



**THE MERCKY WORLD OF MICHAEL SEVILLE**  
Strong but not so silent!

Entrepreneurial property owner and IT consultant Michael Seville is far from being new to car audio. He has upgraded all of his cars since the early 90's but his passion for music goes way back before then. Michael allowed us to sit in his pristine Mercedes ML 63 for a listen and a chat.

Sitting in this car and talking with the extremely affable Michael, I find myself thinking; "So this is what hard work and a successful business can buy you?" – I have never had the acumen or drive to succeed in my career to this level and am always in awe of those who have. The car itself is not only very shiny, clean and posh; it also suits the sophistication of the man himself. Large and luxurious (the car not the man) and extremely comfortable (ditto!) I am privileged to be sitting in the driver's seat taking it all in, asking Michael a few questions and desperately trying to focus on his responses and take notes. There is a huge source of distraction available in the way of a compilation of Reggae tunes that is playing at an extremely low level while we talk. I am usually good at filtering out sounds and focusing on others but I find myself increasingly distracted by the sheer quality of the sound I am hearing, despite the system being hardly turned on at all!

It is a while since I have auditioned an Audison Voce car and I have recently been extremely impressed by the sound of Hertz Mille Legend and Audison Prima speakers and felt that I would find Voce a little more ordinary as a result. Therefore and hopefully without seeming rude, I just had to tweak the level up before continuing with the pre-audition interview. I knew Michael wouldn't mind, as this was his music and

to some but when you have a busy life, it is very good to escape sometimes and just be left to your own thoughts. I find doing so can add clarity to my thought processes when I have issues to deal with and I also use my enjoyment of listening to celebrate personal and business triumphs."

"John Kleis always seems to stock just the right equipment for me and I am happy to take their recommendations with just a small amount of research. I like bold bass and have a good friend who is an expert subwoofer enclosure builder. He has built a custom box that houses a 15" subwoofer from America. This is his hobby, but he does it very well! When I got to John Kleis, I was offered Voce 3-ways almost without hesitation. I was told that the smooth yet detailed tops would really bring out high-end detail while the mids would allow the woofers to be focused on reproducing driving mid-bass and a smooth musical transition between bass and sub-bass - extremely desirable in any car. Simon, as always, was instrumental in these choices and I have no reason to do anything other than trust him implicitly. When it came to amplification, it was recommended that Audison Prima amplifiers would offer huge flexibility while being compact enough to hide away. I was also advised to employ an Audison bit DMI in order to keep the audio signal in the digital domain all the way through the system. The biggest say I had was with the subwoofer amplifier. As previously mentioned I like bold bass but it has to be controlled. This requires a fair amount of power. After some discussion, we settled on the very excellent and extremely powerful HP 3001, a 3000 Watt RMS monoblock amplifier from

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he is as engaged by sound as I am. Having satisfied my impatience somewhat, I return the controls to background level and continued to collect some more information from the lucky owner.

Michael has been around music his entire life. His dad is of Jamaican origin and the family home was always filled with music. This influenced Michael greatly and as a teenager he learnt the guitar and played rhythm in a couple of bands. He also DJ'd quite often and still does although far less frequently now. His brother also played in a Reggae band and his sister plays guitar and sings all over the place. Inevitably, Michael still references Reggae as a favourite genre but now alongside R&B. I suspect he may look slightly more deeply into Jazz following our meeting, but more of that later.

I wanted to find out what had attracted Michael to this particular system. He told me; "I have always taken my cars to John Kleis in Reading. I currently live just around the corner and over the years have come to know the staff here really well especially Simon, who I consider to be a bit of an audio hero. Over the years, Simon has set all of my cars up. He knows my music intimately and completely gets what I am after sound-wise. I had no hesitation in bringing the car here. It is a big car and deserving of a big system. As well as visiting close family as far apart as Portsmouth and Barrow-in-Furness, my car is my man cave and I spend many hours sitting in it to unwind and listen to my favourite sounds. I know this sounds a little odd

the Hertz SPL Show range. Sounds like a lot of power but that is not reflected in the subwoofer level but rather, it helps keep everything tidy and under control at the low end."

