



## Atlantic Technology

### Model 6200e Home Theater Speakers

**W**hy mess with success? That was my first thought when I heard that a Model 6200e system was heading my way. Atlantic Technology's 6200 speakers established themselves years ago with true audiophile performance. Now AT has changed them, keeping the same drivers but simplifying the cabinet and subwoofer design. **As a result, the 6200e costs a mere \$6,500 compared with \$9,000 for an equivalent 6200 system. Great!** But does the sound quality still meet high audiophile standards?

These satin-black, **THX Ultra2-certified speakers** present a no-nonsense appearance that harks back to the days when men were men, women were women, and speakers were speakers. No gimmicks here — just good drivers in heavy, sealed boxes. The satellites (6200e LR and 6200e C in front and 4200e SR in back) share one styling theme: magnetically attached, removable, curved metal grilles. The 642e SB subwoofer sticks with a simple cloth grille.

The original 6200 system featured C.O.R.E. (Custom Optimized Room Enhanced) equalization technology,

which is wisely carried over to the 6200e. For best results, experimentation is the key, as I learned during my setup.

#### SETUP

I unpacked everything and contemplated the transducers at my disposal. The formidable 6200e LR cabinets each house a 1-inch silk-dome tweeter and two 6½-inch woofers, using the familiar D'Appolito layout. Two pairs of binding posts allow biamping. Using supplied hardware, I bolted the speakers to optional pedestal cabinets (\$1,000/pair). Because the mounted speaker is top-heavy, AT insists that you fill each pedestal with 25 pounds of sand. Sorry, kids: Out of the sandbox!

The 6200e C center-channel speaker houses the same drivers as the stereo pair, but squeezed inward to the middle of the cabinet to improve dispersion. The cabinet's bottom fits into a flat wooden base to allow adjustment of vertical tilt.

The 4200e SR surrounds solve my customary dilemma: I prefer direct radiators for surround music playback, and dipoles for movie playback. This speaker lets me choose. The angled front faces each con-

tain a matching silk-dome tweeter and a smaller woofer. A switch puts the faces in phase (bipole) or out of phase (dipole).

The 642e SB subwoofer uses a sealed cabinet sporting a foot-wide, forward-firing driver, and packs 300 watts. Only low-level inputs and outputs are provided, but amenities include low-pass filter bypass, standby, and phase. The continuously variable low pass ranges from 40 to 140 Hz (I chose 70 Hz), with an 18-dB-per-octave upper slope. The sub's level control is hidden behind the front grille, though, making adjustments a bit of a pain.

I placed the front speakers in the usual sweet spots in my room, and after playing with the C.O.R.E. settings, ended up pulling the 6200e LR's away from the wall about 4 feet to tame a lower-mid boost and solidify the imaging. The surrounds went on my side walls, 3 feet behind and 2 feet above the listening position.

C.O.R.E. appears on the three front speakers to allow fine-tuning of their frequency response. One switch varies "high-frequency energy" according to room type (reverberant, damped, and THX/average). I chose the reverberant (rolled-off) setting; my room's absorption is close to the THX spec, but I simply preferred the darker sound. The "location" control boosts the upper midrange if the speaker is placed behind a projection screen or curtains; I chose the THX/normal setting here. The "boundary compensation" control decreases the lower midrange bump caused by proximity to a hard surface; I set the 6200e LR's to the flat

## The Short Form

### Snapshot

Nothing is lost in translation with this less pricey update of an AT classic.

### Plus

- ⚡ Golden Ears sound quality.
- ⚡ C.O.R.E. tailors sound for the room.
- ⚡ Switchable dipole/bipole surrounds.

### Minus

- ⚡ Any color available, as long as it's black.

**Price** \$6,500 (as tested)

### Test Bench

Full lab results at [soundandvisionmag.com/at6200e](http://soundandvisionmag.com/at6200e)



L/R 71 Hz to 17.7 kHz  $\pm 3.7$  dB    Surround 124 Hz to 17.1 kHz  $\pm 2.7$  dB  
Center 85 Hz to 17.7 kHz  $\pm 2.3$  dB    Subwoofer 28 Hz to 100 Hz  $\pm 2.4$  dB

The LR on its stand showed a moderate floor-bounce notch at 200 Hz and otherwise minor irregularities beyond a 5-dB notch at 12.5 kHz. Off-axis lobing of the center began with the mike at 22.5°, and the surrounds exhibited the notching considered desirable in bidirectional speakers. The subwoofer displayed moderate dynamic capability, but SPL was very evenly distributed, and the unit delivered 103 dB or greater at any frequency above 25 Hz. Max SPL measured 106 dB at 62 Hz. — Tom Nousaine

THX/normal setting, and the 6200e C to the compensated position.

