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**FIDELITY visits
Audio Group Denmark in
Aalborg and Copenhagen**



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TOTALLY LAID-BACK

By Carsten Barnbeck. Photography: Ingo Schulz



Group photo with our host. Alongside FIDELITY, Peer (middle) also gave a warm welcome to Morten Thyrrstrup from Audio Group Denmark (right) and Thomas Mørk (left), the owner of the Aalborg hi-fi store LYDSpecialisten.

When people at FIDELITY discuss “listening rooms”, normally they’re referring to dedicated spaces that revolve around the hi-fi system. Ironically, it was the owner of a top chain from Aavik, Ansuz and Børresen who demonstrated that a much more low-profile environment can still deliver superb results.

At the end of November, we visited the far north of Denmark. As it turns out, our mission had nothing to do with our previous review of the Mainz8 D-TC 3. We were simply following up on an open invitation from Aalborg. “It’s really time we got together again”, they said, mentioning just how much had changed since the last time we visited. Then again, we would have been surprised if there hadn’t been continuous developments at a company so renowned for its ongoing research and experimentation.. You can read a detailed report of our

impressions from that visit in FIDELITY online. Simply use the link or QR code at the end of the article.

But the visit didn’t go quite the way we expected. In late 2022, the production in Aalborg ran into serious problems. This wasn’t due to how much needed to be done—which was unquestionably also true—but because several crucial components for the new integrated amplifier (the flagship Aavik I-880) were unavailable. The upshot was that around twelve units were waiting for final assembly when we visited. This led us back to an idea we’d discussed with the Danes a few years earlier: the possibility of visiting a “very special” customer of theirs who lived in the Copenhagen region. So, early on the second day of our visit, we piled into the car and drove the 330 kilometers from Aalborg to the Danish capital.



The following day we were warmly greeted by our host. The hi-fi system in the bungalow he shares with his wife is exceedingly expensive, so we will simply refer to him as “Peer”. But we can reveal a little more information about Peer. He’s a pharmacist who worked for various corporations and spent two decades doing R&D in Switzerland. Upon returning to his homeland, Peer opened up a chain of pharmacies. For the Audio Group Denmark (AGD), he truly is a special customer. He has been a fan of the company’s technology from the very beginning, and always acquires the latest and most exclusive components emerging from Aalborg—almost as if he has taken out a lengthy subscription. The reason he can afford all of this is partly due to his successful career. Another factor is his “super fan” status, allowing him to occasionally obtain products at special rates and long before the official launch. During our visit, we encountered a new, pure silver loudspeaker cable

that we had previously seen in Aalborg that was still an exclusive prototype. Yes, you’ve guessed it! Peer acts as a beta tester for Aavik, Ansuz and Børresen.

After arriving at Peer’s spacious house, located in a quiet, picturesque neighborhood, Morten Thyrestrup from Audio Group and Thomas Mørk, owner of the Aalborg hi-fi store LYDspecialisten, unloaded an upgrade for Peer’s network. While the rest of us made our introductions and drank a cup of coffee—the rituals for welcoming guests are universal—Morten and Thomas hooked up Ansuz’s big PowerSwitch X-TC network switch to the chain. A few moments later, we witnessed our host’s eyes light up as he grabbed his iPad and pressed the Play button. Bruce Springsteen’s “One Minute You’re Here (*Letter To You*)” drifted through the room, with the singer’s voice permeating ▶



