

T.H.E. Show, Newport, USA

Noel Keywood visits a top US audio show to see what America has to offer.

Rumour had it. T.H.E. Show Newport in California was fast becoming the USA's premier audio show, rivaling the popular Rocky Mountain Audio Fair in Denver in Colorado.

Being in sunny California, just a little south of LA, I decided T.H.E. Show was worth a visit. So I ventured forth onto the sunny streets of Irvine, where highways are four lanes wide in either direction and the pavements deserted; you don't walk in LA. My hotel was one block away from the show – so I had to.

This show had every form of hi-fi under the sun and certain trends were evident. Since what happens there usually happens here a bit later, I was alert. Obvious were open panel loudspeakers of many sizes, shapes and descriptions. Most were simple in principle – conventional cone drivers



on an open baffle with big bass units; box loudspeakers seem to be going out of fashion in the U.S. Perhaps we'll be experiencing this in Britain soon.

America can be relied upon to come up with the wonderful and wacky – and it did with the extraordinary high-fidelity cables room.

The first day I sat and heard an intense explanation – complete with

fascinating demonstrations – of the influence of magnetism upon electrical conduction. Drawn back on the second day I listened to the influence on music and was impressed. They hope to exhibit at the UK's Bristol Show – be prepared to hear more about this controversial idea.

T.H.E. Show was an interesting view of hi-fi from sunny LA. Here's a snapshot of what was there.



A brace of Audio Research tube power amplifiers driving Wilson Audio loudspeakers gave a wonderfully dynamic sound.



A fascinating loudspeaker from ESS, using Heil Air Motion transformers in a horn, four horizontally mounted, vertically stacked drivers with acoustic deflectors for midrange, plus three open baffle subwoofers in the base (www.esslab-susa.com). Great bass was on offer.