-performance	outstanding