Just a bit more detail on the Audison bit DMI. This clever device is able to pick out audio signals from the vehicle's MOST digital bus that carries encoded signals to the many different processor-controlled devices on the vehicle. The ability to handle these signals in the digital domain directly from the head unit means the resulting audio is fed directly into the amplifier whilst still in digital form. This helps massively with keeping the audio signal pure and unaffected by other possible on-board disruptions or conversions. The idea is similar to fully digital systems in home hi-fi and really does help to present all the original digits from the source in the correct order instead of giving on-board devices the chore of having to attempt to compensate for any missing information or introducing errors during multiple analogue to digital and digital to analogue conversions.

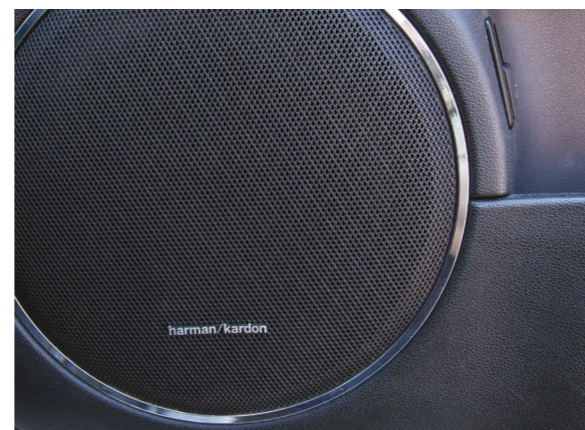
The original system in the vehicle was purported to have been "designed" and "built" by top-end audio company, Harman Kardon. As regular readers will have seen me mention before, I advise every new car buyer to regard such claims as highly suspicious. True, there is a badge on the original speaker grill which carries the brand mark, I do wonder however, how much they really had to do with the "system" – Michael was too polite to comment, but I guess the very fact that he



**Left** This car has performance written all over it!

**Right** The beautiful interior space remains untouched

**Far right** Equipment binned, just the badge remains





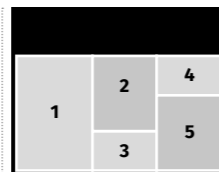


## “I think during this audition I once again fell in love with Audison Voce speakers”

> had it all pulled out and thrown in the bin as soon as he could says quite a lot!

Having resisted for as long as I could, I excitedly threw my trusty demo disc into the CD slot. The first track up was “No Love Dying” by sexy-voiced Jazz genius Gregory Porter. I didn’t really mean to feature this track as I use it elsewhere in this issue, but it is the first one on the disc and as soon as it started playing I was gripped! The Voces present a very dynamic soundstage that puts the listener more in mind of a large living room rather than a relatively small car. The space and air around all the individual sounds is breathtaking. The drums are very understated on this track and, on an inferior system, difficult to pick apart. But in this case every drum hit was clear for all to hear. The swish cymbal sounds like the ocean and the piano is really nicely balanced with the rest of the instruments on the track. Don’t get me started on the sax solo! While I was listening to this I could feel Michael’s excitement. He mentioned that Jazz was not a genre he had explored but has now vowed to do so. It is well worth it for any owner of a decent system, as Jazz tends to be all about the playing and recording “the moment” as perfectly as possible rather than building layers of sounds that come out of a computer or are recorded hundreds of miles and sometimes months apart.

