

Peerless-AV

Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar

BY DENNIS BURGER

Is there anything worse in the world of AV than those teeny tiny speakers built into today's high-performance TVs? If you answered "no" to that question, I'm going to hazard a guess that you've never heard the teeny, tinny-sounding back-firing speakers built into most outdoor TVs. Because if you think a few watts' worth of underwhelming sound is a disappointment in the cozy confines of a living room, imagine that same lackluster output competing with screeching birds, chirping tree frogs, randy cicadas, and the sounds of even a gentle breeze in an environment with no acoustical boundaries. Most people I know who own outdoor TVs tend to blow their terrible speakers within days just trying to eke out any reasonable amount of sound output.



Peerless-AV's Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar is "a giant leap for outdoor TV sound."

That's not really surprising when you think about it. There's this thing called physics, after all. What's surprising to me is that we haven't seen an outdoor soundbar industry rise up in exact proportion to the outdoor TV market. But hey, sometimes all it takes is a first step, right? Peerless-AV's Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar is such a step. A reasonably small step, all things considered, but a giant leap for outdoor TV sound.

As you might expect from a company like Peerless-AV, there's a strong focus here on mounting and installation. In fact, the Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar comes with virtually everything you would need for physical installation of the bar, save perhaps a drill, a socket wrench, and a level. That's true whether you're mounting it to a wood stud wall or a concrete/cinderblock wall. Inside the box, you'll find an assortment of brackets and spacers and washers and screws and bolts, and even a pair of heavy-duty concrete anchors.

And I know what you're thinking: "What about pole-mounted outdoor TVs?" Peerless-AV has you covered there, too, with a pair of brackets designed for mounting directly to the TV itself, with two different bracket configurations for smaller (200-400mm) or larger (400-600mm) VESA hole patterns.

I tried these brackets out with the wall-mounted plasma in my bedroom and found it incredibly easy

to secure the soundbar safely, securely, and snugly. There's also a good bit of wiggle room in terms of height with the brackets, so you can just as easily mount the soundbar flush with the bottom of the TV, or drop it down a few inches to get the drivers closer to ear height, depending on how high the TV is mounted.

This turns out to be a little more important than you might expect, because whether mounted inside to test its hardware and connectivity, or temporarily placed outside to test its weatherproof capabilities, Bluetooth support, and outdoor sound quality, I found that audio performance took a noticeable hit when my ears were more than a foot or so above or below the level of the drivers.

And maybe that shouldn't be too surprising, either. Peerless-AV doesn't exactly tout this as an audiophile solution. The Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar's pair of 3-inch aluminum woofers and 1.5-inch titanium tweeters get the job done (and by "the job," I mean they're a huge improvement over most TV speakers, and certainly over all outdoor TV speakers), but they don't come close to measuring up to even the most affordable indoor soundbar solutions from Vizio.

Since the Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar is stereo only, I did the bulk of my testing with selections from Netflix, primarily the excellent *Daredevil* streaming series. All things considered, I found the

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Kudos ✓

Everything you need to mount Peerless AV's one-of-a-kind powered outdoor soundbar is included right in the box. Whether you're putting it on a studded or cement outdoor wall, or even mounting it to an outdoor TV directly, setting up this upgraded outdoor TV audio solution is a snap. And it delivers more than enough sound to fill outdoor spaces with ease.

Concerns ✗

You'll just need to make sure you temper your clients' expectations when it comes to sound quality. The Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar struggles quite a bit with both the highest highs and even reasonably low low frequencies.

