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Hi-Fi Choice is the UK hi-fi magazine representative of the European Imaging & Sound Association (EISA). Every year EISA honours the finest hi-fi and home cinema products throughout Europe.

### **EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK**

What on earth's a turntable doing on the cover? Jason Kennedy's rather pleased to see the return of vinyl.

hose of you who don't get your copy delivered through the letter box will no doubt have noticed that our cover price has risen by 11p this month. This is the first price rise since June 1995 and reflects the constantly increasing price of putting the magazine together, and in particular the price of paper which has been the root cause of most publications having risen in price over the past year or so. Next month we will also be changing the masthead, so don't be surprised if you can't see the familiar skinny lettering.

Remember that I'm always keen to hear about ways in which you would like to see Hi-Fi Choice improved, and we continually strive to bring you the reviews and features that you ask for, so feel free to feed back (so to speak). In the meantime, I will endeavour to stuff the magazine with as much new product and expert analysis as the budget can withstand - and probably a bit more.

#### **TURNING THE TABLES**

It's extremely gratifying to be able to put a turntable on the cover of HFC – this is the first one in too many years. Years when the medium appeared to be commercially dead, but was in fact merely resting. Now that even the big high street stores are stocking vinyl, we felt justified in reviewing a selection of four gorgeous turntables and six highly polished cartridges - turn to page 49 for the full story.

The record players among you won't need any convincing, but I can imagine there are quite a few readers who haven't listened to a decent turntable in some years, let alone compared one with their CD players. If you have a revealing system and a decent phono stage the contrast can be embarrassing for the silver disc player. And as long as your LPs aren't too rough you'll find the clicks and pops of yore notable by their absence. That is one area where the turntables of the 90s, having evolved in the harsh glare of digital audio, have dramatically improved on their forebears. I guess the sumptuous 180g pressings help as well, but they're far from essential - most black discs sound pretty good and a lot sound superb.

One question that needs to be asked is: will the new digital formats, that are fighting their way to the market as you read, be able to comprehensively trounce vinyl? I should hope so is the only answer, but I can see a lot of vinyl junkies dismissing them as another passing fad. Yes, vinyl is that good.

#### **COMPETITION CHALLENGES**

We had a bit of trouble with our ATC Anniversary competition last month somehow the company's name got twisted in the text and although the list of optional

answers contained the correct meaning, it wasn't stated elsewhere. ATC does of course stand for Acoustic Transducer Company our apologies to readers and ATC alike.

We received a letter this month suggesting that our competitions were too easy to enter. The ATC palaver marked a change, albeit accidental, but this month production editor Rachel Phillips has come up with some serious teasers. If your memory is as rusty as mine, the following website may come in handy: www.mrgroove.demon.co.uk. Confused? You will be.

#### **PROPHECY CORNER**

Marantz's in-house guru Ken Ishiwata shared some of his wisdom with yours truly and a variety of the country's finest hi-fi hacks last month. Among which was the notion that the CD-recorder was the most likely successor to the CD player. While the rest of us are looking at the horizon and waiting for high density mediums, he's realised that what most people want is a good quality recording medium.

The question is whether MD hasn't got there first. It certainly looks like becoming the case with minis and micros, but given CD's universality and the quality available from CD-R, Ken may be right when it comes to the separates market. I'm a CD-R user myself, the recent spate of recorders and discs prompting me to use the medium - or its RW variant - as the first remote control recorder I've had. Now just the music from radio shows can be captured from the comfort of my sofa and enjoyed at leisure.

Now that blank CD-R cost as little as £1.50 a go and players are coming down in price every month, you'd be crazy to ignore it. I can't imagine recording media of this quality has ever been

so affordable.

umedr

#### THIS MONTH'S EDITOR'S CHOICE

This month we had only one real crowd-puller in our high-end selection, the ATC SIA2-150 integrated amplifier. This sturdy device is the first of its kind for ATC, but hopefully will encourage the brand to expand the range. It's a high power, 150 Watt design that's clearly been created to take on the likes of the Krell KAV integrated elsewhere in this issue. It does so with real aplomb and makes music to boot - don't miss Lee's review on page 30.





**SYSTEM OF THE MONTH P12** 

## **FIB**N **JULY/AUGUST 1999 ISSUE 192**

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COLDIAN 50

#### **INSTANT SYSTEMS**

Tim Bowern tries £6,000 system with Anglo-Danish alliances put together by Surrey-based Infidelity.

### O ATC SIA2-150 & SCM-10 ANNIVERSARY

A look and listen to ATC's Anniversary package combining the SIA2-150 amplifier and SCM 10 speakers.

## **KRELL KAV-500i**

An awesome integrated amp from our cousins across the great pond? Jason Kennedy gives it a listen.

## 5 PROAC STUDIO 125

Paul Messenger finds out whether ProAc's new entrylevel floorstanding speakers live up to the brand's illustrious reputation.

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Richard Black gets to grips with the wild world of speaker cables in this month's Super Test.

#### **TURNTABLES &** CARTRIDGES

A super test look at the vinyl-hungry specialist market – Tim Bowern gives his record-playing recommendations.

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This month's Mega Test. Comprehensive reviews of ten hot new integrated amps between £169 and £400.





### **SUPER TEST TURNTABLES & CARTRIDGES P49**

**SUPER TEST SPEAKER CABLES P36** 

#### HI-FI CHOICE July/August 1999













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Paul gets back to bass tricks with REL's new and discreet Q200E subwoofer.

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for you to give it a good home.

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### COMPETITION WIN ACOUSTIC ENERGY 500 SERIES LOUDSPEAKERS WORTH OVER £3,500

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# Tim Bowern, Jason Kennedy & Lee Dunkley leave no stone unturned to find the top stories.

#### **NEWS IN BRIEF**

## **D-Day creeps closer for DVD-A**

TEAC has launched the T-R460 (above) – a budget priced tuner designed to complement the forthcoming A-R600 integrated amp. The tuner employs a PLL synthesiser tuning system and features RDS functionality with 40 preset memories (20 FM/20 AM), MFF display, timer function – used in conjunction with the A-R600 and a mono selector. It will cost about £120. TEAC UK ☎ (01923) 819630

TECHNICS has developed new 'high fidelity' ATRAC encoding for its MiniDisc players. The compression system is claimed to stick closer to the original wave form. In a further development, the company has declared its support for Digital Radio – more details as they come. ☎ (01344) 862444

ACOUSTIC SOLUTIONS has unveiled two specialist products. The Eight is a stand-mounted domestic speaker retailing at £1,375 and the Platform Eight is an open-frame speaker support retailing at £180. Hand-crafted in 21 mm solid American Red Oak, the speaker employs two Morel driveunits in an overlapping design and claims unequivocal soundstage and stereo imaging capabilities. **32** (01245) 600567



MISSION introduces three speakers to its home cinema line-up. The 77c1 is a revised version of the successful 77c (125 Watts) centre channel speaker. The updated model (above) retains the triple tweeter array but gains a second driven Aerogel bass/mid unit replacing the passive bass radiator in the 77c.

The 7ASI (75 Watts) and 7AS2 (150 Watts) are two new active subwoofer systems employing ultra-high excursion 200mm drivers, two in the 7AS2. Prices are expected to be about £200 for the 7AC1, £300 for the 7AS1 and £400 for the 7AS2. **26** (01480) 451777

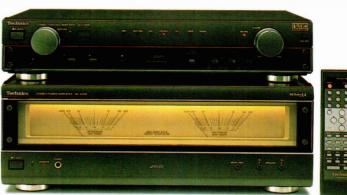
CYRUS unveiled five new products at the Frankfurt show. New models include the Cyrus 5 – an all-new integrated amplifier; Moviemaster – a state of the art digital preamplifier and AV processor and the updated FM 7.5 radio tuner. Two loudspeakers join the line-up: the radical Cyrus CLD 1 and a tower model still in its prototype form – more details as they arrive. ☎ (01480) 451777

**ONKYO** joins the DVD race. The DV-5501 is a second-generation player and features high-grade components as used in the company's high-end CD players. The model benefits from Panasonic/Technics has announced further details of its DVD-Audio players, due out later this year. New machines will appear from both brands and they'll play DVD-Audio and DVD-Video discs, as well as CDs.

However, compatibility with the rival Sony/Philips SACD hardware looks unlikely, as the two new CD-beating formats prepare to go head-to-head. A spokesman said: "Two years ago we asked the SACD camp about possible co-operation, but they haven't responded". Panasonic/Technics gave details of the

DVD players at its annual European seminar, and outlined several key technologies to be incorporated in the DVD-Audio machines. One is a new Super MASH digital-to-analogue converter, precise enough to handle the format's huge potential volume of data – 1,100 times that of CD. Another is a technology called Digital Remaster Processing, which 'remasters' CDs to 24-bit resolution. The claimed result is "near DVD-A quality".

DVD-Audio's copy protection system – co-developed by Panasonic/Technics and Toshiba in consultation with the music industry – also came under the spotlight. As reported in *Choice* last month, it will allow one copy of each disc per recorder at no more than CD quality, and incorporates contents-scrambling and watermarking.



#### O It's (format) war! Technics' DVD-ready amplifiers.

Both brands also showed off prototype DVD-Audio players and their styling would suggest a lower price (still to be confirmed) than Sony's rival SACD player, just launched in Japan. Panasonic/Technics also confirmed its commitment to the format, calling it "the major project for our future", but there were no predictions of a quick take-over from CD as the dominant format – the year 2007 was the only time-frame ventured.

Technics is also set to launch several amps and speakers designed to make the most of DVD-Audio's improved performance. Full details next month. Panasonic UK (01344) 862444

## **Top of the Pops**

New to Sennheiser's headphone range is the HD 495 Silver. Topping off the Four series, the company claims this mid-priced model delivers 'class-leading sound quality' and 'unbeatable metallic looks'. With a padded headband and lightweight build, the HD 495 is designed for comfort.

