



extract licensed for web use from FIDELITY 53 – 1/2021
Göbel High End Divin Marquis

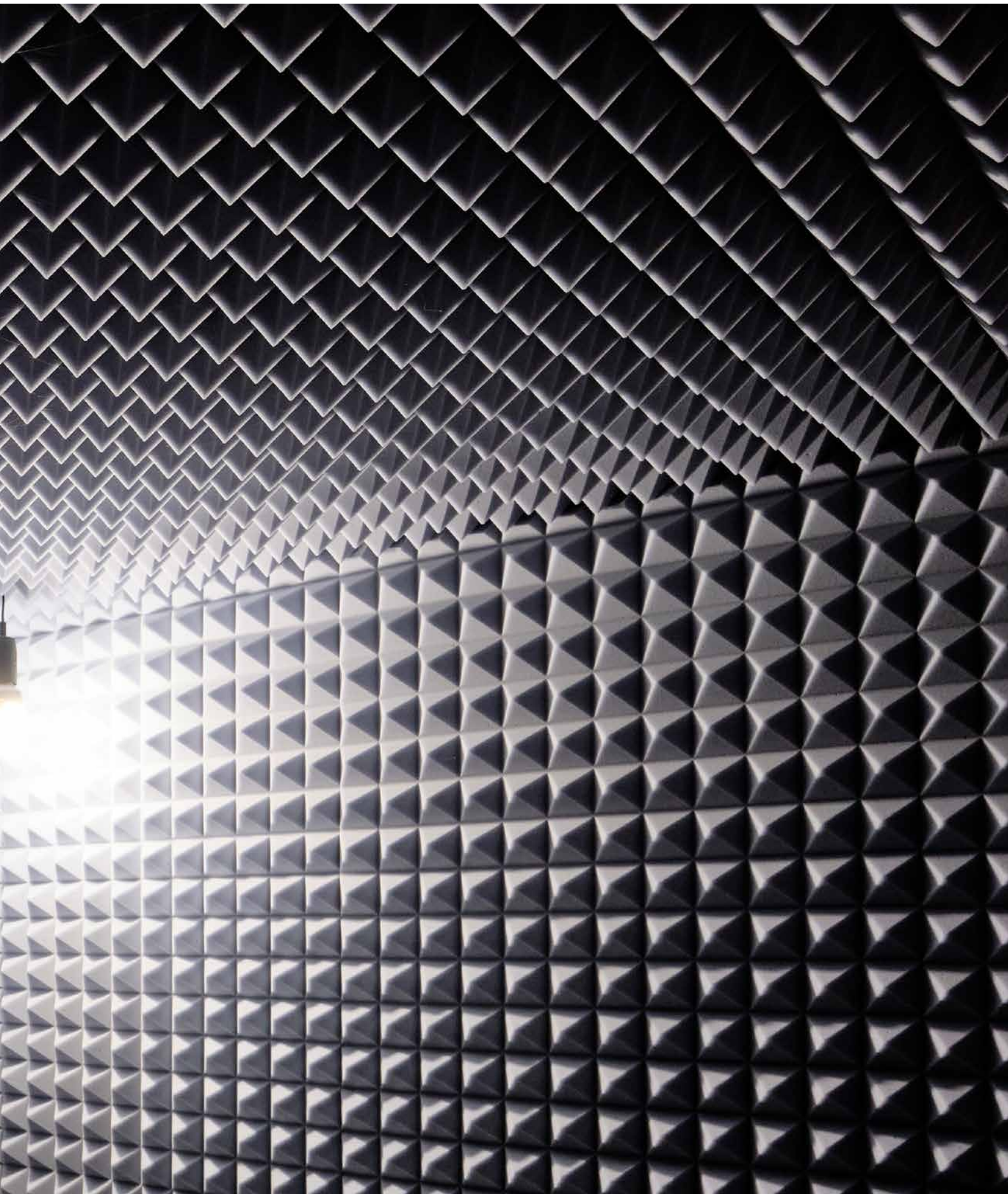


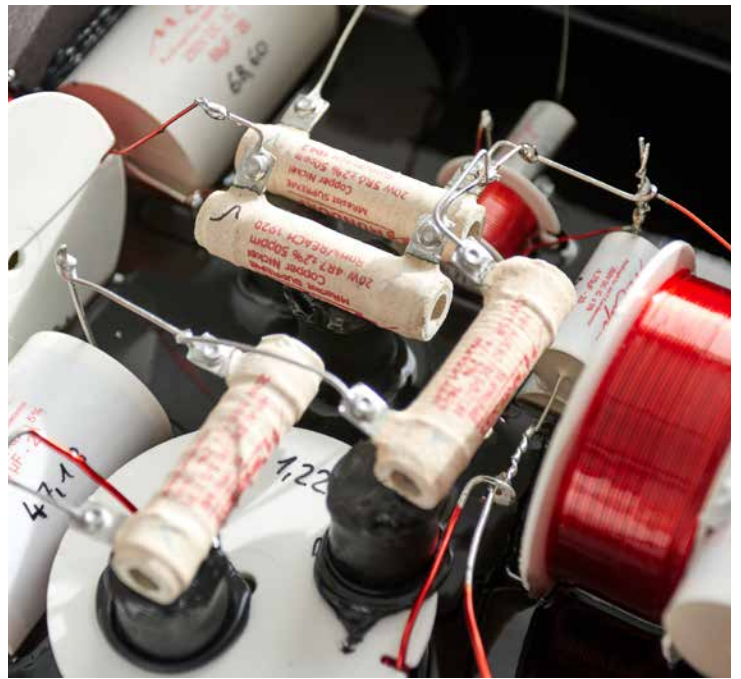
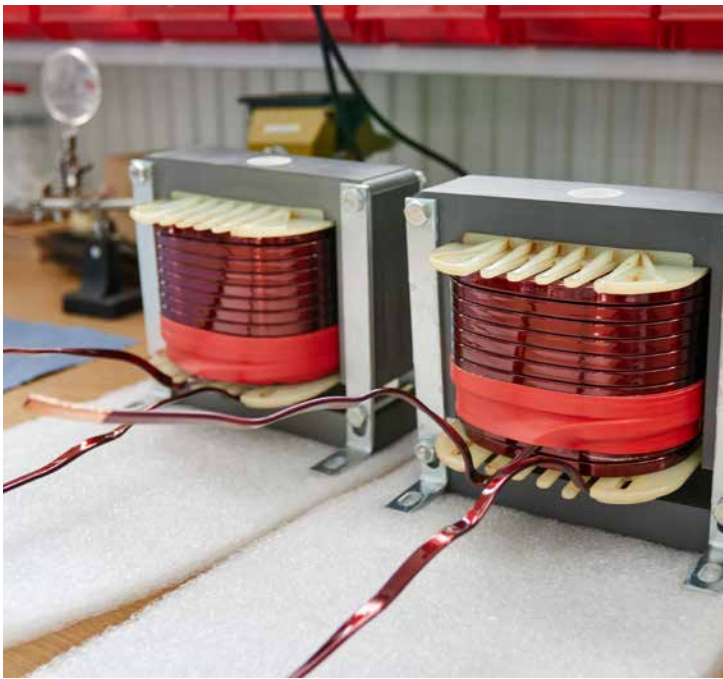
Göbel High End Divin Marquis

DISTANT WORLDS

By Stefan Gawlick. Photography: Ingo Schulz and Stefan Gawlick

FOR MOST PEOPLE, THE IDEA OF EVER OWNING A STEREO SYSTEM THAT COMES WITH A SIX-FIGURE PRICE TAG IS ABOUT AS FAR FROM REALITY AS MARS IS FROM EARTH. GÖBEL HIGH END FLUNG OPEN THE DOORS SO WE COULD ENJOY AN EXCLUSIVE TOUR OF THE RED PLANET.





