

“... possesses every ounce of the

# PARADIGM SIGNATURE SOUND

— without taking up valuable floor space.”

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*“Spatially the Signature W5 images more like a floorstanding speaker than an on-wall ... surprising front to back extension, as well as side to side; both are equally detailed and spacious ... for an on-wall, it’s a best in class.”*

Getting reference-grade or, in the case of Paradigm, signature-grade sound in a compact on-wall package is no easy feat. Many have tried and few have succeeded, so I was apprehensive when I demoed Paradigm’s new Signature W5 on-wall loudspeaker, which claims to pack all of the glorious Paradigm Signature sound into a compact, elegant and affordable design. Did they succeed? Yes, and then some.

*“Paradigm’s ability to pack such rich, nearly full-range sound into the compact and elegant chassis of the Signature W5 is astonishing.”*

The Signature W5 looks like an LCR, meaning it can pull double duty as a main, as well as a center channel. However, Paradigm offers the Signature W5 in a center channel called the W5 C. For a seamless multi-channel system, I would recommend using multiple W5 C’s as surrounds in either a 5.1 or 7.1 configuration. The Signature W5 comes in three finishes, Cherry, Natural Maple and Piano Black, with the requisite hardware to wall-mount it out of the box.

This is a six-driver, three-way loudspeaker, featuring a single one-inch pure beryllium dome tweeter, mated to a single four-and-

a-half-inch midrange driver, two seven-inch bass/midrange drivers and dual seven-inch bass drivers. All six drivers combined give the Signature W5 a reported frequency response of 70 Hz – 45 kHz and a surprising efficiency rating of 94 dB into a stable eight-ohm load. Paradigm does claim low-frequency extension to reach 44 Hz, but I wouldn’t forego a sub or two if I was building a home theater around the Signature W5. You’ll be glad you did.

*“... the beryllium dome tweeter is among the best there is in terms of high-frequency detail, air, dynamics and natural musicality ... midrange is to die for — rich and full ... surprisingly deep — nimble, taut and rife with detail.”*



**HIGH POINTS**

- The Signature W5 possesses every ounce of the Paradigm Signature sound without taking up valuable floor space in your living room or listening room.
- Paradigm's ability to pack such rich, nearly full-range sound into the compact and elegant chassis of the Signature W5 is astonishing.
- I've said it time and time again, but the Signature's beryllium dome tweeter is among the best there is in terms of high-frequency detail, air, dynamics and natural musicality.
- The Signature W5's midrange is to die for, sounding rich and full, though not overly tubby or warm, making it ideal for film dialogue, as well as a wide range of musical tastes.
- The Signature W5's bass, while surprisingly deep, is still going to need a sub. However, what it possesses is so nimble, taut and rife with detail that perhaps in small rooms, it may be enough for most people.
- Spatially the Signature W5 images more like a floorstanding speaker than an on-wall, having surprising front to back extension, as well as side to side; both are equally detailed and spacious. Does it beat a floor-standing speaker? No, but for an on-wall, it's a best in class.

**LOW POINTS**

- For true full-range performance, you'll want to mate the Signature W5's to a capable and quality sub, which may or may not tack a few thousand dollars onto the system price, depending on your tastes.
- Because of the placement of the speaker's binding posts and quality of sound, you're going to want to use quality speaker cable, which means running the cables inside your walls. This is not mandatory by any means, but trust me, you would not be out of line using something like transparent reference speaker cables on a pair of Signature W5s, for they're that good.
- While able to be powered by a simple 100-watt receiver of nearly any make and model, you're going to want to mate the Signature W5s with some quality gear, say, an Anthem separates system or beyond. I demoed with an all-McIntosh front end and didn't think it to be extreme in the least. However, whichever route you choose by not going with a \$1,000 or less receiver, you're going to improve the sound quality, but you'll also increase your budget.

**CONCLUSION**

At the price, the Signature W5 is not cheap. However, it gets nearly 95 percent of the performance of its larger floor-standing sibling, the S8, yet takes up zero real estate doing so. When you consider the sheer level of performance and enjoyment the Signature W5 provides, then take that and match it to its cost compared to the competition, while a bit expensive, a Signature W5 system is an absolute high-end bargain. The Paradigm Signature W5 is one of the best on-wall speakers available today, period.

*"... a Signature W5 system is an absolute high-end bargain ... one of the best on-wall speakers available today, period."*