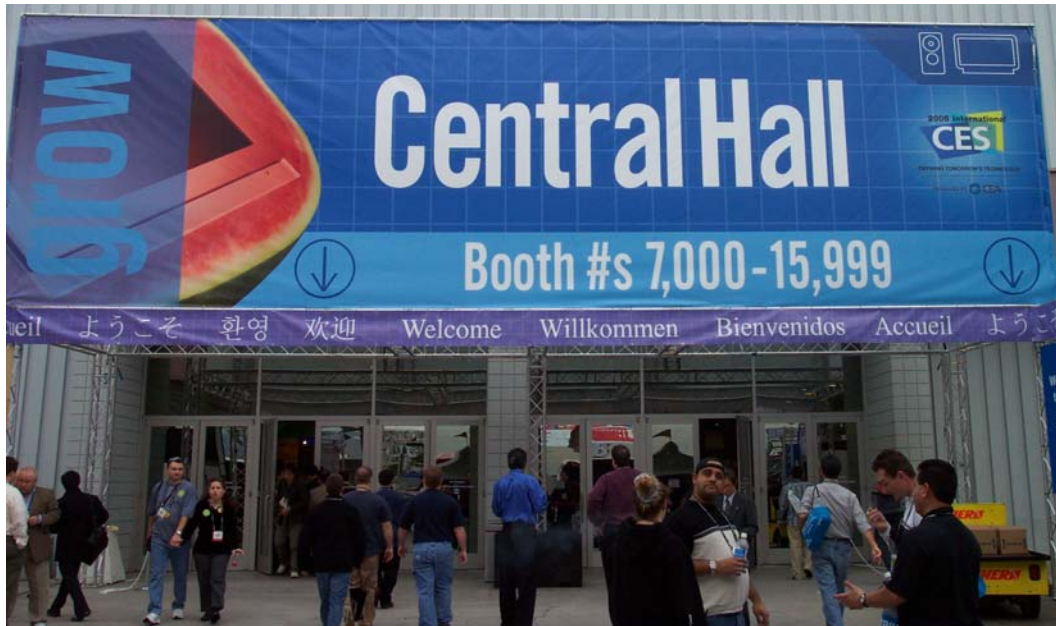


# Dave's 2005 Vegas Show Report



Now this is where you want to be. Linn had the top-floor suite at the Bellagio. Shown here are prototypes of a new metal speaker that will be formally introduced in a few months, a Klimax preamp, Unidisk 1.1 universal player and Klimax Chakra Twin power amplifier. The sound demos were actually happening in an adjacent room within the suite. (see next picture)



Included in this demo room were the matching metal center, subwoofer and rear speakers. They look very sleek and sexy in real life. The higher frequencies are dealt with by what Linn calls a “2K” array (same as the Akurates minus the larger midrange dome), while the bass is handled by twin 6” woofers. We listened to both 2-channel music and multichannel movies on the system and the sound was very good.



In another room within the suite, Linn featured the very cool new flagship Artikulate loudspeakers. They can be purchased in a partially active version, which for \$25,000 includes a built-in Klimax Chakra channel per speaker to drive the twin subwoofers. Otherwise you get the decked out version at \$45,000, which includes five channels of internal Klimax amplifiers built in each speaker! If you get out your trusty calculator and add up the cost of five Klimax Twin amps at \$8000 each, you get \$40,000. That means that Linn is throwing in their flagship speakers for a mere \$5000! Now I know it sounds crazy to call a \$45,000 speaker a “screamin’ deal” but they are. More importantly, they sounded awesome. Even in a room that was bare and reflective, RJ and I sat and listened for a long time. They are effortless and musical in that way that makes you not want to leave. If not for being offered the Linn Limo to take us to our next destination, we might have stayed all day.



Next up was Audio Research who was showing the CD3mkII, new REF 3 preamplifier, REF 300 amps and Wilson Alexandria speakers. They sound was very good for a Wilson system. In fact, three other rooms had the same speakers and didn't sound nearly as good. This was, by far, the best I have ever heard Wilson speakers sound.



**Audio Research** had a beautiful room at the San Tropez. Many of the other rooms were too small and cramped by comparison. They had a couple of demo discs that I made for them ready for us to listen to when we sat down. Part of the credit for the great sound also goes to the REF300 mono tube amplifiers, CD3mkII player and the fabulous new PH5 phono preamp. Very nice.





**Vandersteen** was running his new and highly anticipated Quatro speakers with a bridged pair of ARC VS55 tube amplifiers. What are Quatros? Basically, they are a smaller version of the Model 5A for less than half the price. The speakers look much more slim and petite in real life than this picture demonstrates. They use the same tweeter and midrange driver as the Model 5A combined with twin mid-bass drivers and active dual 8" subwoofers that allow the same bass equalization that is found in the Model 5. Surprise, surprise, they sound like a smaller version of the Model 5A as well. The two 8" subwoofers made tight, extended bass that filled the room perfectly. The Quatro is a true reference speaker at a reasonable price. Vandersteen is going to sell tons of them.



In the Joule Electra room, they were running Vandersteen Model 5As connected to their top-of-the-line OTL mono tube amps. The sound was very good, nearly the best at the show. Very liquid and see-through, but not as dynamic and exciting as what we get out of them in our demo system. Richard liked it so much that he ordered a pair of the smaller (\$13K) versions for himself. This room was crowded both times we were there and everybody seemed very impressed with the sound. You kept hearing people mutter, "This is the best sound at the show." It probably was.



This is a picture of the back of the Vandersteen 5A/ Joule Electra system. Do you think they have enough fancy power cords and speaker cables, maybe?



**ProAc** was demonstrating two of their more real-world speakers: the Tablette Reference 8 Signatures and the Response D25s. They were switching back and forth between the two and each sounded excellent in its own right. All of their models just have that immediately engaging sound that we love so much. As a ProAc owner himself, RJ was proud to pose alongside the two models. While part of me wanted ProAc to show off the massive D100s at \$30,000 the pair, it was refreshing to hear such great sound from reasonably affordable speakers that are sized to fit into a normal home.