The very best of the best high-end systems remain beyond the reach of most of us throughout our entire lifetimes. Trade fairs offer us the opportunity to look at them, ogle them, gain a decent understanding of the outstanding technology in use in them, and marvel at the out-of-this-world craftsmanship involved in making them. Yet events like these actually carry a serious, inevitable flaw when it comes to the most important of all aspects pertaining to this kind of equipment: You only gain what's at best a superficial impression of a system's sound quality due to the alien environment and hullabaloo created by all the enthusiastic, excitable visitors. So, as you

can imagine, we didn't hesitate for a second when Oliver Göbel asked us if we wanted a bit of peace and quiet to experience his new loudspeaker, the Divin Marquis—an astonishingly compact model by his standards. The experience would come in a setting that not only served as a superb listening room but also a chamber used for adjusting and fine-tuning the sound produced by his gems. Of course we were very keen—so keen in fact that no less than three of us all showed up together: Carsten Barnbeck, editor in chief, and Ingo Schulz, publisher, flanking me in the middle. When you think of the kind of human-sized, super-exclusive, high-end loudspeakers

popular in such metropolises as Hong Kong or Taipei, all sorts of surroundings pop into your head. But a farm surrounded by idyllic rural countryside? That probably isn't exactly what immediately springs to mind. Yet our excursion to the western outskirts of Munich took us to just such a place: a farm, albeit a former farm. Beaming a smile in our direction, Göbel greeted us on the premises of what used to be a cattle farm but is now a place for listening to, testing, and monitoring his fascinating loudspeaker systems. I, of course, had tucked a few CDs up my sleeve and was keen to immediately find out what his promising speakers were all about. But I had to remain patient as



my colleagues engaged in a deep conversation with our host about his career, his background, and the history behind his company.

Göbel has amassed an impressive CV, and his previous experience helps explain many of his technical decisions. He cut his teeth designing drivers and loudspeakers at Siemens, predominantly of the bending wave variety. Consciously, these developments did not take aim at the small high-end niche market, but instead focused on the larger business found in event-related technology, the automotive industry, and furniture production for which Siemens designed invisible

speakers. However, at some point the young engineer couldn't help but wonder how far the flat diaphragm principle could be pushed. As the company he was working for was concentrating on the mass market, the logical next step was for him to branch out on his own. That was some 17 years ago when his first-ever series of in-house-developed diaphragms was launched under the name Detaille. Since it's very rare for new loudspeaker manufacturers to be able to rely solely on new business to make ends meet, the fledgling company also simultaneously operated as an OEM development office, designing and making products for other manufacturers. Soon, Göbel could

boast an impressive list of top clients, including industry giant Grundig for which he created the last incarnation of the Audiorama. In fact, we were lucky enough to see one of these spherical loudspeakers in his workshop during our visit. Bending wave drivers did, however, remain the focus of Göbel's attention. His thoroughly exceptional and visually striking Epoque series is to some extent designed around this key component.

I was especially excited to finally get a chance to saunter up to the ultra-flat mythical creatures and experience them in a setting that guaranteed the proper welfare of the beasts. ▶



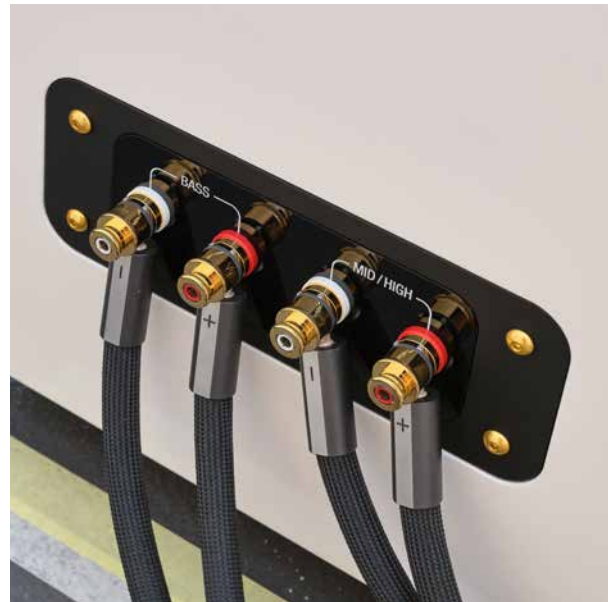
You can then imagine how surprised I was as I noticed the loudspeakers prepared for our arrival had been equipped with everything you could possibly imagine except bending wave drivers. They were the Bavarian firm's new "entry-level unit"—the smallest model in the Divin series, the rather wonderfully named Marquis. The lofty dimensions and tender weight of the speakers, which each tip the scales at just under 150 kilos, made it clear they didn't stem from the company's "bread-and-butter range." A pair of these speakers will

set you back €75,000; configuration options relating to the finish can bump up the price even higher.

