

“**... OVER-ACHIEVERS**

**that can stop and start on a dime**

**with little effort and power ...”**

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by Andrew Robinson

**M**any manufacturers design home theater systems around a pair of main speakers, for good reason, as the mains can either be right and left channels in a home theater or stand alone in a two-channel rig. This said, the main channels don't always translate into a center channel speaker design, which has given rise to a new segment of speakers, the LCR or Left, Center and Right speaker. In an LCR design, the mains and center channel are all in one speaker, making for a more seamless sonic presentation. Paradigm, makers of some of the best affordable loudspeakers on the planet, have taken the LCR concept one step further, offering it in an in-wall configuration with the CS-LCR reviewed here.

*“Spatially, the effect of having three identical speakers across the front of your home theater or multi-channel listening space is awesome ... a much more seamless and natural cinema or musical experience ... truly uniform and unobtrusive sound.”*

The CS-LCR's look like traditional in-wall speakers, in that they are white, but can be painted to match any décor, and mount between standard center studs. However, because they are LCR's, you can mount the mains vertically and the center horizontally



(provided you keep the tweeters aligned) or mount them all vertically/horizontally and have them fit into the same wall cavity.

*“The CS-LCR's tweeter is nimble, airy, non-fatiguing and doesn't shout at you when pushed to the limits.”*

The CS-LCR is a three-driver, two-way loudspeaker, featuring a three-quarter-inch dome tweeter, mated to dual five-and-a-half-inch bass/midrange drivers in a sort of triangular configuration. The CS-LCR has a reported frequency response of 75 Hz to 20 kHz and has a sensitivity rating of 89 dB into a stable eight-ohm load.

**HIGH POINTS**

- The dual bass/midrange drivers in the CS-LCR provide for a warm, rich and non-fatiguing midrange that is wonderful with vocals and film dialog, as well as to provide a surprising amount of punch for complex action sequences.
- The CS-LCR's tweeter is nimble, airy, non-fatiguing and doesn't shout at you when pushed to the limits.
- Spatially, the effect of having three identical speakers across the front of your home theater or multi-channel listening space is awesome, making for a much more seamless and natural cinema or musical experience. Throw two or even four CS-LCR's in the back of your room for a truly uniform and unobtrusive sound.
- Dynamically the CS-LCR's, like most Paradigm speakers, are over-achievers that can stop and start on a dime with little effort and power, making them ideal for a receiver-based home theater.

**LOW POINTS**

- The CS-LCR's, like most in-wall speakers, are going to need a subwoofer to sound their best. Luckily, Paradigm makes a few in-wall subs that will mate nicely with the CS-LCR's without breaking the bank.
- For the most seamless presentation, special attention needs to be paid to installation, keeping the tweeters not only near or at ear height, but also at the same height across all three, five or seven speakers in your system.
- While they can be powered with little power, the CS-LCR's sound their absolute best when mated to a solid receiver, so plan on spending around a \$1,000 on solid budget separates.

**CONCLUSION**

I'm a huge fan of LCR speaker designs for two reasons. First, it makes sense, for this is what sound mixers and engineers use to master the content you watch. Second, it simplifies your shopping when it comes to buying home theater speakers. Not only are the Paradigm CS-LCR's superb-sounding, they are also hugely affordable to boot, making them one of my favorite home theater in-wall speakers currently in the market today. Highly recommended.

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