Inside, it uses Sennheiser's 'Duofol' diaphragm, incorporating dual films to make a single, rigid, resonance-resistant structure. The magnet assembly is designed to allow controlled long excursions for deep bass with low distortion. An open-back design, the HD 495 boasts a lively, dynamic, natural sound with solid bass and clear, clean treble.

Features include: oval capsules designed to sit comfortably on the listener's ear, replaceable foam pads and a one sided, oxygen-free copper, replaceable cord.

The HD 495 retails at £59.95. Sennheiser Helpline (01494) 551571

O Sennheiser's HD 495: 'unbeatable metallic looks'.

## **REL's Release**

REL breaks its two-year silence with the introduction of the Strata III active sub-woofer system. Replacing the Strata II, the III employs a sophisticated version of REL's 'ABC' filtering circuit, calibrated in 24 semi-tone increments between 22 and 96Hz, to achieve a finer tuning accuracy.

The Strata III is a closed-box design for greater phase accuracy and is rated at 100 Watts continuous power employing a 10in long-throw, downward firing driver.

Built from 30mm MDF, the Strata III is available in standard Grittex black plus five real-wood veneers: black ash, cherry, light

oak, rosenut and walnut. REL claims that the Strata III will further raise the performance standards of subwoofers in mid-market hi-fi and A/V systems. Prices start from £600. REL 🕿 (01656)768777



## **Marauding Marantz**



Marantz is planning an armada of new products for the coming year with new

models at almost all price points. The most dramatic change will be in the budget arena, where nearly

everything bar the stalwart PM-66KI and CD-63II KI will make way for sturdier-looking replacements. These feature brushed aluminium fascias and, with some models, an alternative champagne gold finish.

August will see a CD-67 replacement, the CD6000, at £250 and £350 for the OSE version, while the matching PM6010 OSE amp at £230 replaces the PM-66SE. In September they are joined by PM7000 (£300) and PM4000 (£150) amplifiers, CD4000 (£130) and CD500 (£200), CD-17MkII (£800) CD players, DR-17 (£1,200) CD recorder, ST4000 (£120) tuner and SR500 (£500) AV receiver.



#### O The CD6000: set to replace Marantz's CD-67 in August.

Early next year the Premium series will be enhanced with an SM-17 power amp (£700) that can be used to bi-amp with the PM-17 integrated, which will appear in MkII form for £900. There will also be two new CD-R machines next year, this being the direction that Marantz expects separates CDP purchasing to take.

There are no plans for MD or SACD hardware, but in the latter instance Marantz's connection with Philips should stand it in good stead should it prove a winner. Marantz Hi-fi UK 🕿 (01753) 680868

## **Copland redefines valve market**



The birth of the Copland CTA 402 integrated valve amplifier could be set to change the view on valve amps. The CTA 402 claims to offer better all-round performance with its improved design.

Maintaining Copland's simple style, the new model is housed in a silver alloy-fronted case. Amongst the amp's features is a new MM phono stage, described as providing a more dynamic sound for vinyl lovers, and a remote handset to control functionality. This can be bypassed into 'digital silence' mode rendering the audio circuitry completely free from any digital processing. The

### **Tannoy Revolution**



Tannoy has announced the introduction of the Revolution R3 loudspeaker. The new 'big brother' to the range is a twin bass configuration employing two 16.5cm drivers and a 2.5cm soft dome tweeter. Standing at just over a metre, the M3 is a tall, elegant floor-stander which can be mass-loaded to provide additional stability and enhanced bass control. The Revolution R3 comes in a real-wood cherry veneer finish and is expected to retail at about £550.



COPLANE

amp's output gives 35 Watts RMS a side into an 8 Ohm load. The CTA 402 costs £1,698 and is available now. Absolute Sounds Ltd 🕿 (0181) 971 3909

## **Radical Speaking**

ATC has launched an anniversary speaker to celebrate its first quarter-century. The SCM70 SL is an unusual design with gentle curves - a move away from the strong lines of more conventional speaker boxes. The shape of the cabinet is apparently a result of the speaker's sonic demands and is developed to be free of unwanted resonance and vibration.

The SCM70 SL employs a new 234mm bass driver incorporating 'Super Linear' magnet technology to reduce 3rd harmonic distortion. New MkII midrange dome and 25mm tweeter units with improved frequency linearity are also installed.

To celebrate the launch and its anniversary, ATC is producing a special edition limited to just 50 pairs worldwide. Each pair will be accompanied with a certificate of ownership.

Finish, befitting the occasion, is silver, with anthracite grey high-gloss side panels and anodised aluminium polished front corners with a mid-grey grille cloth. ATC inform us that this finish is limited to the special edition model only and will not be repeated. The SCM70 SL is expected to retail at £9,950. ATC 🕿 (01285) 760561

O ATC's SCM70 SL.



#### **(1) NEWS IN BRIEF**

20-bit/96kHz audio playback, 10-bit video D/A with total front panel control of menus as well as remote operation. Price is likely to be £999.95. 2 (01296) 482017

WADIA DIGITAL has bought UltraAnalog. The 'unique technology achievements' of both companies should provide a healthy platform for future development, and there are plans to bring 'innovative products' to the market during 1999.

Meanwhile, Wadia has unveiled its latest development: a 'revolutionary' PowerDAC. The Wadia 790 claims to be a ground-breaking amp to re-evaluate high-end audio values. It is pitched at a provisional price of around £48.000. (01996) 573030

**PIONEER** is launching a new-look mini system. The IS-21 series is a futuristiclooking system which is the result of 18 months of extensive design research. The system is available in both cassette and MiniDisc versions, referred to as 'media zones'. The power amplifier is a 100 Watt RMS per channel unit housed separately. Prices are likely to be about £300 to £400, depending on your choice of 'media zone' **2** (01753) 789500



- AIWA has added an ultra-compact personal MiniDisc recorder to its range. The AM-F70 (above) is smaller and lighter, with longer battery life performance than its predecessors. Billed as 'one of the smallest MD recorders in the universe', the AM-F70 provides full recording and editing facilities with optical, line and mic level inputs, as well as an anti-shock system. Price is expected to be about £200. 2 (0990) 902 902
- HIFICABLES.CO.UK is a new website, offering award-winning cables at discount prices. Visitors to the site can order hi-fi and home entertainment cables and interconnects from the likes of AudioQuest, Cable Talk, Chord and QED. The site has already generated lots of interest during its trial and its planned launch in June http://www.hificables.co.uk



SONY has a new addition in its micro system range. The Series D was created to bring together high quality sound, contemporary design and a wide range of features. Available in four versions, the basic SD1 comprises of amp, CD and RDS tuner. The SD1M has the inclusion of a MiniDisc while the SD1T is the cassette deck version. For those who want both cassette and MiniDisc there is the SD1MT. Prices start at £350. 2 (01932) 816000

Ø

# NEWS & VIEWS



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DIARY DATE *HFC* contributor Richard Black is playing Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Lambeth Orchestra, conducted by Christopher Fifield, on 10 July. Venue – All Saints Church, Rosendale Road, West Dulwich, London SE21 (corner of Lovelace Road), starting at 7.30 pm. The programme includes wind serenades by Strauss and Dvorak, plus Mozart's Symphony 25.

TANNOY'S Mercury home cinema range is three years old, and the company has made some additions to the line-up, including the Mercury mR - a compact speaker designed to be used as a rear/surround pair – and the new Mercury mSUB 10 – an active subwoofer model with a 25cm long throw drive unit. Tannoy has also revealed new Prestige and Kingdom models will be coming soon. **2** (01236) 420199

#### LUMLEY LOUDSPEAKERS has announced the launch of the LMS

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ADVANTAGE is introducing a new CD player. The CD1 is touted as having unsurpassed precision engineering placing the player in a class of it sown. Employing the Burr-Brown 1702 20-bit D/A converter – a benchmark for the world of high-end D/As, alongside state of the art jitter reduction circuitry goes some way to reinforcing the claim. Pricing for the CD 1 is expected to be £1,995.

## Ahoy there, Philips flagship



Philips is launching the CDR 950 to replace the acclaimed CDR 880, reviewed in *HFC 184*, at the top of its digital recorder range. With an emphasis on playback quality, the company claims this model will take CD-R performance a step further.

Internal enhancements include new D/A and A/D converters and Philips' Direct Line Recording (DLR) technology, said to allow highly accurate recordings from CD or other 44.1kHz sources, to be made bit-by-bit. A further benefit of this technology is that bit-by-bit copies can be made of HDCD-encoded discs.

To make CD recording more intuitive, Philips has made enhancements including 99-track programming,

easy recording start and clearer displays. The 'Make CD' function allows discs to be recorded and finalised with a single command. Additional recording functions enable monitoring of the recorded signal, fade in/out control and a recording level and balance adjustment for level differences between discs. There is also a three second audio buffer allowing accidental recordings to be halted before the disc writing process begins.

Distinctive high-end styling is harmonised with other Philips products and comes in black or champagne finish as the CD-R 951. Price will be about £350 and it should be in the shops by August.

Philips Consumer Electronics Ltd 🕿 (0181) 689 4444

## Denon bids to DVD and conquer

Denon has launched a budget DVD player with the benefits of DTS. The DVD-2500 is a £500 machine with 24-bit/96kHz audio capability and 10-bit video.

Denon's experience in highend products has been used to select key components. An advanced digital servo offers high performance in reading and processing disc information, offering improved picture quality

and sound. While the player's ergonomic styling makes it straightforward to use whilst a full selection of DVD features is available from the remote control with on-screen displays. The DVD-2500 comes in black and gold finishes and is available at your A/V specialist now.  $\ (01234) 741200$ 

## The life and Solus of the party

Ruark has a new compact speaker system. The Solus is designed to deliver those qualities typically found in compact speakers systems but with the addition of real bass and scale. The standmounted two-way design incorporates some of the innovative features developed for its Excalibur model.

The bass/mid driver is a 15cm unit with a 3.8cm aluminium voice coil, while the tweeter is a larger than average 2.8cm textile dome. Impedance is 8 Ohms with a sensitivity of 86dB and bi-wiring capabilities. The cabinets measure 33x21x33cm (HxWxD) and are ideally situated free-standing. Dedicated Solus stands are to be launched shortly.