Our attentive, sharp-eyed host picked up on my surprise and immediately explained the reasons for using more conventional equipment. Göbel had ruled out the idea of using bending wave drivers early on in the planning stages in order to pursue an altogether different concept with the Divin series. Here, the aim was to achieve maximum efficiency without using any horn constructions. Despite

their price difference with the rest of the product range, the new loudspeakers are on par with the Epoque models and should appeal to both owners of hefty power amplifiers and fans of exotic valve amps. Göbel found a fitting replacement that was able to meet his exacting requirements for airy transparent overtones and distortion-free impulses even in the highest frequencies in the form of an air motion transformer (AMT) that he heavily modified. Only after he had installed the new tweeter in a meticulously calculated waveguide did the

The Divin Marquis may be Göbel's smallest model, but it certainly packs a punch. The image top right shows the separate compartment for the crossover on the back of the loudspeaker. The photo on the left-hand page shows the four symmetrically arranged bass reflex openings that enable the bass driver to vibrate with maximum uniformity.



AMT meet the necessary requirements. The rest of the Marquis was then literally designed around the AMT.

Göbel developed a customized mid-range in the form of a firmly suspended carbon-coated paper diaphragm that covers the range from 140 to 1,600 hertz. To ensure it wouldn't be left behind by the super-fast AMT, he optimized every last tiny detail of the eight-inch driver. Göbel drew, for example, on his knowledge gained from his extensive

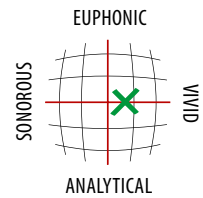
experience with bending waves and ensured exceptionally high-precision centering and optimum temperature control in the driver's drive section. For the ever-active developer, the goal of these refinements wasn't just phenomenal transient response and the ability to showcase every little detail—Göbel ultimately attaches the importance to resonance control, as we'll see later on.

He uses drivers in the bass that he's refined and optimized taking a similar meticulous approach. At 12 inches, the diameter here is,

of course, considerably larger. As a fan of professional cuts, Göbel also deployed a concept that PR departments and product designers all too often forbid the groundwork-laying engineers from using: a fully symmetrical bass reflex layout, which gives the Divin models their unmistakable, distinctive appearance. The air volume's spring force, which is uniformly connected at all points, ensures the long-throw diaphragm doesn't get into any difficulty even in the case of larger oscillations. Göbel explained that this was simply ►

Oliver Göbel (top left) is a renowned expert in flat diaphragms. Among his accomplishments, he developed invisible drivers for furniture producers and the automotive industry as well as worked for Grundig on the last Audiorama. As an expert, he also knows the limitations of his innovative developments, therefore he decided to design his Divin series without bending wave drivers.

Göbel High End Divin Marquis
 Oliver Göbel has kept his promise: The Divin Marquis is an uncompromising loudspeaker that can handle all amplifier concepts without any issues. It also can't fail to impress with its out-of-this-world level of precision and detail.



CHALLENGING = A component is 100% intuitive if you can exploit its potential to the full intuitively.
 INTUITIVE =



