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## SPEAKERS

You wish - JBL Project Everest DD66000  
loudspeakers

According to JBL, they're the finest loudspeakers it has ever created, which probably explains why the DD66000 speaker set is also known as Project Everest. A set of massive cones in a curve-backed wooden case, the DD66000 was first released in Japan in 2006 to commemorate JBL's 60th anniversary - and now they're being made available to Australian buyers.



Designed to be the biggest, baddest high-end domestic speakers that money can buy, the Everests are the audiophile's fantasy speaker: 500 watts maximum power handling, 96dB sensitivity, and an incredible frequency response of 32Hz to 50kHz and higher. They're also designed to reach high volumes with

no distortion, deliver uniform directional sound and linear frequency response.

Each Project Everest speaker comprises two low frequency drivers, 380mm in size and using an Aquaplas-treated pulp cone that's designed to dampen unwanted resonances to preserve audio purity.

The top part of the speaker houses two more speakers - a 100mm compression driver for mid- to high-frequency response as well as a 25mm driver made for ultrahigh frequencies. This latter component works with a 50mm neodymium magnet to give the Everest its unheard-of high frequency response range.

And here's the kicker - both of those drivers are made of beryllium, which explains in part why you'll probably never be able to afford a pair of Everests for yourself. Beryllium is used because it's actually more rigid yet lighter than even titanium, making it the perfect material for driver diaphragms. It's also notoriously hard to work and many times more expensive than titanium (and many, many times more expensive than aluminium), so only the most high-end equipment uses it - and even those tend to use alloys. The JBL uses pure beryllium.

At the base of each 142 kg speaker is a complex control panel that allows the owner to fine tune frequency response levels and optimise the speaker for whatever conditions it happens to find itself in.

Nearly a metre tall, a little over a metre wide and half a metre deep, they're not speakers that are going to fit into a small space. But then again, if you can afford these, you're probably well sorted on the real estate front too.



Like most of the products featured in these pages, if you have to ask the price of the JBL Everest, then you probably can't afford them. At \$80,000 for a pair, they're not going to appear in too many ordinary suburban homes. In fact, if you want to hear what they sound like, you'll have to trek to SE Asia, Japan, Europe

of the US to get a taste, since Convoy International (JBL's Australian Distributor) doesn't keep any in the country, they're so rarely sold. They're imported to order, and you can ask for them with a cherry, rosewood, ebony or maple finish, as you desire. According to Convoy's Brand Manager John Martin, the factory may be also prepared to consider a special finish at extra cost.

Martin noted, however, that special finishes were not what people are after with this speaker. "The most common accessory (more a necessity to get the best performance) would be high quality cables connecting to the rest of the system. Of course that is another area - the rest of the system must be of a very high standard to do justice to the Everests," he said.

If you don't have the budget for the Everests (and who does?), Martin also recommended another set of high-end speakers from JBL, the new LS80. While not quite the monster that the DD66000 is (having 'only' 200mm twin drivers, a 50mm titanium mid-high range transducer and an ultra-high frequency transducer capable of responses up to 40KHz) it may be as close as many of will get without breaking the bank too badly. The LS80's price tag is a far more reasonable \$4,999.