



“Our industry has always been led by innovators.”

into the UK. Each of the men behind those products had a clear vision of the best way to implement their respective technologies.

For Focal, it was the D’Appolito design and inverted dome tweeter which was capable of producing some stunning detail and dynamics albeit at some cost in the early days! Boulder was all about the unique gain stage with a then unrivalled build quality capable of enormous control and dynamic swing. And Alon was all about the open baffle design with an electrostatic style sound stage – deep, airy, and tangible. Those three manufacturers more than any others for me broke new ground and therefore influenced my understanding of what good hifi was capable of.

► **Where do you see the industry going?**

I’m generally very optimistic. Our industry has always been led by innovators and I believe this will continue to be the case in the future. These innovators often become trendsetters and so each era has tended to have a “style” of sound, and a focus in certain areas; think of Spikes, cables, bi-wiring, power conditioners, mains cables grounding, and isolation.

I believe there will be an increasingly holistic approach to system building taking into account all of the above as we gain a better understanding of the their influences.

Entry-level products continue to get better as filter-down technologies get implemented. However, the gap between these and true high-end system will remain.

Differing technologies and implementations will ensure we continue to have diverse offerings, each with its own colour allowing manufacturers to differentiate themselves from one another.

Computer technology will continue to give ever-higher Bit and Sample rates interpolating the waveform to the nth degree but until we have a breakthrough in our understanding of psychoacoustics and precise algorithms for how the brain interprets sound, with a transducer to match, then the steps will continue to be small incremental ones.

There is and I believe will continue to be a dichotomy between those that want a hi-fi system but need it to be invisible and those who may have the luxury of a dedicated room or at least for whom the system takes centre stage.

We are not a one size fits all industry.

Who or what has been your biggest influence?

I can best answer that by products and their designers. In the 90s we were responsible for introducing Focal (then JMLab), Alon (now Nola), and Boulder

How has the Internet affected your business and do you sell online?

The Internet is a double-edged sword. We all know what a wonderful resource it can be. On the other hand it can give credence to opinions and ideas that are unfounded and based on hearsay and conjecture that spread like a game of ‘Chinese Whispers’ (‘Telephone’), and end up far from the truth.

Many sites now allow users to buy and sell their items online.

Long distance, arms length selling is here to stay. However, I much prefer the one-to-one interaction with customers where you can gain a real understanding of their needs not to mention the friendships you develop and the music you discover along the way.

In short, the need for good audio dealers is stronger today than at any time in the past, because when you are parting with your hard-earned cash, there is no substitute for coalface experience, especially when combined with service, support, peace of mind, and long-term relationship. +