

Monitor Audio Gold 300 6G

Described as 'contemporary classics', the six-strong, sixth generation Gold series spans, you guessed it, six models!
 Review: **Jamie Biesemans** Lab: **Paul Miller**

After the renewal of the Silver in 2021 and the Platinum range at the tail end of 2022, it was only logical the intermediate Gold line would reappear, now in 6th generation (6G) guise. The Gold 300 6G is the smaller floorstanding model in the new range, and in many households will be the sensible choice. The three-way design and two 150mm woofers promise performance, while its living room friendly footprint makes choosing between the £4000 Gold 300 6G and the Gold 100 6G standmount (£3000 plus £550 for the ST-2 stands) just that bit more difficult. Its design chops, both when it comes to looks and acoustics, made it an obvious candidate for the EISA members to pin an EISA Award on its lapel this summer [see p85].

This storied speaker family was boosted by Monitor Audio's launch of the Hyphn [HFN Jun '23] to contend in the most rarefied parts of the market – just like rival brand DALI with its KORE [HFN Dec '22]. Yet this doesn't mean the British manufacturer has lost sight of the mass-market, as these forays to the summit of hi-fi deliver trickle-down benefits. That's the case here, with the Gold 300 6G's drivers inspired by the RDT III cones of the Hyphn and Platinum 3Gs. On top of that, its MPD III tweeter finds its way to the Gold series too.

SLIMMER SONICS

The slender build makes the Gold 300 6G a three-way floorstander that doesn't visually dominate the room. Boasting a design that, compared to the last Gold generation, is more refined, there's a modest but still sophisticated air around this speaker. The 5G version was stockier, though some elements are recognisable in the 6G, such as the oval surrounding the AMT-derived MPD III tweeter and the 75mm C-CAM midrange. On the Gold 100 6G and Gold 500 6G this oval stands slightly proud above the cabinet, reducing

diffraction from the folded ribbon tweeter – the Gold 300 6G is more conventional with all its drivers located on the baffle.

GOING GREEN

But there are changes here too, such as an attention-grabbing white 'race strip' down the middle of the 'man-made' ebony veneer. This terminates in a minuscule Monitor Audio logo, which should please those who don't like overt corporate branding in their living rooms. The Gold 300 6G's new faux ebony veneer is smarter than on previous MA offerings, which featured high-gloss varnish and ecologically suboptimal real tropical wood veneers.

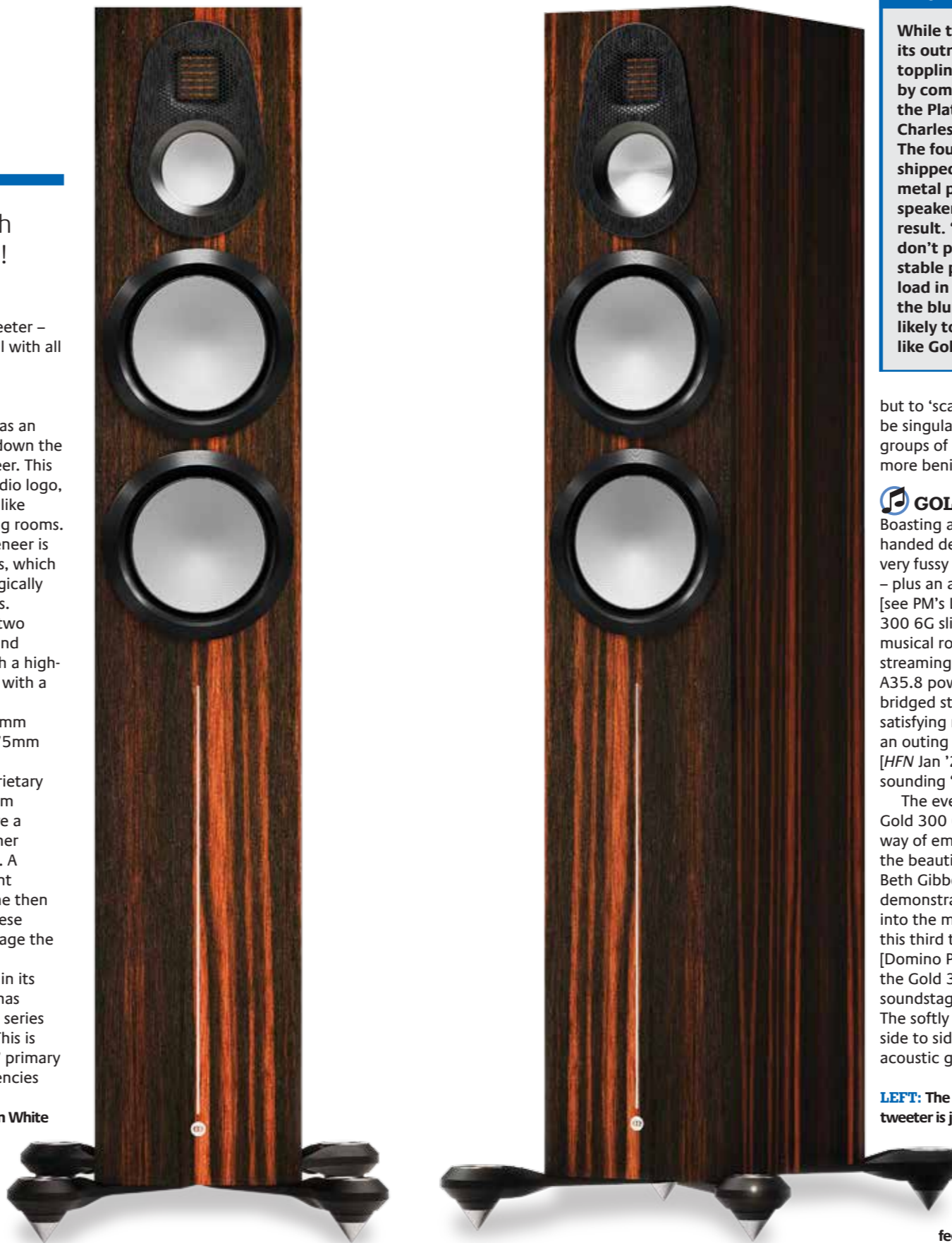
Monitor Audio offers two other finishes, black and white, the former with a high-gloss finish, the latter with a luxurious satin polish.