The Solus comes in a variety of real wood veneer finishes: natural oak, black oak and natural cherry with prices starting at £1,200. Also available at an extra cost



are yew, natural beech, santos rosewood and black piano lacquer finishes. *Ruark* **2** (01702) 601410



## **PMC Update**



PMC has introduced the FB1 loudspeaker a floorstanding model aimed at the rapidly expanding home cinema market. Standing a meter tall, the FB1 employs a 17cm mid/bass unit with a bass response down to 22Hz, 150 Watt power handling and a sensitivity of 90dB. The speaker comes in four finishes - walnut, rosewood, cherry and black ash - and prices will start at £1,100.

Meanwhile, the Bryston electronics ränge, imported by PMC, is now available in a metallic platinum grey finish, in keeping with today's popular 'lifestyle' designs. PMC 2 (01707) 393002



PMC's now offers the FB1 (right) and a new finish for Bryston electronics (above).

### **Stylish, Budget Celestion**



Celestion has a new loudspeaker based on the earlier C1 model with claimed improved

performance. Aptly named the Celestion C1 Improved, it is designed to appeal to both hi-fi and home cinema markets. The cabinet is manufactured from thick extruded aluminium and sports a tear-drop section design.



A two-way reflex ported design, the unique shape of the cabinet is said to eliminate standing wave distortion that can be a problem with square boxes. The C1 Improved features a 2.5cm titanium dome tweeter and a 13cm mid/bass driver with an 'unusually large' magnet that's said to be responsible for 'deceptively extended bass for its size'. Specification details give 90dB sensitivity with an impedance of 4 Ohms. Dimensions are 34x17x25cm (HxWxD) and weight 4.4kg. The speaker can be standmounted or fixed with brackets - both can be purchased separately.

The Celestion C1 Improved is expected to retail at around £200. Celestion 2 (01622) 687442

### **PAUL MESSENGER** Paul goes back to bass tricks with REL.

hen Richard E Lord rang me up, way back in 1991, to try to persuade me to listen to his subwoofer, I little suspected that REL would turn out to be one of the British hi-fi success stories of the decade. After several depressing previous experiences with so-called subwoofers, most of which were all woof and no sub, I was initially sceptical. Richard didn't dispute my observation that most of the subs then available didn't work properly, but asserted that his did.

I suggested he travelled the country to prove his point, and subsequently described the results of that encounter in Hi-Fi Choice (March 1992). The long and short of it was that REL subwoofers were indeed the real thing, and from a hi-fi perspective too, mostly because of their ability to generate seriously deep bass while avoiding all the midbass muddle produced by most rivals.

Richard not only had an excellent product, he'd also got the timing just right, because the early 1990s saw the emergence of the whole home cinema sound 'thing'. REL's subs have always been oriented towards hi-fi, but a little extra heavy-handedness on the volume and filter controls could meet the home cinema enthusiast's preferences.

Today, REL turns over some £1.5m and exports to about fifty countries. The product range has been expanded and refined steadily over the years, but his 1999 initiatives may mark the most important changes yet.

The familiar, longstanding, ongoing, port-loaded and more upmarket STseries is being upgraded to MkIII spec, with more powerful amplification, greater input flexibility and semitoneaccurate filtering. Richard reckons the biggest sonic improvement is down to using a better quality mains toroid transformer in the amplifier's power supply.

But the development that REL is most excited about is the prosaically-named Q200E. The Q50 and Q100 are cubeshaped, sealed-box designs, smaller and more cost-effective than the STs. Back in 1996 their 40x40cm sides seemed compact enough, but a couple of years ago. US designer Bob Carver came up with the Sunfire True Subwoofer, a powerful device that moved the goalposts for super-compact, serious subwoofers, by housing everything in a sub-1ft<sup>3</sup> box.

The Q200E - it should have been called the QT - is REL's response, if only because it's almost the same tiny size. In



#### O REL's little black box: well, woof woof.

other respects, though, it's a very different proposition - and the 600 REL sells at less than half the Sunfire's UK price.

The baby REL is quite conservative in most respects. The exception lies in the actual bass driver, a radical device Richard tracked down in California and which is very much the key to keeping the overall dimensions so tiny.

Most bass drivers look like scaled-up midrange drivers. This one represents a substantial rethink on what a dedicated bass driver needs to do. Instead of the usual lightweight cone, it uses a hefty thick composite disc diaphragm, kept in position by a stiff suspension and driven by an enormous magnet – this compact (10in frame) driver weighs nearly 9kg!

Because the cone is so thick, internal box colorations are less liable to get out into the outside world. And because the suspension is stiff, the extra stiffness added by loading one side with a small sealed box has only a modest extra effect, raising the resonant frequency from 38Hz (free air) to just 42Hz.

Richard brought a couple of preproduction O200Es round to show me. I was impressed by how easy they were to accommodate and how quickly we obtained very respectable results, even though there was only time for a very rapid and rudimentary installation. Sweep tests confirmed that the subs integrated very well and went well down to 20Hz in room.

First impressions were positive enough, even though there wasn't enough time for proper assessment. But I still reckon the O200E will hit the commercial spot irrespective of its performance, because it's so discreet and easy to accommodate, even in multiple arrays, for distributed room drive!

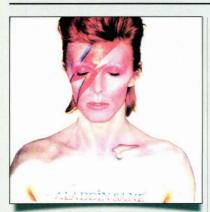
O Celestion C1 Improved.

## **NEWS & VIEWS**

## **PREVIOUSLY UNHEARD**

Phil Strongman digs out rare and classic tracks appearing on CD or virgin vinyl for the first time. Go strut your funky stuff...





#### **DAVID BOWIE** Aladdin Sane

The epic Time, the urgent, Stonesque Panic In Detroit, the synth-flecked Drive-In Saturday and the lush Lady Grinning Soul are all gems. An original double sleeve, 180 grammes' worth of fresh wax and access to the master tapes make this LP a bit of a sonic winner too . Not the 1973 you'll see in sitcoms, but an indispensable time capsule all the same. EMI Millennium Vinyl – from Vivante

#### MARK MURPHY Who Can I Turn To?

Jazz Singer of The Year 1966 *and* '96? How does he do it? Effortlessly, as this breezy '66 disc reveals with a dozen above-average standards. Flows like fine sand. Immediate CD

#### Music OOOOO Sound OOOOO

#### **ERNEST RANGLIN** Now Is The Time

MPS stands for Most Perfect Sound – this 1974-81 CD, of reggae guitar work, was converted at 24-bit, 192kHz (at Emil-Berliner-Haus Langenhagen). And damn pure it is too, with fine separation and detail on Ranglin's fret dancing – and Monty Alexander's ringing piano. Well crucial, as they now say in Germany. MPS

#### 

#### BILLY NICHOLLS Would You Believe

The British *Pet Sounds* is the tag collectors have given this – belatedly, since the label refused to release it in 1968, making it a  $\pm$ 1,500 rarity. It still sounds fine – wasted tunesmith meets a would-be Phil Spector (producer Andrew Loog Oldham) while going for pop profundity. Magnificent folly. Immediate

#### Music OOOOO Sound OOOOO

#### VARIOUS Best of Latin Jazz / Jazz Spectrum

The Global Best of CD is a double that paints a fine picture of pre-digital Latin Jazz – Quincy, Ella, Astrud et al. The BBE set has more 'soul', as well as Ray Barretto and Jonah Jones. Both albums contain melodic rhythms that always will be cutting-edge. Global / BBE

#### Music OOOOO Sound OOOOO

#### **ELVIS PRESLEY** Suspicious Minds

Or how Elvis completed his 1968 comeback by diving into a Memphis studio with in-house producer Chips Moman. Remastered to give a transparent platform to classics like *In The Ghetto, Wearin' That Loved On Look* and *Gentle On My Mind*. Superb performances, well captured. RCA-BMG CD

#### 

#### **MAURICE JARRE** Lawrence of Arabia OST

Cinefile are also issuing the excellent *Diamonds OST* by Roy 'Get Carter' Budd but *Lawrence* will probably make a bigger splash because it was a better film – an epidwith a mesmerising score. Castle Cinefile CD **Music** 

WHOCAN I TURN TO CON MARK MURDEN A Tubbe port contact

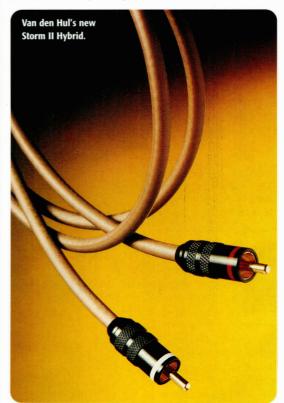




## **Budget Storm**

Van den Hul has released the Storm II Hybrid – a new, low-priced interconnect cable employing vdH carbon-metal technology. The Storm II is touted as being a well balanced cable offering excellent image depth and stereo focus with exceptional bass and a detailed and smooth high-end.

Made from high-grade stranded copper with a special carbon coating, the cable is insulated by a Hulliflex 3 outer jacket and terminated with high-grade phono plugs featuring gold-plated contacts. Screening is courtesy of 112 silver-coated, Matched Crystal, oxygen-free copper strands providing high resistance to external electrical fields. The cable is ideally suited to digital audio and is claimed to work well across a wide range of systems. van den Hul says the Storm II Hybrid will give a dramatic upgrade on component supplied interconnect cables. The Storm II Hybrid is available at £29.99 for a 0.8m pair – other lengths are available. *van den Hul* **☎** (02088) 994280





Rega has brought two new products to the market. The first is a loudspeaker called the Ara that's described as the 'little brother' of the range – a two-way standmounter with dimensions of 32x17x20cm (HxWxD).

The second is the new Super Elys MM cartridge built into a blue one-piece body. It has a handwound coil similar to the Exact and uses the same tip as the Elys, but is billed as an altogether more efficient cartridge.