### MUSIC PERFORMANCE

After giving the speakers some break-in time, I started my music audition with 2.1-channel playback and quickly appreciated the prowess of the stereo pair and sub.

*Introducing Joss Stone* is actually the 20-year-old powerhouse's third release. Just like Aretha, Gladys, and Janis, this bluesy singer can pour her heart into a song. "Tell Me 'Bout It" is an upbeat R&B tune, and its driving retro-mix kick drum was handled nicely by the subwoofer in taut hits, with only slight resonances on a few particular notes at loud levels. The musicality of both the sub and the satellites' woofers was evident on the complex bass line — clean and tight. The wonderful background harmonies had good clarity (and imaging) that balanced nicely with the muted horn stabs. This crucial midrange was just a bit forward for my taste, but not a serious issue. Upper-midrange clarity was good, and was improved when I removed the metal grilles. "Tell Me 'Bout It" has a gritty quality (with record scratches) that could be annoying on harsh tweeters, but the timbre here was natural and smooth. This is a great song with a great groove, and the system nailed it.

If you've not seen it, the latest surround-sound concert video from Peter Gabriel, *Still Growing Up: Live & Unwrapped*, offers an incredible performance. "Come

Talk to Me" starts with Gabriel's voice stark and clear, mixed primarily to the center channel. The 6200e C center provided controlled sibilance, and a warm, natural presence that persisted off-axis. The full weight of the song kicks in with a massive wash of sound, and the system responded with good dynamics and detail. The surrounds — set in bipole mode — were fully exploited here, with piano mixed to the right rear, guitars to the left. The system kept everything in place, creating an immersive circle of sound. Only when pushed to the loudest levels did the surrounds tighten up a bit with reduced dynamic linearity.

The mix on the Gabriel DVD is a fabulous example of what live drums should sound like. The subwoofer was figuratively jumping with the sound of the massive floor toms and kick drum and of Tony Levin's incredible electric bass, plus keyboards down in the lower registers. This acoustic-suspension subwoofer had a tight musical tone, playing notes — not just grunts.

### MOVIE PERFORMANCE

Switching to movies, I checked out *Déjà Vu*, a techno-action thriller. Gotta love a movie that starts with a massive explosion. It was nicely mixed, with most of the bang in the front speakers. They handled the impact nicely, with the subwoofer kicking in effortlessly. I appreciated the center's clean intelligibility and articulated vocal quality on dialogue. Its close tonal simi-

larity to that of the stereo pair helped provide a solid soundstage and convincing panning effects. The sound effects mixed to the rear were a bit pulled back in the surrounds — now set to dipole mode — but their sense of ambience was quite good (almost 7.1-ish). Panning effects and ambient details didn't localize with the speakers and provided good immersion.

The subwoofer punched up the car crashes as Agent Doug Carlin (Denzel Washington) drives in the present while chasing a car in the past. The sub's bottom octave was not among the most powerful I've heard, but it was solid. Given its size and power, the 642e SB had plenty of rumble, and it merged nicely with the satellites.

I was extremely impressed with how the 6200e handled Harry Gregson-Williams's score. The system's hauntingly warm bass fleshed out the, um, interesting romantic angle in which Carlin falls in love with a corpse. The repetitive heartbeat rhythm pulsed through all the speakers with convincing purpose, and the satellites were smooth on upper-register strings.

### BOTTOM LINE

AT has always had a good bead on the sophisticated-consumer/install market. The 6200e continues that legacy. Its overall sound is extremely satisfying, and its C.O.R.E. equalizers let you dial in just the right sound — great if you have placement or room issues, or just a really good ear. Why mess with success? Just listen. S&V

### Key Features

**6200e LR (\$2,300/pair; optional pedestals, \$1,000/pair)**

:: 1-in dome tweeter, (2) 6½-in woofers; 23½ in high (47½ on pedestal); 26 lb

**6200e C (\$1,300)**

:: 1-in dome tweeter, (2) 6½-in woofers; 21½ in wide; 25 lb

**4200e SR (\$900/pair)**

:: (2) 1-in dome tweeters, (2) 4½-in woofers; 12½ in high; 11 lb

**642e SB (satin black, \$1,000; gloss black, \$1,040)**

:: 12-in driver; 300-watt amplifier; 19 x 21 x 20½ in; 65 lb

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