Both the twin 150mm bass drivers and the 75mm midrange unit all use Monitor Audio's proprietary

Ceramic-Coated Aluminium Magnesium (C-CAM) diaphragms, behind which are a core of Nomex honeycomb and an inner skin of woven carbon fibre composite. A few years ago, MA's design department added indentations to the cones of the then new Silver 7G range [HFN Oct '21], these deformations designed to better manage the cone breakup modes.

The brand took that a step further in its Hyphn and Platinum 3G models, and has 'tweaked' the concept in the Gold 6G series with a new hexagonal cone pattern. This is designed not only to push the drivers' primary resonance(s) up to even higher frequencies

RIGHT: Available in High Gloss Black, Satin White and 'man-made' ebony veneer (pictured) finishes, the MDF cabinet is traditionally braced and further reinforced via MA's 'bolt through technology', which connects the rear of the driver magnets to the back panel [see pic p59]



BEST FOOT FORWARD

While the Gold 300 6G has a slimline profile, the same cannot be said about its outrigger assembly. This curious five-part 'foot' keeps the speaker from toppling, even when under assault by unruly pets and/or children, as required by common sense and government safety regulations. Its design is taken from the Platinum 3G series, 'ensuring,' explained MA's head of product design, Charles Minnett, 'that our premium lines speak a universal design language'. The four outriggers terminate in large spikes, and the component parts are shipped disassembled. After fixing the four heavyweight pieces to a separate metal plate with 12 screws, the plate is mounted to the underside of the speaker with four bolts. It's a bit more work than usual, but it's worth the result. 'By assembling all the outriggers to a central plate, we can ensure we don't put excess load on any corner of the speaker cabinet and create a more stable platform', says Minnett. In practice, this anchored outrigger spreads the load in a more balanced way, affording the benefits of a large plinth without the blunt appearance. 'The larger diameter spikes are more robust and less likely to get damaged over time', we were told. 'That's important on a range like Gold, as we understand these products must last a generation.'

but to 'scatter' what might otherwise be singular, high-level modes into groups of lower-level, subjectively more benign resonances.

GOLDEN DELICIOUS

Boasting a relatively neutral, even-handed delivery that shouldn't be very fussy about electronics pairing – plus an amp-friendly impedance [see PM's Lab Report, p59] – the Gold 300 6G slips effortlessly into many musical roles. Using a Primare PRE35 streaming preamp [HFN Dec '19] and A35.8 power amp [HFN May '22] – in bridged stereo mode – provided a satisfying result for one but, equally, an outing with Musical Fidelity's A1 [HFN Jan '24] saw these speakers sounding 'organic' and engaging.

