

The 2023 AXPONA Show

**ROBERT HARLEY, ANDRE JENNINGS, ALAN TAFFEL,
AND JONATHAN VALIN REPORT FROM
NORTH AMERICA'S PREMIER HI-FI SHOW!**

the absolute sound

THE JOURNAL OF HIGH-END AUDIO

p.32

The 2023 AXPONA Show

The Chicago expo has emerged as the biggest, best, and most important North American show. Robert Harley, Andre Jennings, Alan Taffel, and Jonathan Valin report on all the latest new gear.

Jonathan Valin on the Axpona April 2023 in “**The Absolute Sound**” issue July/August 2023:

I am going to organize this report by floor, starting up at the top (16), where **Dr. Roland Gauder of Gauder Akustik** introduced his four-driver-three-way, 149k\$ **DARC 200**, driven by a complete suite of Soudution Series 7 electronics and sourced by a Soudution 760 DAC. As it turned out the room was a surprise, as the DARC 200s were not equipped with Accuton woofers, as has been the case with the Gauder speakers I’ve heard in the past but with aluminium-sandwich ones. The characteristic ribs of the handsome chassis have also been changed to solid aluminium, with intermediate dampers between each rib. The sonic result to these changes to drivers and enclosures couldn’t have been more positive. **Gauders** have never lacked for detail, but in tone color they’ve tended to the lean, cool, antiseptic side. Not the DRACs! The sound was extremely rich, smooth, dark, lovely, and listenable. And tremendously dynamic. It was just a matter of luck, but this very first room turned out to be a potential candidate for Best of Show.

Robert Harley’s Best OF Show on the Axpona:

Axis Audio’s demo of the **Gauder Akustik DARC 200** loudspeaker driven by a Soudution electronics with a Transrotor turntable and Air Tight Opus One cartridge. Spectacular dynamics, hard-hitting bass, quick, clean, non-fatiguing, and just plain musical.

Andre Jennings’ Most coveted products:

Gauder Akustik DARC 200 loudspeakers

Andre Jennings wrote:

...However, there was something else of interest in this room. The item was the Gauder Akustik loudspeaker **DARC 200** loudspeakers (149 k\$). Being familiar with Gauder Akustik’s Berlina RC 9, which I reviewed in April of 2016 (TAS 262), I was intrigued with the **DARC 200**. The speaker takes the Berlina rib construction to new heights with the implementation of aluminium instead of dense fibre materials. In addition, the crossovers and drivers are new and have been improved over the years. The speaker features some adjustability in terms of linear bass output level and selective boost/cut between 30-60 Hz (typical problem areas for many rooms) Driven by a full suite of Accuphase electronics or alternatively a full set of Soudution electronics and sourced by a Transrotor TT with Air tight Opus One cartridge, the **DARC 200** speakers sounded very promising and easily showed the user-preference-based difference between the two sets of electronics: one leaning towards rich and warm while the other being quicker and having slightly more-perceived low-level resolution. The performance was enjoyable enough to foresee a review of **a DARC loudspeaker** in the near future.