



The rich TIMBRE of cellulose

UPM ForMi natural-fibre composite, manufactured from cellulose and polymers, lends itself to a variety of purposes. In addition to furniture and household commodities, this material has found its way into Finnish-made Aurelia Aniara loudspeakers.

■ TEXT BY Olli Manninen ■ PHOTOS Juuso Noronkoski

While small in size, the Aniara loudspeaker has a sound quality which is a suitable match for larger loudspeaker boxes. The Aniara is suited for mounting on traditional stands, and equally well on TV stands to improve the sound quality of today's flat-screen televisions. When wall-mounted, it will blend smoothly with the furnishing.

"In a family, it is traditionally the housewife who dictates the furnishing of the living room. In the furnishing business, this is known as the WAF effect (Wife Acceptance Factor). Women value loudspeakers that are virtually invisible," says **Antti Louhivaara**, CEO of ASL Technosystems Oy, the manufacturer of Aurelia loudspeakers.

"Aniara is a loudspeaker with a stylish design that takes up minimal space. Bachelors will haul loudspeakers the size of a telephone box to their living rooms – and remain bachelors," laughs Louhivaara.

The idea of using a natural-fibre composite in loudspeakers arose when **Petteri Koljonen**, Louhivaara's former business partner, introduced Louhivaara to this new material.

"I was immediately enthusiastic about the new material. It is extremely homogeneous, with excellent acoustic characteristics. The material allows strength that is many times superior to that of conventional plastics, while producing a spectrum of sound that is more even when compared with conventional materials."

Louhivaara reviewed the available materials, finding UPM ForMi to be best suited for the manufacturing of loudspeaker boxes.

"It settles evenly in the mould, providing superior technical characteristics. It is also competitively priced."

Think courageously

Cooperation between Aurelia and UPM is an excellent example of a partnership born of a courageous plan to make ideas collide.

"Louhivaara phoned us, asking us questions about the material. We were dumbfounded because we would never have realised that natural-fibre composite could also be used for the manufacturing of loudspeaker boxes. We principally thought that the material could be

CEO Antti Louhivaara is responsible for Aurelia loudspeakers' design as well as sound quality.



According to Director Stefan Fors, UPM has over a hundred partners interested in the ForMi product.

work called “Aniara” — a description of a spacecraft — written by poet Harry Martinson.

Louhivaara estimates that the Aniara loudspeakers will sell approximately 1,000 pairs this year. In order to enhance the attractiveness of the design, Aurelia will introduce a surface-treated mode, aimed at the international market, to complement the current black and white finishes.

“That’s Mercedes quality!” Louhivaara says, praising his loudspeakers.

“Tests conducted by the audio business are a persuasive sales argument. Our loudspeakers have emerged as winners in all comparison tests in which they have participated.”

Louhivaaran says that Aurelia’s loudspeakers are differentiated from their competitors not only by their design but also by their sound quality, which is softer and gives the listener a richer acoustic experience.

“When designing the acoustics of our loudspeakers, I paid particular attention to the vividness of sound, and not solely to the flawless but dull reproduction of a cool sound quality.” ■

used as a replacement for technical plastics,” says Stefan Fors, Director of the UPM ForMi business.

Already, furniture manufacturers Isku and Puustelli are using UPM’s natural-fibre composite in their products.

“The characteristics of the material, its recyclability and relatively small carbon footprint make ForMi an attractive product. Using UPM’s natural-fibre composite, up to a half of the non-renewable raw materials of plastics can be replaced. We already have over a hundred interested partners. Through presentations at international trade shows, we have found new partnerships that we would not have thought of otherwise,” says Fors.

Louhivaara describes UPM as a reliable and safe partner, one with whom cooperation has been uncomplicated.

“Our loudspeakers, highly esteemed in the audio circles, have acted as a reference for UPM and led to new partnerships, while allowing us to gain visibility at international trade shows, through cooperation with UPM,” says Louhivaara.

A soft and vivacious sound

In addition to the technical and acoustic design of Aurelia’s loudspeakers, Louhivaara is responsible for the design of the loudspeaker box. The idea for a small-size loudspeaker came from Louhivaara’s mentor, who encouraged him to design, for a larger target group, a loudspeaker that would be affordable and yet have a high sound quality. The name of the loudspeaker, Aniara, also came from the mentor. It is a reference to a poetic