The everyman character of the Gold 300 6G doesn't stand in the way of emotional involvement, as the beautiful 'Burden Of Life' from Beth Gibbons' latest album aptly demonstrated. Effectively pulling me into the melancholic atmosphere of this third track on *Lives Outgrown* [Domino Publishing; 96kHz/24-bit], the Gold 300 6G crafted a broad soundstage brimming with detail. The softly played drums panning from side to side, and the carefully picked acoustic guitar, were very convincing.

LEFT: The latest AMT-inspired MPD III tweeter is joined by a 75mm midrange and two 150mm bass drivers, all featuring HDT/C-CAM cone technology. The slender cabinet is supported on sturdy outrigger feet [see boxout, above]

Showing off great integration, the speakers presented the music as a serene whole. While the track did at first appear a bit dense – equally, 'intense' could be used – the violin and Farfisa organ joining in around the two-minute mark broadened the soundstage. This was quite surprising, as some sounds were then projected far off to the side. As expected, playing around with the toe-in did have clear consequences for the image width, resolution and treble bite [again, see Lab Report, p59]. I elected to turn the Gold 300 6Gs in only slightly, while keeping them a fair distance from the rear wall.

While Portishead's heyday lays quite a few years behind us, the Bristol trip-hop band remains influential to this day, in part because Gibbons' vocal performances were so distinct. *Lives Outgrown* is a mature work that sees her leave that past behind, although tracks like 'Ocean' do tantalisingly look back to earlier performances. Once again, the Gold 300 6Gs showed themselves perfectly capable of evoking that nostalgic ambience, smoothly putting Gibbons' vocals front and centre, with nary a trace of sibilance or artificiality.

STELLAR PERFORMER

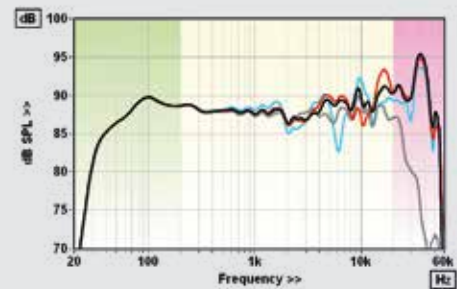
This year saw a 25th anniversary re-release of the seminal *Moon Safari* [Parlophone 5054197906770; CD resolution] by French ambient popstars Air. While this heralded a Dolby Atmos remix of songs like 'Sexy Boy' and 'Kelly Watch The Stars' – which are great on a surround set-up – the actual stereo version remained unchanged. Spinning the disc via a Pro-Ject CD Box RS2 T [HFN Sep '19], with a digital feed into Primare's PRE35, proved a trip down memory lane, aided and abetted by the Gold 300 6G's ability to balance the spacy

LAB REPORT

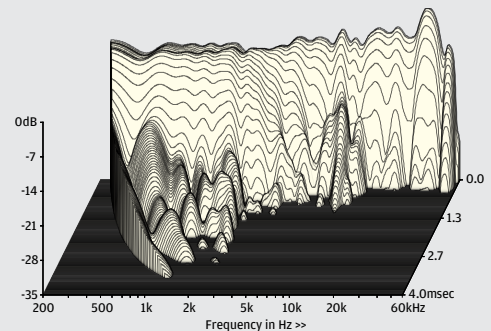
MONITOR AUDIO GOLD 300 6G

Measured at the average listening height (just below the MPD III tweeter) the '6G' Gold 300's response is flat in trend [see Graph 1, below] even if a 2.7dB variation in HF response between our pair [red and black traces] results in errors of ± 2.5 dB and ± 3.7 dB, respectively, above 8kHz. Otherwise, pair matching is a very tight 0.7dB (200Hz-7kHz). The mid/treble grille introduces a further notch and peak at 6kHz and 10kHz while toeing the speaker in or out by $\pm 15^\circ$ effects a significant treble roll-off – potentially useful for in-room tuning. Otherwise, the extended HF response limit of 52kHz (-6dB re. 10kHz) follows a primary – and well-damped – axial resonance at 36kHz [pink shaded area, Graph 1 and CSD Waterfall, Graph 2].