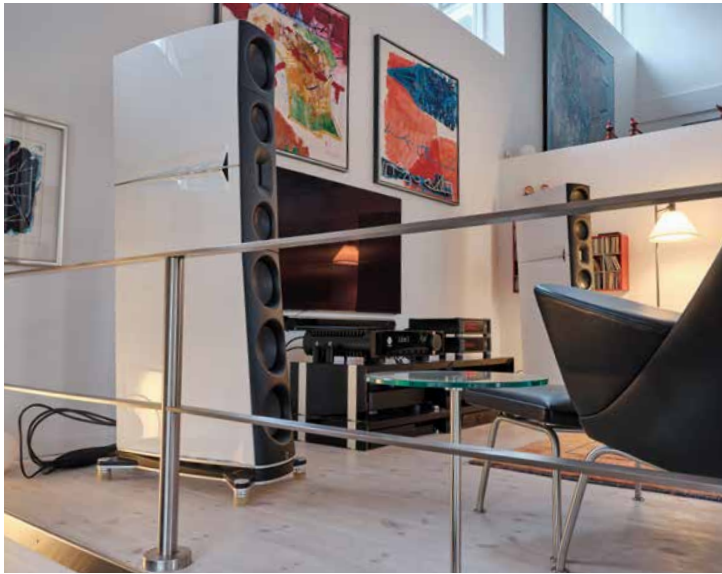
During our visit, Peer revealed that he is an incorrigible audiophile. In addition to the laid-back luxury chain in the family's lounge, we spotted at least three other high-end systems. Apart from the massive home theater system, an excellent sound system lives in the office, plus a . . .

through us and on into the farthest corner of the irregularly shaped building, which was essentially one huge room. Peer sat on the stairs leading from the entrance and dining area into the lounge. Without any questions or explanations, it was clear to everyone that the X-TC would be staying where it was! Peer looked to his wife, who was standing on the threshold to the kitchen, and she responded with an impish smile. There's clearly more than one music fan in this house.

Gathered around the hi-fi system, we began discussing the host's extraordinary configuration. For the past several months, the central component in his chain had been the Danes top-of-the range model: the Aavik I-880. Peer told us that upgrading from the I-580 to the I-880 had been the single greatest enhancement he had ever made to his system. And this says a lot. At the office we use an I-580 as a

reference system, so we know just how good the predecessor was! A pair of Børresen 05 speakers stood at attention, the flagship edition with cryogenic treatment and pure silver magnet systems in the drivers. The other electronic components comprised the remnants of the previous 580 chain—D-580 (DAC) and S-580 (streamer)—which brought us Bruce Springsteen's voice from the Tidal servers. Numerous black boxes lived on the lower shelves of the two-level rack, including the Ansuz D-TC 3 power distributor and the X-TC that had just been added. The cables were all from Ansuz, with an indeterminate number of Darkz feet, Sortz noise killers and Sparkz terminating plugs—the whole nine yards!

Anyone entering Peer's house cannot miss the hi-fi system, which holds a prominent position in the living room. On the other hand, it's not



... fitness room with musical entertainment in the basement. He regularly upgrades and enhances the superb components from Audio Group Denmark. Alongside the PowerSwitch X-TC network switch, our companions brought Peer a suitcase full of Darkz and Sparkz. He was looking forward to trying these out in the coming days.

visually overwhelming in the way you might expect from a system of this size. When we asked about this, he admitted that he's passionate about hi-fi and always looking to obtain the very best components. However, equally important to him is that his hobby doesn't completely dominate the living area of his home. And his listening habits confirm this mindset. Peer explained that he checks everything occasionally by positioning a chair at the precise point where the axes of the two Børresen 05 speakers intersect, which is normally occupied by a table. He much prefers to listen to music from his comfy armchair, positioned sideways to the system and directly under a wide expanse of window—a much better place to read and take a nap. In other words, Peer doesn't let his system dictate where he should sit. He believes it should work precisely the other way round—and it does. The chain from AGD delivers music so precisely, and the system has been set up and adjusted

perfectly by Messrs Mørk and Thyrrstrup over the years. Therefore, it's essentially irrelevant where the listener is located in the huge room—the superb sound will find you. We are a little envious of Peer's relaxed attitude to his hi-fi obsession.

Later on, I got to enjoy his chain at greater length. First, I listened to Nick Cave's resonant voice from a central seating position. The poet seemed to be sitting right next to me. A little later, curiosity got the better of me, and I moved to the reading chair. It's not only more comfortable there, but also just as good as sitting in the sweet spot. I stayed for a while, immersed in Fleetwood Mac, PJ Harvey and Faithless, until Peer's wife brought me back to earth: she had prepared something for us to eat—Smørrebrød, a further Danish delight for discerning palates. ■