Both products are available from your local Rega stockists and are expected to retail at £250 and £150 for the Ara and Super Elys respectively. *Rega* **2** (01702) 333071



## JIMMY HUGHES

#### Jimmy reckons Harmonix isn't strictly for the Byrds.

You'll either think the products are wonderful – or a complete con. The range is comprehensive, covering everything from room tuning devices to treated power cords and speaker cables. So where to start?

I began with the RF-11 CD Tuning Sheets – the cheapest Harmonix device at £15 for 8. They're simple to use: just peel off the protective layer and carefully stick one to the label side of your CD, taking care to line it up.

Because they aren't meant to be removed once stuck in place, you can't do 'before and after' A/B comparisons unless you have two copies of the disc in question. Each sheet has a pattern cut out of it – shades of John Rogers' CD Statmat – although Harmonix doesn't say why. Beyond damping vibrations on the CD,

"Magical' is a deeply unscientific term. But how else do you define a change that, at a stroke, makes music much more intimate and involving?"

how could such a device alter the sound? Even the most open-minded enthusiast must surely be sceptical. Nevertheless, there was a change to the way the CD sounded after treatment. Clarity improved, making it easier to follow individual voices and instruments. On Elvis Costello's *Sulky Girl* from the CD *Brutal Youth*, the phasey 'processed' vocal quality was enhanced, and the whole track had much more vibrancy and life, sounding crisp and exciting.

But was I fooling myself? I don't think so. Untreated CDs (irrespective of differences in recording quality) didn't seem to have quite the same focus and clarity as those I'd Harmonix'd. There was definitely something extra-special about the treated CDs.

Next I tried a set of three SF-200 tuning feet. These cost £35 each (the SF-200EBS enhancing tuning bases are another £70 each), and you can easily compare results with and without. Interestingly, the perceived improvement was similar to that produced by the CD Tuning Sheets, despite the disparate nature of the products. The difference is musical rather than sonic, and concerns the way voices and instruments relate to each other. Both devices made the music sound more personal and expressive, allowing you to hear more clearly how things were being sung or played. For example, on the Byrds track *Mr Tambourine Man*, the double-tracked vocals separated out better, while the clarity of the 12-string electric guitar part and bass line was

enhanced. So you need Harmonix feet or the CD Tuning sheets to hear such things? Of course not. But it's a question of degree. When I first listened to *Mr Tambourine Man*, minus Harmonix treatment, I'd have said there was nothing lacking in the musical presentation. Indeed, the reproduction seemed superb.

However, once the support feet were under my Meridian 518 digital processor box, the experience of listening to a track I've probably heard a thousand times over the past thirtyplus years was magically enhanced. Suddenly, I was hearing things I'd never noticed before.

Of course, 'magical' is a deeply unscientific term. But how else do you define a change that, at a stroke, makes music much more intimate and involving? To describe the change only in terms of improved sonics – tighter bass or sharper treble – misses the essence of it.

The difference between a great system and one that's merely average is that the former is always equal to the demands of the music. It's able to recreate the individual shape, texture

Harmonix's tuning sheets (above) give a very similar perceived improvement in sound quality to that offered by the SF-200 tuning feet (below) but at a fraction of the price.

XIUOULA

Marmonty SE-200

and tone colour of voices and instruments – subtleties of timbre, phrasing, and dynamics that make the performance of a piece of music expressive and involving. Listening to *Mr Tambourine Man* with the feet in place, I could

differentiate Roger McGuinn's double-tracked vocals as never before. The pitches of the notes were clearer; the shaping of the vocal line was more contoured dynamically. And it was possible to hear both vocal parts clearly all the time.

UNING SHEET

BHS

DUIUNI

The instruments were clearer too, and everything stayed in focus and was correctly proportioned. Compared with before, it was as though you could hear all the music all of the time, rather than only hear some of the music most of the time.

Incidentally, the feet themselves consist of what looks like a piece of hardwood glued to a shallow, not too sharply-pointed aluminum spike. An aluminum support cup prevents the point scratching the surface it interfaces with. And that's it. Superficially, there's nothing to suggest that it's is anything other than a nicely finished support foot.

Subjectively, however, the sonic difference is much bigger than you'd get with an ordinary set of spiked support feet. With the latter you could look forward to improvements in sharpness and focus, with firmer, tighter bass and perhaps even a slight increase in perceived loudness.

Harmonix's support feet offer similar sonic benefits, but it's the improvement musically that makes the extra cost of these beauties worthwhile. If your experiences

tally with mine, you'll find the Harmonix products make your system sound more natural and informative, increasing transparency and clarity, while making the music more believable and communicative than you might have thought possible. Inevitably, some will find

Inevitably, some will find Harmonix too tweaky, while others will dismiss it as fraud or snake oil. My advice is don't be hasty. Listen without prejudice, and see what you think. Worth checking out. 22 Audiofreaks (0181) 948 4153

July/August 1999 HI-FI CHOICE 11

## TRUE To the end

Surrey-based hi-fi dealer Infidelity has a system it thinks we might like. Tim Bowern listens to find out whether it keeps the faith.

#### THE SYSTEM

Meridian 508.24 CD player	£1,995
Densen B-200 preamp	£1,000
Densen B-300 power amp	£800
B&W Nautilus 805 speakers	£1,400
HNE Cableway 805 stands	£585
Nordost Blue Heaven intercon £290/1	nnects m pair x2
Naim NACA 5 speaker cable	1. S. C.
£110/5	m pair x2

nfidelity: what a cheeky moniker for a dealer in fine audio systems. It's a rye poke in the eye for those who neglect hi-fi's fun factor, for those who seek precision but forget to find pleasure in the pilgrimage towards true 'high fidelity'. But when it comes to the cream of Infidelity's stock, and its sonic loyalty to the original source, no description

could be much further from the truth. Ah, the truth – that's what we all crave in the end. Faithful and precise reproduction of our favourite music from the first note to the last, limited only by the performance frontiers of the recordings we play. Any specialist worth its salt can spark such cravings in even the most casual customer, so we thought we'd set a challenge for the guys at Infidelity – give 'em something to set their creative juices flowing.

'Imagine someone walks into your shop and wants to buy a system,' we said. 'He or she has a flexible budget and can stretch to several thousand pounds, as long as performance is persuasive enough. It needs to be a musical all-rounder, with a CD player as its source, and suitable for operation in a medium-size listening space. What would you suggest?' Preparing a system to meet

the needs of a hypothetical customer entails

something of an educated guess. But armed with invaluable knowledge of what works with what,

MERIDIAN 508

Infidelity has combined some of the best kit to pass through its portals in recent times.

#### AN ANGLO-DANISH ALLIANCE

The three main components are a juicy cut of Danish sandwiched between two slices of English excellence. Let's start at the source, a highly capable CD player from Cambridgeshirebased Meridian.

The 508.24 is the most recent version of the established 508 design, complete with a 24-bit-capable DAC hidden within its brick-like casing. Other familiar features include: a remote control the size of a book; the ample provision of socketry, including optical and coaxial digital outputs, and balanced and singleended analogue outputs; a substantial transport mechanism with the motor and optical assembly incorporated into the disc drawer, the aim being to improve the disc's stability.

The player's performance is every bit Meridian, its smooth and delicate signature making a consummately civilised impression. It's not overly soft-sounding like some of the company's earlier efforts, yet its delivery is precise, silky and beautifully mannered, and capable of quite impressive snap and drive. Not the most riveting player at two grand, perhaps, but its even-handed realism is very hard to knock.

From Cambridgeshire to Esbjerg, Denmark, and the fine amplifiers of Densen Audio Technologies. This company's reputation for engaging gear gets stronger every year, and the new B-300 preamp featured here should further

> strengthen its



7:09 PS

BRAW

singular UK image. First, like any new preamp that wants to be taken seriously in the long term, its design is intended to allow growth from two-channel stereo to multi-channel with minimal strife. It includes a dedicated processor input which can be switched in or out, plus four pre-outs, four line-level inputs and a pair of tape loops. There's also a neat 'standby' control which sends the motorised volume pot gliding to its minimum setting, then returns it to its previous position upon reactivation.

#### "This system sounds superbly transparent and box-free, able to convey tonal contrasts in pure, unsullied fashion."

Then there's the quality of its performance when used with a suitable two-channel power amp like Densen's own B-300. We heard this combination in last month's *Choice*, when we gave the B-200 a standalone review. Then we had a pair of biamped B-300s to play with; here we're only using one, yet it remains a potent combination. It lacks a touch of delicacy, but overall its performance is musical and involving.

For the speakers it's back to the hallowed halls of B&W in West Sussex. The Nautilus 805 is the baby of the firm's universally-acclaimed high-end studio range, a 41cm tall standmounter parading a remarkable level of engineering.

Its cabinet is constructed from two pieces of bent ply which form a horseshoe shape in section, with Matrix bracing strengthening the structure from the inside. A 25mm metal dome tweeter sits on top in its own isolated housing, complete with a tapered tail to dissipate rear-firing energy. And the mid/ bass driver sports a 25cm Kevlar cone, its enclosure reflex loaded via a front-facing port with golf ball-style dimples for a smoother flow of air.

It all adds up to form an unobtrusive speaker of some quality. Its sound is superbly clear and transparent, with the sort of dynamic accuracy few speakers this size can even dream of. It appears devoid of colouration and presents music in an eminently coherent fashion, although it lacks the weight, scale and sheer gravitas imparted by larger models from the same range.

B&W makes its own stand for the Nautilus 805, but Infidelity recommended we try one from an independent maker – HNE's Cableway 805. It's custom-built granite with a cable piping system to the rear. This version is 62cm tall on its spikes, and comes with a Nautilus-style base and top plate.

Infidelity's choice of cables is unusual, pitching Nordost's well-regarded Blue Heaven interconnects with four runs (for bi-wiring) of Naim's NACA 5 speaker cable – wire you don't often see outside of a complete Naim system. Still, they should make a lively enough coupling.