Next up, I put some classic rock on in the form of Led Zeppelin’s “Heartbreaker” from their second album. It is well recorded but difficult to reproduce in most cars. If the mid-bass and low end are not tight enough the bass can seem a little heavy and



**1** The Voce woofers and mids fit snugly behind the standard grilles

**2** A 15 inch American-sourced sub in custom enclosure fits behind the rear seats

**3** Simon found just enough room for the huge sub amplifier

**4** Simon and Michael chat about future upgrades!

**5** Audison bit DMI and Prima amplifier mount under rear seat

ponderous, but in this car, there was drive, energy and enthusiasm, which helped carry the track along to the naked guitar solo which comes at 2:03. The edge on the guitar sound rips out of the speakers almost violently. At 2:12, there is a short hiatus and the buzz of whatever valve amplifier that is being used, is clearly audible along with some hiss from somewhere and you can hear what sounds like speakers rasping in their attempt to keep up with the guitar playing. The effect really makes you feel like a participant in the recording. When the rest of the instruments come back in, the hard-hitting drum sound achieved by John Bonham is as steady as a rock as it drives the track through the remainder of the solo. In this car, this track flies! I continued with the mournful and beautifully poetic vocals of Nina Simone on her version of “Feeling Good”. I love the big band-style recording and the way the instruments have been arranged in order to capture every element of the massive ensemble with everything being picked up and mixed in an almost physical way. Unfortunately, it is easy for lesser systems to lose their way with this style of recording and instruments are easily buried. This was not the case here. Each section could be clearly identified and pointed to. Violins on the left were particularly distinctive and every drum hit was clearly audible despite the kit being quite clearly placed some way from the microphones.

I threw a lot more tracks at the system including a few of Michael’s own favourites. Michael pointed out that he felt the system revealed flaws in the original recordings. In my opinion, such flaws add character

to the music. A strong song will get you through the odd cough, dropped drumstick and overly distorted guitar. I always approach such anomalies as being “as the artist intended” and get very excited when I can hear them. In fact everything about this system was genuinely exciting and I wanted to know more about it. We were fortunate to have Simon with us and I was able to quiz him further on configuration and set up. He told me that the 3-way Audison Voce speaker system was running active from all eight channels of the amplifier, with two pairs of bridged channels providing the power to the woofers. The SPL Show amplifier is fed from a dedicated line-level subwoofer output from the ninth channel of the Prima offering Simon the ability to mix all of the levels and fix all of the equalisation using the internal processor on the amplifier. Simon is a traditionalist and prefers to use a Real Time Analyser (RTA) and his ears to achieve set ups that are designed to bring the very best out of the systems he installs and then apply final tweaks to meet customer requirements. “The RTA alerts me

to the internal characteristic of the vehicle and helps to give me a starting point. Cars have very different internal volumes and mixtures of reflective and non-reflective surfaces that may need compensating for. Time alignment is very important with this kind of system that is listened to mainly with just Michael himself in the car. I achieve this in time-honoured fashion by measuring the distance between all of the speakers and the ears of the listener and adding delays where necessary to ensure that a coherent sound is presented with minimum phase distortion. This allows the sound to be centred around his driving position ensuring he is always in the sweet spot” Simon tells me. This has been achieved brilliantly in my opinion.

I think during this audition I once again fell in love with Audison Voce speakers. For the price point and in the hands of the right installer they are astonishing in fact the whole car is astonishing and I am extremely grateful to Michael for allowing me to get close up and personal with his brilliant system in his beautiful car. □



**Successful**  
Trey Songz and Drake

**Stay**  
Controllers

**My Princess Gone**  
Jah Mason

**Hammer**  
Luciano

**Our Music**  
Macka B

### The Equipment:

- Audison bit DMI MOST interface - £599.99
- Audison Prima AP 8.9 bit amplifier - £699.99
- Hertz SPL Show HP 3001 - £1299.99
- Audison Voce AV 1.1 Tweeters - £139.99
- Audison Voce AV 3.0 Mid range - £149.99
- Audison Voce AV 6.5 Woofers - £169.99
- Connection Cables and Accessories
- Skinz Expert Sound deadening
- Skinz Wave Diffuser
- Skinz Panel Liner
- Fi 15 inch Subwoofer – Sourced from the US by Michael

