

Best Real World Gear: HSU Research



On to the Best Real World Gear award, with "Real World" meaning gear that's not only highly affordable but a legit performer. Without question, this award goes to the incredibly gracious folks at HSU Research.

Traveling all the way from their lab in California, it was great to see a pioneer of ID [subwoofer](#) manufacturing strutting its stuff. HSU's room had three subs (ULS15, VTF-15H, and VTF-3 MK5 [HP](#)), HB-1 MK2 mains and surrounds, and an HC-1 MK2 center channel. The HB-1s sell for \$159 each and the [HC-1](#) goes for \$249. The two subs Dr. Hsu used during the demos (the VTF-3 MK5 HP and VTF-15H) are \$799 and \$899 respectively. That means a complete 5.1 system rolls-in well under \$2,000.

HSU's room was rigged with a [projector](#) and screen and its demo session featured a wide range of material including pop music, pipe organs, and scenes from *Interstellar*. I thought it was notable that their HB-1 mains were set-up with an extreme toe-in. This positioning created a large soundstage that stayed composed outside of the center listening position.

The HB-1s are great speakers and they produce a pleasingly neutral sound that isn't shy about sounding full and well rounded. They really shine and they're easy to drive too (as evidenced by HSU using an inexpensive [Onkyo](#) AVR to power the show). This goes without mentioning both subs can also dig super deep without a burp or hiccup.

It's more than easy to give HSU's speakers two thumbs up. If you're in the market for a affordable quality system, I'd say HSU's speaker package should be on your short list.