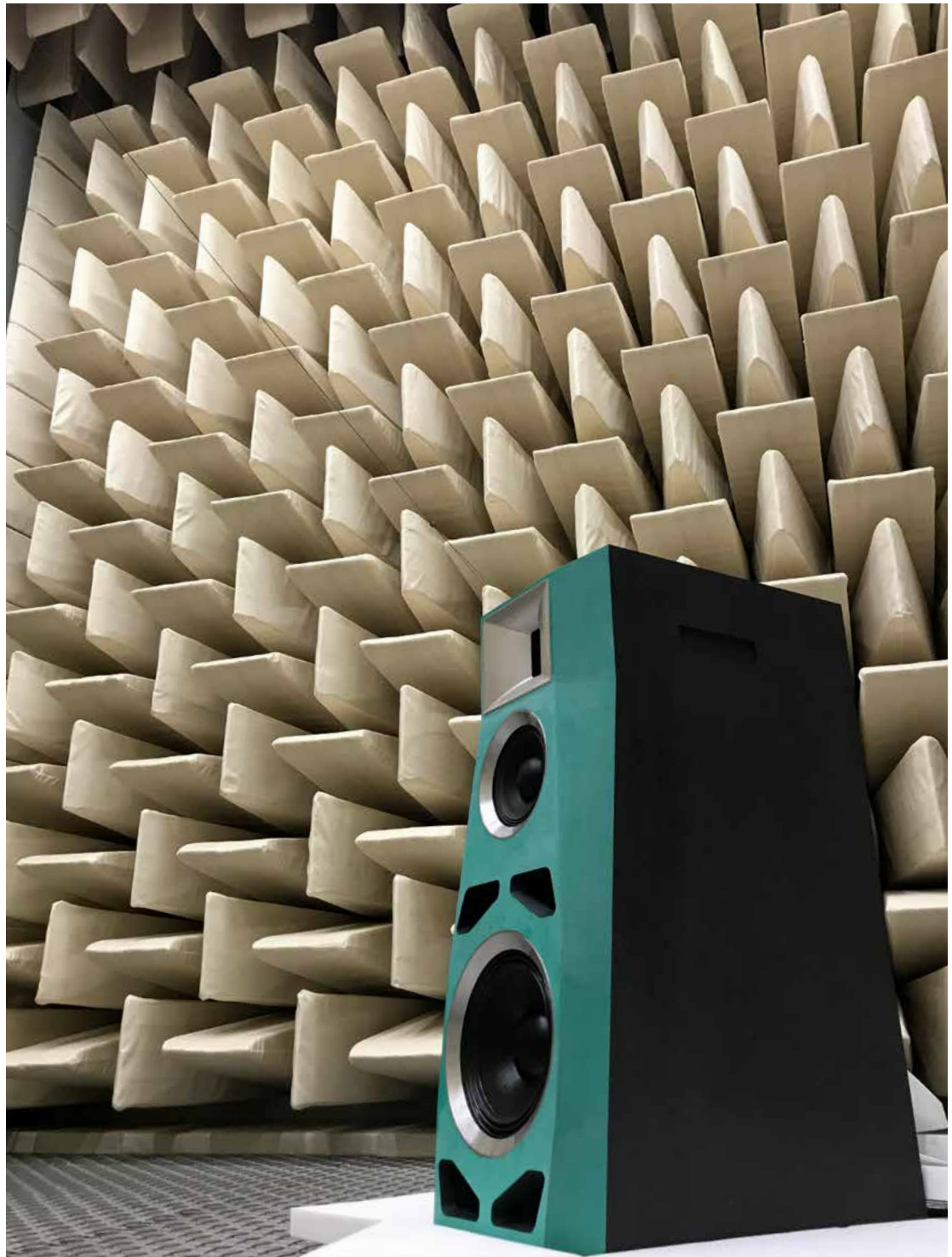
unavoidable for achieving extreme precision in the lowest registers.

Ultimately, the housing can't be compared in any way, shape or form with the MDF or HDF enclosures of many other speakers. The models in the Divin series comprise solid panels of different mixtures of resin and plastic. The material is so dense it would sink like a stone in water. The Marquis's front panel is carefully milled from a single block and is 75 millimeters thick at most

points. The interior features numerous struts that have not been positioned at random, but rather on the basis of results from an extensive range of simulation programs and measurements. Interestingly, Göbel broadly refrains from using any insulating material as, in his experience, it tends to result in a weak, undefined, and therefore often boring sound. Instead, each Divin contains several Helmholtz resonators that have been precisely adjusted in line with the cavity resonances. The rear of the huge housing features

an isolated compartment that holds the impressively equipped crossovers.