#### THE SYSTEM'S SOUND

This system is technically mostly very good, and sometimes quite exceptional. At its best it sounds superbly transparent and box-free, able to suspend music in free space and convey tonal contrasts in pure, unsullied fashion. It's fast without being forced, endowed with the kind of mid-to-treble coherence and resolving power that makes you feel privy to the slightest recorded nuance.

But during my time with this set-up I found it less cut and dried on subjective levels. At times it moved me to tears – during a rendition of Fauré's staggeringly beautiful *Requiem* (King's College Choir/English Chamber Orchestra on EMI), my eyes became wells as the music flowed. The way this system lets the choir gently swell, the way brass swoons and strings soar, it tugs at the heart strings.

No less bewitching was the opening track on Nightmares on Wax's *Carboot Soul*, its stringladen prelude gently subsiding into a razor-sharp atmosphere of focused percussion and free-breathing organ. The soundstage is so real, so vivid you feel you could dive in and swim from corner to corner.

But when I tried some more beat-driven stuff it grabbed me less, its performance seeming to harden up and lose some heart and soul. The technical class of its sound remained as I cycled through trance, deep house, and a healthy slice of rock; it was consistently tight, fast and controlled, but the emotive force of the music seemed diminished. Crisp and clear, but seemingly going through the motions.

#### CONCLUSION

At more than £6,000 this is a relatively costly set-up, given the nature of its components, but the expense is justified by its insightful sonic view. It's magical with voices and musically compelling, though its involving qualities are diminished if heavy bass lines and driving beats are called into the equation.

VERDICT		
SOUND	00000	
SYNERGY	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£6,180	

 When this system scores, it does so with real star quality. A truly insightful performer, engaging with many forms of music and exceptional with some.
 Infidelity (0181) 943 3530

#### THE SYSTEM COMPONENTS

#### AMPLIFIER

#### DENSEN B-200 £1,000 Preamp

A new, high quality preamp with the versatility to grow easily into part of a multi-room set-up. Supplies four line-level inputs plus two tape loops, a processor-specific input and four pre-outputs.

Alternatives: Copland CTA-301MkII £1,399; Meridian 502 £1,295; Musical Fidelity X-P100 £800; TAG McLaren PA10 £850.

DENSEN B-300 £800 Power amp

An engaging performer offering a strong mix of pace and warmth. Power output is 100 Watts per channel.

Alternatives: Michell Alecto (stereo) £1,150; Musical Fidelity X-A200x2 £1,000; Roksan Caspian Power £595; TAG McLaren 60P £850.



#### **B&W** Nautilus 805 £1,400

This is the baby of B&W's sublime Nautilus 800 Series – it lacks the sonic scale of its larger brothers, but its transparent and effortless music-making is instantly recognisable. Sensitivity is 91 dB/W/m and impedance is 8 Ohms. Alternatives: Audio Physic Step £1,299; Dynaudio

Contour 1.3 Mkll £1,198; Harbeth HL Compact 7 £1,300; Jamo Concert 8 £1,365.

#### **CABLES & SUPPORTS**

We used Nordost Blue Heaven interconnects (£145) and five metre runs of Naim NACA 5 speaker cable (£5.50/m). Speaker stands were HNE Systems Granite 805 (£585), purpose-made for the B&Ws. All were recommended by Infidelity.



#### CD PLAYER

#### **MERIDIAN** 508.24 £1,995

A pure and cultured-sounding player, complete with 24-bit-capable DAC and Meridian's usual quality of build. It's a solid digital disc-spinning foundation for any high-end system.

Alternatives: Acoustic Precision Eikos £1,850; Copland CDA 289 £1,898; Helios Stargate £2,550; Naim Audio CD2 £2,000.



#### TECHNOLOGY IT'S THE PITS



### Following on from last month's feature on CD-R blank discs, Paul Miller takes a detailed look at the workings of the medium.

ast month's special on domestic CD-R recording media yielded some pretty spectacular results and, as promised, we'll take the time to explore just why, on a microscopic level, CDs look the way they do. In the feature, we discovered that both CD-R discs and CDs employ a spiral track composed of reflective and non-reflective patches. These are called 'lands' (1) and 'pits' (or bumps, (2)), respectively and, when strung together in a sequence, represent the digital data.

The intensity of the reflected laser beam is much reduced as it passes over an optically destructive pit or bump, distinguishing them from the flat land surfaces that lie in between.

#### EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

However, bumps do not represent digital 1s nor lands solely digital 0s, as you might expect. Instead, a digital '1' is represented by any transition from land-to-bump (3) or bumpto-land while the number of Master Clock periods (T) accumulated across each 'land' or 'bump' surface represents a sequence of digital 0s.

You might imagine the laser 'looking' at the CD spinning overhead and 'counting' the number of regularly spaced T intervals as it goes. Imagine 'seeing' the transition from a reflective land to a nonreflective bump: this is a digital 1. The number of Ts counted until the next transition (from bump back to land) represents the number of digital 0s. Simple, huh?

In essence, the length of a bump, or of the land between two bumps, determines the number of digital 0s that are encoded between adjacent digital 1s. And for continuity, the duration of each land or bump is measured in Clock Periods or Ts. This is the socalled run-length of the land or bump and, as we'll discover, only nine different run-lengths (from 3T to 11T) are allowed to exist on a CD. Somehow, all that 16-bit data has to be represented by patterns made from just nine differently-sized bumps and lands.

"A CD made today must adhere to the specification of those first discs pressed in 1984. In a perfect world, only the tolerances of manufacture would've changed, presumably for the better."

#### HOW TO SQUEEZE 70+ MINUTES OF MUSIC ONTO 5" OF PLASTIC

From an historical viewpoint, the exact dimensions, spacing and number of available 'bump' lengths was limited by the wavelength and Numerical Aperture of Philips' low-cost laser, and the track velocity (speed) of the disc. The height of a bump is fixed at about one quarter of the laser wavelength so that destructive interference is guaranteed to reduce the intensity of the reflected beam.

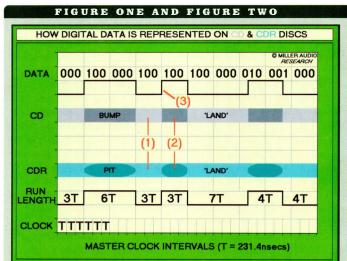
The hard reality of mass manufacture also played a role in what might be achieved. Twenty or so years ago, the minimum size of 'bumps' that could be reliably pressed into a disc's polycarbonate base material was limited. Today, improved manufacturing technology allows a finer structure to be imprinted on higher-density DVD discs, for example. We'll look at this in a future *Oasis*!

For the sake of compatibility, a CD manufactured today must adhere to the specification of those first discs pressed in 1984. In a perfect world, only the tolerances of manufacture would have changed, presumably for the better. Either way, the absolute run-lengths of the lands and bumps depends on the recorded velocity of the CD which, in turn, depends on the total available recording time.

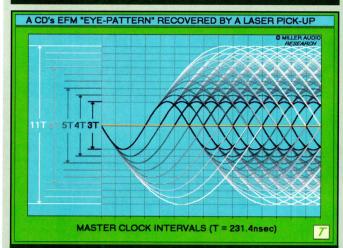
A 74-minute disc, for example, will use a Constant Linear Velocity (CLV) of 1.2m/sec, while a 60 minute disc will use a faster 1.4m/sec.

• Innocent enough, but you wouldn't believe what's going on inside the box...





The spiral track on a CD is composed of reflective and non-reflective patches called 'lands' (1)and 'pits' (2), respectively, which represent the digital data.



Higher frequency, lower amplitude waves (black) are the shortest 3T bumps/lands, lower frequency, higher amplitude waves (white) are the longest 11T bumps/lands.

#### IT'S THE PITS TECHNOLOGY

A CLV is maintained by continually decreasing the rpm of the CD as the laser moves from the inside to the outside of the disc. The faster the CLV, the longer the run-lengths, and vice-versa.

Practically speaking, for the laser to 'see' bump and land patterns moving overhead at a constant 1.4m/sec then the disc's speed must slow from 568 to 228rpm as it tracks from beginning to end. This is just one reason why belt-drive CD transports aren't necessarily such a bright idea.

There are nine allowable run-lengths (bump or land lengths), each of which is an exact multiple of the 4.3218MHz Master Clock (T = 231.4nsec). To maintain this relationship, CDs recorded at 1.4m/sec will have slightly longer bumps and lands (and a shorter '60 minute' playing time) than an equivalent disc recorded at 1.2m/sec.

This leaves us with a minimum run-length (called 3T) between 0.833-0.972um (1um = one thousandth of a mm) and a maximum-run length (called 11T) between 3.05-3.56um, depending on the CLV of the disc. This is true for both CD and CD-R discs.

#### LASER PICK-UP OUTPUT

I have programmed a computer simulation of the electrical output from a CD's laser pickup, shown in Figure Two. It shows that a laser doesn't 'see' 1s and 0s, but instead provides a complex series of superimposed waveforms from which the 16-bit data is decoded. This is known as the EFM or RF eye-pattern (we'll talk about EFM a little later).

Figure Two clearly shows that each run-length is represented by a waveform whose wavelength and amplitude increases with T-length. So, the shortest 3T bumps/lands are represented by the higher frequency, lower amplitude wave (black) and the longest 11T bumps/lands are represented by the lower frequency, higher amplitude wave (white).

It's also clear that each of these waveforms is placed at 1T intervals. From their precise timing at the horizontal (red) zero-line, the CD player's decoder will extract the 00100000100100... (etc.) data pattern of bumps and lands impregnated on the disc.

Bumps or lands shorter than 3T are not permitted because bump-to-land and land-to-bump transitions will occur too close to the optical cut-off frequency of the laser. Also, bumps and lands longer than 11T could accumulate an unacceptable timing error as 1s become separated by excessive numbers of 0s. So, with a range of 3T to 11T, this means that a '1' must be followed by a minimum of two 0s and a maximum of ten 0s. So how do CD and CD-R discs use combinations of just nine different run-lengths to represent a full 16-bit digital code?

'clumps' are scattered through a wider sequence of data, making correction easier. This is the basis of the Cross Interleave Reed-Solomon code (CIRC) used to combat errors in both CD and CD-R systems.