Product Specs

- ▶ TV Size Range: 42" (107cm) and Above
- ▶ Total System Power: 180 watts
- ▶ SPL: 103dB
- ▶ DRIVERS
 - (2) 3" (76mm) aluminum drivers
 - (2) 1.5" (38mm) titanium dome tweeters
- ▶ Audio Inputs: (1) Analog 3.5mm Connector, (1) Bluetooth 4.0 Input
- ▶ Environmental Protection Rating: IP65
- ▶ Rated frequency response: 50Hz - 20kHz
- ▶ Operating Temperature Range: -40° - 160°F (-40° - 71°C)
- ▶ Dimensions: 38.09" x 3.91" x 4.07" (967 x 99 x 103mm)
 - ▶ Weight: 8.7lb (3.95kg)

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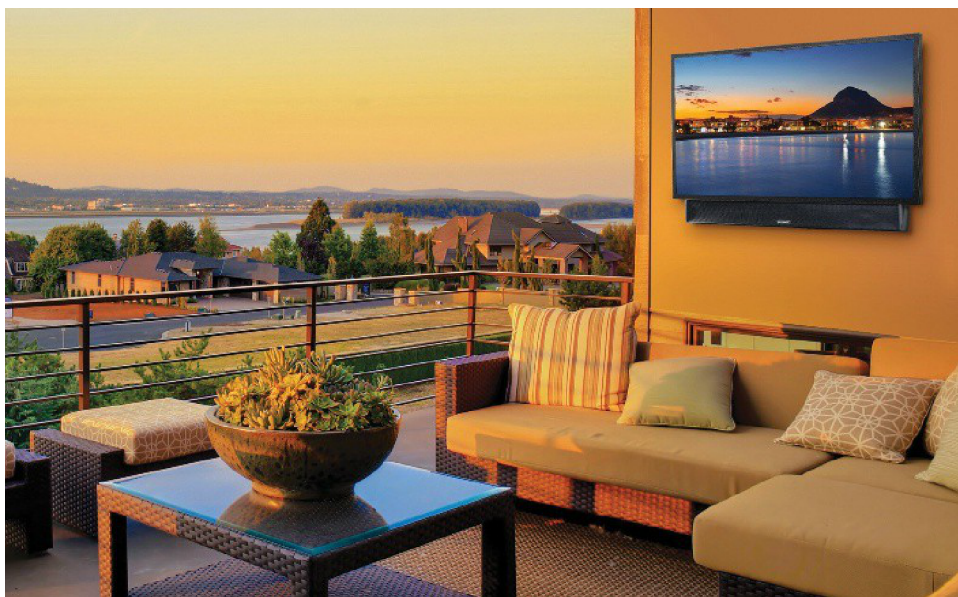
soundbar’s handling of dialogue to be pretty solid, which you would expect given its emphasis on midrange frequencies. Only rarely did I struggle to understand what was being said onscreen.

In terms of action, though? Well, again, let’s be reminded of the fact that the Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar is nearly in a category of its own right now (ignoring proprietary speaker module offerings from SunBrite), so it’s hard to compare it to pretty much anything else, at least fairly. That said, action scenes are not this soundbar’s forte. Although Peerless-AV lists low-frequency extension down to 50Hz, in my testing I found that it struggled to pump out anything below 80Hz with any appreciable volume. And any sound effects (or musical elements) that hit with any amount of power below 50Hz or thereabouts result in significant amounts of audible compression and even a bit of distortion.

Some of that could be ameliorated with a subwoofer, of course, but the Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar doesn’t support one. Its only connectivity comes in the form of a 3.5mm audio cable (sealed water-tight at the back of the cabinet) and a power cord (ditto). It does include Bluetooth wireless, but no support for a wireless sub.

But hey, like I said, show me another powered outdoor soundbar with subwoofer support and I would be inclined to be a little harder on the Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar. There’s no doubt that even with its audio performance shortcomings, it boasts plenty enough power to make outdoor movie- and TV-watching enjoyable.

In the end, more than anything, I’m excited to see where Peerless-AV goes from here (or where its competitors go with the inevitable knock-offs). With some tweaks to its DSP and maybe some slightly beefier mid/bass drivers, the Xtreme Outdoor Soundbar could be a great-sounding little soundbar with excellent installation support. For now, I’m just impressed that it exists at all.



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