There's no end in sight to the intricacies of the design. And Göbel had all sorts of interesting stories to share about every single detail of the Marquis, explaining why something was like this and not like that and producing measurement plots, material samples, and design drawings at the drop of a hat. Little by little, it became increasingly clear the meticulousness of his striving for technical perfection, the



To truly perfect his loudspeakers, Göbel uses the low-reflection fully anechoic chamber (all six walls are lined with absorbers) of the Deggendorf Institute of Technology. Only a measurement chamber of this size (the room measures over 1,000 cubic meters) can create the conditions for exhaustively exploring the omnidirectional sound distribution of a speaker. The huge Marquis almost looks cute here...

keenness of his desire to not have his products be thought of as “bling bling,” as he would say. We spent several hours at the company’s headquarters, were shown around the entire production facility, visited the low-reflection measurement chamber, and learned just how much importance the company attaches to each and every little detail (right down to the elaborate packaging used for accessories) before the moment we had all been waiting for finally arrived: We got to experience the Divin Marquis speakers live in action.

The powerful floor-standing speakers delivered on Göbel’s promise—and then some. He had stressed time and time again how important it was, in his eyes, to get an even better handle on resonances, to combine faster drivers, and to ideally not allow vibrations to occur in the housing in the first place. And that was exactly what came across when the loudspeakers were playing. After just a few tracks, we all agreed that we had rarely ever heard such clean, artifact-free yet organically vivid and lively playback before. The Marquis

achieved exemplary nuance of sound right down into the deepest ranges, and the spatial placement of the individual sound events below the fundamental tone was absolutely amazing. Many can achieve that above the tone, but such a precisely projected series of double basses was something we hadn’t ever heard before. Göbel, who is a huge fan of classical music, fed his CH Precision electronics with Strauss’s *Salome*, Mozart’s *Figaro*, and Beethoven’s piano sonatas, and we wandered from one virtual concert hall to the next all ►



We were able to enjoy listening to the Divin Marquis (in white) for several hours in the outstanding listening room. While Göbel was explaining the ins and outs of the bass reflex concept to FIDELITY editor in chief Carsten Barnbeck, the larger Divin Noblesse was probably wondering why it wasn't getting any attention.

the while feeling like the musicians, singers, and conductors were physically right in front of us. Later on, we opted for more hearty fare with the likes of Fiona Apple, Michael Jackson, John Coltrane, and Phil Collins to name but a few artists. Heard through the Marquis, the modern productions never once sounded too dense or overstated, not even for a split second. From the most delicate undertone right through to the most brutal volume, the “smallest” loudspeaker in the Göbel range masterfully commanded all registers. Given all its many positive qualities, the Divin Marquis is, well, simply *divine*.

All that was left to do was to find out how the larger models in the new series would sound. Theoretically speaking, we could have assessed their sound quality as a pair of the Divin Noblesse speakers were parked in the listening room next to the Marquis, but, alas, we had run out of time. Perhaps we'll get another opportunity to do just that one day... ■

Loudspeaker | Göbel High End Divin Marquis

Concept: Three-way floor-standing loudspeaker with high-efficiency concept and symmetrical bass reflex layout | **Equipment:** AMT tweeter with waveguide, 8-inch midrange chassis and 12-inch

bass driver made from carbon-coated paper; all drivers are developed and adjusted in-house | **Housing:** acoustically optimized, temperature and climate-resistant sandwich construction made from a dense resin and plastic mixture, wall thickness up to 75 mm, integrated Helmholtz resonators | **Impedance:** 4 Ω (minimum 3.4 Ω at 95 Hz) | **Efficiency:** 92 dB | **Crossover frequencies:** 140 Hz/1,600 Hz | **Frequency range:** 21 Hz to 28 kHz (–3 dB) | **Included as standard:** customized flight cases | **Dimensions (W/H/D):** 41/118/72 cm | **Weight:** 150 kg each (180 kg including packaging) | **Warranty period:** Five years | **Price:** from €75,000

Göbel Audio GmbH | Schabweg 4a | 82239 Alling (Munich) | Germany | Telephone: +49 8141 2255887 | info@goebel-highend.de | www.goebel-highend