During the CD mastering process, these 8-bit audio samples are encoded into 24 symbols (12x8-bit samples for both L and R channels). Four extra 8-bit symbols, called Parity Symbols, are sandwiched between each block of 12 audio symbols and one 8-bit Control Symbol is also added to the front. The latter caters for subcode information and brings the total to 33 symbols

"The precise dimensions, spacing and number of available 'bump' lengths was historically limited by the wavelength and Numerical Aperture of Philips' low-cost laser, as well as the track velocity of the disc."

Let's take this from the top. Imagine you've just recorded a piece of music, taken a snapshot every 44.1kHz and then allocated each snapshot a 16-bit number. Remember, with a 16-bit code you have 16<sup>2</sup> (65,536) different combinations of 1s and 0s, each 16 digits long, available to describe the amplitude of each snapshot (see Oasis issue 187). Inevitably, some of these permutations will have consecutive 1s or strings in excess of ten 0s, both violating our 3T-11T rule. So it's impossible to directly accommodate 65,536 permutations of 1s and 0s with a selection of just nine different run-lengths.

#### THE TRICKY BIT: EIGHT-TO-FOURTEEN MODULATION (EFM)

Overcoming this problem is a complex affair. Before the data is committed to CD, every 16-bit digital sample is split into two, smaller 8-bit samples running one after the other. This sequence is then scrambled so that consecutive samples are not placed one after the other on the disc. If they were, then scratches, jam, dust and other imperfections could mask whole sequences of data.

It's the job of the player's decoder to rearrange these 8-bit samples back in their original order so that any missing per block of data (1 Control + 12 Audio + 4 Parity + 12 Audio + 4 Parity = 33 Symbols).

Each of these 8-bit symbols can be represented by one of 28 (256) permutations of 1s and 0s. Each permutation is 8 digits long, yielding binary words extending from 0000000, 00000001, etc to 11111110 and 11111111. But the smallest bump on our CD must be at least 3T in length, so each 1 must be followed by at least two 0s for the run-length to be valid. So we can't accommodate these 8-bit symbols directly onto the CD or CD-R disc. So where do we go from here?

Fortunately, a 14-bit code, which allows 16384 different combinations of 1s and 0s (each fourteen digits long), contains some 267 permutations where each 1 is followed by at least two 0s and no more than ten 0s. So 256 of these 14-bit symbols are used to represent our 8-bit symbols, ensuring there are no bumps or lands smaller than 3T or bigger than 11T. This, then, is the channel coding used by CD, CD-R and CD-RW which, naturally, is called Eight-to-Fourteen Modulation (EFM).

#### JUST WHEN YOU THINK IT'S ALL OVER...

In practice, however, our 8-bit symbols are represented not by 14-bit symbols but by 17-bit

EFM CONVERSION TABLE:		
Decimal	8-bit Symbol	14-bit Symbol
0	00000000	01001000100000
1	00000001	1000010000000
2	00000010	10010000100000
127	01111111	0010000000010
128	10000000	01001000100001
129	10000001	10000100100001
253	11111101	00001000010010
254	11111110	00010000010010
255	11111111	0010000010010

symbols. These three extra bits, called merging or packing bits, are placed between each successive 14-bit symbol to ensure that the 3T/11T rule is upheld.

If a 14-bit symbol ends in a 1 and the next begins with a 1, for instance, this would violate the rule with a runlength of less than 3T. In this case, three '0' packing bits are inserted to create a valid 4T bump or land.

Finally, each data block of 33, 17-bit symbols is headed by a 24-bit preamble with its own three packing bits. This gives a grand total of 588 bits per Information Frame, which coincides with the player's Master Clock (T) period of 4.32MHz. Phew...

Do you have a subject matter for the Oasis? Please contact Paul Miller via e-mail at: MILLER\_AUDIO\_RESEARCH @compuserve.com

#### GLOSSARY

#### **BINARY OR DIGITAL WORD:**

A number composed solely of 0s and 1s. A 16-bit binary word is 16-digits long. As each digit can be a 0 or a 1, there are  $2^{16}$  (65,563) possible permutations from 000000000000000 to 111111111111111.

**BUMP (OR PIT):** A non-reflective Run-Length on the CD (see Figure 1). **EYE-PATTERN:** The electrical output from a CD player's laser pick-up (see Figure 2).

FRAME: Each CD frame contains a Data Block of 33, 17T Symbols, one 24T Preamble and 3 additional Packing Bits.

LAND: A reflective Run-Length on the CD (see Figure 1).

**MASTER CLOCK:** The 'metronome' from which all timing within the CD player is derived. One Clock interval = T = smallest interval or point-to-point distance 'recognised' by the laser on the spinning CD.

**RUN-LENGTH:** The size (length) of a Pit or Bump in multiples of the Master Clock (T). This varies from 3T to 11T. **SYMBOL:** A binary sequence that's 17T long (14T Data + 3T Packing).

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## **DAVID VIVIAN**

## Home is where your hi-fi supports are. But as they say in those scary TV ads, what if your circumstances changed?

've moved. My hundred-year-old three-storey cottage has become a brand new first-floor, two-bedroomed apartment. Laura Ashley frills and florals have been jettisoned into deep space. Paint, steel, leather and blonde woods have appeared *en masse*. How so? You don't need to know. Suffice to say that the great hi-fi/spouse interface debate isn't pencilled in for any future columns.

Neither are contributions from my (now erstwhile) listening partner, Steve.

No doubt you've got the picture. So let's call it a clean sheet and talk hi-fi.

It's probably fair to say that a new listening room makes a bigger difference to the sound of your hi-fi than changing any single component. And, just as with hardware, the results can be better or worse. It's impossible to know if you've landed an upgrade for sure until you set up your system and experiment.

Nonetheless, I felt optimistic. My listening area had increased dramatically – from 11ftx13ft to about 21ftx14ft – and the floor was concrete rather than suspended. Windows that were off to the side and not in the direct sound-reflection path looked encouraging, too. And the much smaller ratio of soft furnishings to wall area all but guaranteed a more 'live' balance (potentially, but not necessarily, a bonus).

But I'd be misleading you if I said that fine-tuning the sound of my resident reference system (currently AVI pre-power and Biggatron speakers with Arcam Alpha 8SE CD player) was a burning priority. Before I moved in I had a hunch it would be, but I couldn't have been more wrong.

Mysteriously, inexplicably – because I'd never shown a glimmer of interest in the subject before – I turned into an interior design despot. As the days to completion melted away, I started to consume the contents of magazines with names like *Perfect Home* and *Home Flair* at a terrifying rate. Then Your Home and Ideal Home, House Beautiful... you name it, I read it. Cover to cover. Morning, noon and night.

And then the trips to Ikea began. Now, Ikea is the place where people who started out with a decor budget but blew it all on interior design magazines are forced to go. You can make your place look like the apotheosis of cool, modern design with the meagre pennies you have left.

Over three weeks I became such a regular customer that the staff started saying hello. Having assimilated an entire month's output of the country's home decor writers, I knew exactly the look I wanted: nothing. Well, next to nothing, anyway. Clean and minimal. Certainly no hulking great black tubular metal hi-fi supports. A few simple wooden tables at most.

Ikea is a store with a splendid hi-fi heritage. The Swedish company's dead simple and cheap coffee table became even more of an icon than it already was when Linn's Ivor Tiefenbrun used one to plonk his Sondek turntable on and said: 'Listen to that... who needs costly, fancy hi-fi furniture?'

I started to wonder if I could revive the Tiefenbrun initiative and, as well as the sofa, chairs, dining table, blinds, lighting *et al*, go the Ikea route for equipment supports as well. Not the purpose-built stuff (too expensive, slightly naff), but the classic light, sturdy, simple, cheap tables.

For reference purposes, but fully aware that I might have to buy it if it turned out to be the business, I borrowed a basic Torlyte combo from Russ Andrews. The Torlyte range, to the best of my knowledge, is unique in the realm of pukka dedicated hi-fi supports in being made entirely out of wood. It's light – both in colour and weight – and extremely stiff. And, used in conjunction with metal spikes (lower unit) and RA's oak

"I knew exactly the look I wanted: nothing. Well, next to nothing, anyway. Certainly no hulking great black tubular metal hi-fi supports. A few simple wooden tables at most." cones (upper platform), it's up there with the best metal stands in the £500-£700 price bracket. And it looks great – very Wallpaper.

The Ikea alternative comprised three birch veneer 'Lack' coffee tables (square, simple, a descendant of the Tiefenbrunendorsed original) placed side-by-side to form a single platform about five-and-a-half feet wide – plenty of space for the TV, VCR and CD player without stacking. Plenty of space underneath, too, for CD storage and (improvisation worthy of Changing Rooms, this) a slatted



wooden shoe rack into which the AVI amplification and cable TV control box fitted perfectly. Total cost? £63 – £18 each for the 'Lack' tables and £9 for the shoe rack. No, in some ways it doesn't sound quite as good as Torlyte – transients are marginally softened, the treble isn't as airy – but bass is more powerful and deeper and, overall, I think the balance is more musical.

Which, when you consider the clean style and paltry outlay, has to be some kind of result. I suppose my point is this: hi-fi furniture doesn't have to look like it fell off the back of an oil rig. It didn't matter before, it does now. The good news is Ikea is still producing the goods.







#### Hi-Fi Choice's very own 'points of view' page, where you, the reader, can express your opinions!

#### LETTER OF THE MONTH

#### WATER THERAPY

I'd like to thank you for publishing such an excellent magazine during the latter half of the millennium. I especially like your impartial reviews. In fact, it was one of your earlier Super Tests that resulted in the purchase of my present, but soon to be replaced, system.

I wonder how many of your current staff remember your 'shoot-out' between the Dansette LP12 and Pye's Black Box? The reviewer came down in favour of the Black Box due to its colour, the quality of the rubber on the turntable and the Bakelite arm. He did, however, like the portability of the Dansette and the raffia style covering of the loudspeakers – although 'loud' is probably a misnomer there.