The two 150mm HDT, C-CAM bass drivers are reflex-loaded via two rear-facing ports, both tuned quite sharply to 33Hz with the upper tube betraying mild port/quarterwave modes at 135Hz and 960Hz. Nevertheless, and while the low bass roll-off is steep, the diffraction-corrected LF extension clocks-in at an impressive 36Hz [green shaded area, Graph 1]. Now, while MA has engineered a response that's both quite flat and uniform, with good bass and a very low $<0.1\%$ midband distortion (re. 90dB SPL), sensitivity has been reined back to 87.6dB/1kHz (and 88.0dB re. 500Hz-8kHz) because it has chosen *not* to saddle your amp with a punishing load. With a high minimum impedance of 4.1ohm, the Gold 300 6G represents a fairly easy 5ohm nominal load, and with mere $+34^\circ/-43^\circ$ swings in impedance phase through the bass it presents a well above average 2.08ohm/101Hz EPDR. In short, the Gold 300 6G is a doddle to drive. PM



ABOVE: Response inc. nearfield summed drivers/ports [green], freefield corrected to 1m at 2.83V [yellow], ultrasonic [pink]. L, black; R, red; $\pm 15^\circ$, grey; grille, blue



ABOVE: A resonance at the top of the mid unit's range (2kHz) is joined by a short-lived treble mode (10kHz)

LEFT: The bi-wire/bi-amp terminals may be combined with a solid link. Note Monitor Audio's 'bolt through' driver bracing and rifled 'HiVe II' bass ports designed to reduce turbulence

Such a performance had me revisiting Billie Holiday's classic set *Lady Sings The Blues* [Milestones Records 3616401523726; CD res], using an Eversolo DMP-A8 [HFN May '24] as a streaming source from Roon. MA's new speakers rendered 'Strange Fruit' and 'No Good Man' in a rich and enticing fashion, the trumpet that heralds the beginning of the former particularly vibrant and powerful, its brassy rasp artfully depicted without any rough sheen. The Gold 300 6G's softer HF – summed up as brilliance without brightness – combined with the tube-like warmth of Musical Fidelity's A1 amp to ensure the club ambience was present in heaps. And the slight 'crunch' in the vocals on 'God Bless The Child' – typical for a recording of this period – sounded authentic.

BALANCE OF POWER

If I were to level a hint of caution at these latest Monitor Audio floorstanders, it would be that they at first might appear too reserved, especially when placed parallel with the wall. If auditioning and comparing these speakers with others in a dealer's showroom, you might easily overlook them in favour of more outspoken tunings. That might be a mistake, though, as their balanced approach delivers long-term enjoyment – which is just what you want from a hi-fi investment on this level. ☺

HI-FI NEWS VERDICT

Built on a solid foundation of core technical principles that evolve with each speaker generation, the Gold 300 6G is an apt illustration of how Monitor Audio successfully combines industrial and acoustic design. With trickle-down know-how from the high-performing Hyphn, the Gold 300 6G emerges as a very accomplished, all-round loudspeaker that delivers music with feeling and authenticity.

Sound Quality: 87%



synthesiser effects panning through the air with the solid bass guitar underlying 'La Femme d'Argent'. There's no faulting the pulsing Moog-driven intro to 'Sexy Boy', one of the most recognisable beginnings to an electronic anthem ever, while the vocoder vocals were displayed with intriguing amounts of texture.

This track is a bit of an outlier on *Moon Safari*, as most of its songs are more laid-back – 'All I Need' and 'You Make It Easy', both featuring the singing of Beth Hirsch, are more typical, allowing the Gold 300 6Gs to show off their midrange capabilities and excellent control of the lower registers. But it's the female vocals in both songs, as with *Lives Outgrown*, that were really placed in the limelight.

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Sensitivity (SPL/1m/2.83V – 1kHz/Mean/IEC)	87.6dB / 88.0dB / 86.5dB
Impedance modulus: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	4.09ohm @ 163Hz 16.7ohm @ 63Hz
Impedance phase: minimum & maximum (20Hz–20kHz)	-43° @ 82Hz +34° @ 22Hz
Pair matching/Resp. error (200Hz–20kHz)	2.7dB/ ± 2.5 dB/ ± 3.7 dB
LF/HF extension (-6dB ref 200Hz/10kHz)	36Hz / 55.2kHz/55.0kHz
THD 100Hz/1kHz/10kHz (for 90dB SPL/1m)	0.5% / 0.06% / 0.5%
Dimensions (HWD) / Weight (each)	1098x339x463mm / 21kg