Unfortunately, the Black Box was in excess of £30 whereas the Dansette was about £23. As £30 was almost equivalent to ten weeks' gross wages, I could not afford the reviewer's choice and bought the Dansette instead. This has held me in good stead for many years now, but recently I've noticed a preponderance of small silver discs adorning the shelves of my local record stores.

Flicking through them in the 'nostalgia' section I found one of my favourite Max Bygraves discs and asked if I could hear it. Quite mind-boggling. During his rendition of I'm a pink toothbrush, you're a blue toothbrush I actually heard tap water going down the plughole.

I rushed home and read a vast number of your back issues and have decided to buy a number of black boxes – although these are made by AVI, not Pye. As I am about to take delivery of what could be described as "the dog's cajones", I have been assured that not only will I hear water going down the plughole, but on Gracie Fields' version of *Singing in the bathtub* you can hear her drop the soap. Wow, such bliss!

RW Fredrick, Cornwall



#### **VIVA KEVLAR**

I read with interest Dr Neil Straker's letter in your March issue. He was a bit cynical about Paul Messenger's earlier column on Kevlar drivers, saying the sound from such units would be highly coloured.

For the defence, I have a pair of B&W CDM1SE loudspeakers and absolutely love them. When I purchased them, B&W told me they needed a week to run in – that's the full 168 hours, not just a couple of hours over each of the seven days!

Straight out of the packaging, I was initially disappointed by their bottom end. After about 50 hours I began to hear an improvement and tracked noticeable improvements through 80, 120 and 168 hours. However, it was only after 200 hours that they really began to sing. B&W need to ensure that their speakers are well run in before sending them out for a review, so as not to be disadvantaged in panel listening sessions.

Despite the good doctor's broadside, I think Kevlar is tough enough to survive.

Eric McCormick, Tasmania, Australia

#### AND THE WINNER IS...

Despite endless attempts, along with colleagues and friends who are all regular readers or subscribers to *Hi-Fi Choice*, I have never succeeded in winning a prize in one of your competitions.

This, as you can imagine, makes us all very sad, and even more so because a couple of our number have won goodies from your rival, Hi-Fi World. The reason for their success is quite simple: they run a competition that requires some skill and judgement. By this I mean not only do they pose questions which, like yours, are easily answered from the text of the competition article, but they also ask for a tie-breaker. Original, eh? This is a much fairer way of allocating prizes rather than the 'first out of the hat' approach.

So come on, how about injecting a bit of fun into your future contests and allow us clever devils a chance to display our powers of intellect?

John Boyd, Nottingham

The Editor replies... I'm sorry to hear that neither you nor your friends have managed to win one of our fabulous competition prizes, however, I'm sure that perseverance will bring its own reward. As for the other publication you mention, there are a couple of reasons why your friends have had greater fortune. First, that magazine has a lower circulation than this one, and second, as you point out, their competitions require some ingenuity. If the less than gratifying response we got with our crossword competitions is anything to go by, quizzes that require mental activity are not a great turnon. We therefore feel inclined to stick to the easy/popular approach.

#### SOUL REVIVING

I'm not generally a fan of recording devices, but was recently talked into buying a Philips CDR 760 (below) by my other half. She thought it'd be useful to put her now unavailable Northern Soul vinyl onto CD. I expected it to sound like vinyl with, perhaps, some loss of detail. But I was wrong - it sounds excellent. There's the odd crackle. but instruments sound better separated with vocals more open and natural and on the whole more musical. In fact, an album I own on both CD and vinvl sounds better when recorded onto CD-R.

Is it possible that during cleaning things up in the digital remastering stages, they remove some of the 'soul', leaving it sounding thin?

Digital-to-digital recordings sound excellent and it's extremely difficult to tell the original from the copy when played on my Naim, Audiolab and Marantz set-up. However, playback through the CD-R machine is poor and best used solely as a recording device – but at £300, it's a steal.

Karl Todd, Oldham

The Editor replies... Most unusual. We've not heard of this phenomenon before. Digital recordings can be better than originals because of reduced jitter but we've not experienced an improvement when recording from vinyl.



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> 9 (2)

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#### GENERAL ENQUIRIES



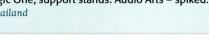
#### LETTER OF THE MONTH

With an upgrade budget of £2,000 and a goal to heighten vocal and midband clarity, where would you advise spending the

money on my existing system as set out below? I primarily listen to blues and rock.

CD player: Micromega Stage 2; amp: Audiolab 8000S; speakers: B&W DM 603s - stood on spiked sand ballasted floor stands; speaker cable: Nordost Flatline Gold - bi-wired; interconnects:

Nordost Magic One; support stands: Audio Arts - spiked. Paul Rowe, Thailand



**GET A JAMO LEATHER CD WALLET!** Every issue, the reader whose letter is our Query of the Month will receive one of these stylish, leather CD wallets, courtesy of those lovely people at Jamo Loudspeakers.

Given your requirements, this system looks like it's in need of a bit of euphony. One way of injecting it would be with valve amplification - we'd suggest an integrated amp like Copland's CSA8, or something with valvelike balance such as the Electrocompaniet ECI-2 or Musical Fidelity A2.

FLECTROCOMPANIE

Alternatively, you could change the loudspeakers, which would have a more dramatic effect on the balance of the system. There's a wide variety of options, but one speaker that is both mid-forward and particularly well suited to your musical tastes is the JBL 4312 MkII. As many rock and blues albums were produced with monitors like these, they'll give you real insight into your music collection.

#### WIRE WOUND



I am putting together a system that at the moment consists of B&W 802 Series 3 speakers, a Krell KAV-300i amplifier and a Marantz CD-17.

I know that to get the best sound I have to get the best cables, and that's my problem. With all your knowledge and experience, could you guys help me out here? I'd really appreciate some suggestions and any recommendations on the best interconnects and bi-wire cables. Andrea, via e-mail

You've got a pretty serious system there, Andrea, so you're going to need some hard core cabling to get the best out of it. In fact, all systems need higher quality cabling than most people appreciate - until somebody sticks some in their system and tries to take it away a week later, that is!

The best cable for your system is always open to debate - or it is until you hear some Electrofluidics or



O The Electrocompaniet ECI-2.

Goertz speaker cable. This stuff consists of flat copper ribbons bonded together to give very low resistance and high immunity from RF (radio frequency) interference. Everyone we've lent this stuff to has refused to give it back!

As for interconnects, our last group test turned up a real winner in the Supra EFF-ISL, but there are alternatives - notably the van den Hul D102 MkIII and Kimber PBJ.

#### FINE TUNING

My combination consists

of a Marantz CD67SE CD

player, Musical Fidelity

X10-D 'missing link', MF E10 amp

Cambridge Pacific before X10-D

and Straight Wire Chorus after it.

The sound is dynamic, bright,

located. The bass has been much

improved after the participation

However, the timbre of violin is

midband and smooth the treble

Where should I start, given a

budget of £500 per component?

While the system could certainly be

components, it might be possible

to tune out the edginess by careful

thin, sharp and even sibilant.

I've tried to enrich the

by changing cables, but the advice from different shops has

been contradictory.

Yang Wang, London E14

improved by changing your

and Mission 733i speakers

bi-wired with Straight Wire

Ouartet. Interconnects are

open, detailed and precisely

of Straight Wire Quartet.



O Straight Wire Chorus interconnects.

cable selection. We suspect the reason you've encountered this problem post-Quartet might be the extra resolution you're now getting. And while some silver cables do have a sweetening effect on high frequencies, other designs might differ – generally, other factors have at least as great an influence on cable sound as the material.

We'd suggest that you make a start by replacing the Cambridge interconnect with some more Straight Wire Chorus and toe-in the speakers so they're pointing diagonally to either side of the listening position.

If that's not enough, try hearing some Pioneer Precision electronics and select speakers to taste.



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#### O The Myryad MI120: Vincent was impressed by the build and sound.

Up to a short time ago, my system consisted of the following: Technics SA-GX370 surround receiver, Yamaha KX-380 tape deck, Yamaha CDX-480 CD player, NAD 5120 turntable and NAD 801 speakers. I live in Switzerland and managed to find a pair of B&W P5 speakers at a great price brand new.

I'm now looking to upgrade the amplifier and have between

"Would a lower power amp like the **Audio Analogue** Puccini be enough to drive my B&W P5 speakers?"

£500 and £700 to spend. I'm looking at the following: Arcam Alpha 9, Musical Fidelity XA-1, Creek 5250, Orelle SA-100 or even the Primare A20. I saw a Myryad MI120 and was very impressed by the build and

sound quality. Do you have any ideas regarding the suitability of any of these amps for the P5s?

Also, would lower power amps like the Audio Analogue Puccini at 40 Watts, or even something like the Naim Nait 3 at 30 Watts, be enough to drive these speakers?

My musical tastes vary from hard rock, (Zeppelin, Metallica), through to pop (Björk), jazz and some R&B (Erykah Badu). Vincent Fernan, Zurich, Switzerland

Looking at the specs on the B&W P5, it doesn't appear to be the kind of design that will give of its best with low-powered amps - nothing unusual with this brand. Therefore, we'd encourage you to audition the Alpha 9, XA-1, Myryad and Primare (now in MkII form) from your list. We've not tested the Creek and Orelle has temporarily stopped making electronics.

If your budget will stretch, also consider the Roksan Caspian and Densen Beat, both of which will add a bit of life to the sound.

#### FIDELITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

Which amp would do justice to my new JBL Ti6 speakers? I heard them on Accuphase E211, Arcam Alpha 10 and Rotel RC972/ RB981 amplifiers. The Rotel combination had better control over the lower regions than the Arcam

I'm thinking of bi-amping them with 2 Rotel RB981s or going into a higher league (Primare A30.1, Classé CP80, Copland CSA-28 or Audio Analogue Bellini and Donizetti).

My current set-up consists of a Nakamichi CR-3E tape deck, a Luxman DX-112 CD player, a Sony S570ES tuner, the Denon PMA-920 that is to be replaced, and a mostly unused Technics SL-DL5 turntable.

The speaker cables that connected the Denon to my replaced B&W DM6 speakers are van den Hul's Snowline. In a year or so the CD will need to be replaced or supplemented with an external DAC. Hans Hinnekint, via e-mail

"Bi-amping might not give as good a result as going for a more refined option - power isn't everything."

IBI's Ti series is not available in the UK, nor does it feature on the company's website, so we aren't totally au fait with its characteristics. But as you've discovered it responds well to power, that might be the best way to go.

However, bi-amping with RB981s might not give as good a result as going for a more refined, albeit less powerful option - power is by no means everything.

We'd encourage you to audition a few of the following in the context of your speakers: Creek P43R/A52SE, Quad 77 pre/power, Roksan Caspian integrated (possibly bi-amped with a Caspian power) and one or all of the Scandinavian integrateds you mention.



#### ACOUSTIMASS CONFUSION

not give a sensitivity figure. Also, my present amp has no digital connection - does that mean the PD-S505 Precision wouldn't perform at its best? I'm not interested in attaching an MD or DAC. I'm not able to replace the Bose speakers as they fit in with the decor

R Brattesani, Harrow, Middx

Your last point rather puts paid to the obvious suggestion with a system like yours – replace the speakers. The Acoustimass sat/sub systems don't often appear around these

15

parts, so we're not overly familiar with them, but given their massmarket inclinations, it's highly unlikely that they require serious wattage. On the other hand, whether they'd be transparent enough to make the most of an A-300R Precision is less predictable, and we'd recommend you borrow one before committing yourself.

With regard to your current amp and the PD-S505 Precision, you do not need a digital input to make the connection. Digital inputs on AV amps are generally designed to accept the Dolby Digital or DTS

feed you get from DVD videos CD players connect to a regular analogue input – your amp should have a CD input for the job.

> O The Pioneer PD-S505 Precision.

#### **HINTS & TIPS**

Although tone controls are frowned upon in purist hi-fi circles, if your amplifier has them it's worth experimenting to see if a little tonal correction improves the sound. Small loudspeakers often benefit from some bass lift to bolster limited low frequency extension, but interestingly a degree of treble cut can sometimes

produce similar results subjectively. A useful form of correction is to combine cut at one extreme with lift at another. For example, mildly lifting treble while reducing bass slightly will improve sharpness and clarity. Cutting treble while boosting bass should make the sound warmer and fuller. Subjectively, this type of correction lift combined with cut - is often more pleasing than just lift or cut on its own, giving a contoured frequency response that's more naturally balanced. But much depends on the effect that you want, of course.

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I'm looking to replace the Pioneer PD-106 which appears to be the weakest link in my system.

However, I've read that home cinema amplifiers like my Pioneer VSX-505RDS don't compare favourably with straight hi-fi amps, and so would hesitate to buy a Pioneer PD-S505 Precision CD player if my amp isn't going to reveal its qualities.

that this player would perfectly match a Pioneer A-300R Precision amplifier.

change I'd like to be assured that it would drive my Bose Acoustimass 5 S2 speaker system. My Bose

manual does

On the other hand, I know

Before making the DIONEER

#### INTERESTING BUDGET

I have managed to save about £1,500 -£2,000 pounds

for possible upgrades to my system. Initially I was thinking of upgrading my CD player because I consider it the weakest link, but after much reading about DVD-A and SACD I'm not sure whether it might be wiser to wait a couple of years.

On top of that, I think I could continue saving about the same amount per year for upgrades, so in two years' time my upgrade budget will be more interesting. I'd very much like your advice on whether to buy now or wait.

Also, I'd like to know if you would recommend any 'not so substantial' improvements to my system – that is, in the £500-£700 bracket. I currently own a Quad 77 CD, 77 pre and 707 power amp (connected with the Quadlink bus) and KEF Reference 2 speakers bi-wired with van den Hul Cleartrack.

My listening room is about 4mx6m. I'm also a keen headphone user, owning a Musical Fidelity X-Cans amplifier and Sennheiser HD 600 headphones. I listen mostly to rock, indie, soul and some dance/techno.

Ricardo Damborenea, Madrid, Spain

On the future formats issue (SACD and DVD-A) you could have a long



#### O Next year's Quad?

wait before, a) players come down to a reasonable price, and b) they get as good at playing regular CDs as a good CD player, if you get my drift. In other words, it could be a year before we know which format has the best software support and the finest 16-bit/44.1kHz playback. Having said that, it looks as

though your system will need a wholesale rather than piecemeal upgrade to take it up to the next sonic level, so an extra year's saving might be a good idea. By then the Quad 99 series and electrostatics should have appeared on the shop floor, which might make a nice upgrade.

In the meantime, there are a variety of options to consider – your cabling, for instance, could be upgraded to Supra EFF-ISL interconnect and Goertz M2 speaker cable.

WISE CHOICES

#### DIGITAL RECORDING DIVERSIONS

I have read about CD-Rs not playing in some older CD players. I have a Philips CDR-880 and have experienced the same difficulties – my old Philips isn't interested in playing CD-R discs at all, while my ten-year-old Yamaha takes about ten seconds to find each track, and usually starts playing somewhere in the middle of the song! I'd be interested to know what causes these problems.

I'm equally puzzled by my newly acquired Sony MDS-JB920 MiniDisc recorder and its ability to make 20-bit or even 24-bit recordings. As I understand it, the MiniDisc format is 16-bit, so why offer these options?

The manual sheds no light on this subject, and does not say if the 20-bit/24-bit modes are dithered or not. Surely if these signals are not dithered, then any bits above 16 would be lost? The MDS-JB920 also has this option on the digital outs, so it is possible to record at 24-bit while sending a 16-bit signal to other digital equipment!

I fail to understand the reasoning behind this. Could you please shed some light on the above subjects? Russ Hurley, Hereford

The Technical Editor replies... I presume that your Philips and Yamaha CD players have no difficulty playing conventional (silver) CDs. In which case, the problem arises from the *difference*  in reflectivity between silver CDs and gold CD-R discs. If the CD player is engineered to 'read' data from the big contrast that exists between reflective (land) and nonreflective (bump) on a silver CD, it may not be able to discriminate between the equivalent areas on a CD-R disc which are generally uniformly less reflective. The contrast between reflective and non-reflective areas on CD-RW discs, incidentally, is even poorer, which is why only a handful of the latest CD players will read such 'dull' discs. See my Oasis column (p14) and last month's feature on CD-R media for more details.

Onto MiniDisc. First, the Sony MD920 uses 20-bit (not 24-bit) ADCs and DACs. The ATRAC

"My MD recorder can make 20-bit or 24-bit recordings. If the format's 16-bit, why offer these options?"

processor, has a selectable wordlength which 'floats' lowdensity data to achieve the highest resolution during coding. This helps counter the reduced resolution inherent at lower signal levels, although a full scale signal will only be coded and replayed to 16-bit accuracy. Finally, the selectable wordlength available on Sony's digital outputs is provided for 'futureproofing' with other ancillaries.

#### HINTS & TIPS

Setting cartridge azimuth is usually a visual exercise;

you look at the front of the pickup, make sure the stylus comes down vertically, and that's it. But there's another method for those with steady hands! Temporarily reverse the cartridge wires on one channel only, so the pickup is out of phase. Set your stereo amp to mono – you'll need a mono button – choose a flat (not warped or dished) mono LP, and play it.

Because the pickup is out of phase and the record is mono and being played with the two stereo channels summed, there should be complete cancellation – silence! In practise, because the cartridge isn't perfect, you'll hear a very quiet, edgy, thin sound. If, by adjusting the azimuth of the cartridge, you can reduce this spurious sound, your pickup will be perfectly aligned.

41EAO.3

My system consists of an Arcam Delta 90 amp, Technics SLP220 CD player, Denon DRM 800 cassette deck and B&W 110i speakers – interconnects are Monster Cable.

I've been looking at upgrading the CD player with either a Sony CDP-XB920E, Marantz CD63 MkII KI-Signature or Pioneer PD-S707, and am considering replacing the speakers with B&W DM602s or Acoustic Energy AE109s at a later date.

I listen to classical music mostly, with just a little rock. Given that my budget for the CD

#### player will

disc

be limited to £300-£400, do you think I've made a wise choice? I need a clear, high treble without sacrificing a good solid bass. My room is approximately 11ftx12ft. Eddy Wood, Gloucester

Your selection of new CD players and speakers look pretty wise on the whole. We'd be inclined to consider a couple of other players if those listed fail to do the trick. The Arcam Alpha 7 is a great player in its own right and might find some synergy with your amp, while Rotel's RCD-971 is another strong contender.

### O Rotel's RCD-971: a strong contender.

5 7:27

Speaker, er, wise, we'd imagine you'd like the B&W a little more than the Acoustic Energy, although we've not yet tried the Series 2 version of this model. But there are, as ever, some tempting alternatives – how about the Heybrook Heylios or Royd Doublet, for instance?

#### SMALL SWEDISH ROOM II

I want to change my speakers. I bought Dali 450s and feel they produce too much bass for my small room. My current set-up consists of Thule PR100 preamp, NAD 214 power amp, Arcam Alpha 7 CD player, Supraply 3.4 speaker cable and Tara labs 22 interconnects. I listen to soft jazz, rock and pop.

The speakers which I think might work with my system are Dali Royal Menuet II, Dynaudio Audience 40

#### and B&W 602/601. But which of these would 'fit' best with my amplifiers and source? Henrik Ljadas, Sweden

What is it about the Swedes and their small rooms this month? Clearly there's an opening for a golden section listening room kit – I wonder whether Ikea's thought of that one yet?

With the power you have on tap, it's safe to assume that control is not really the issue here and that smaller speakers are going to be the only option, but it might well

be worth looking at some of the suggestions we make in our reply to 'Small Swedish room' on the Systems queries page (p25).

Of the names you put forward, we'd plump firmly for the Dynaudio, which did very well in our last group test. The B&Ws have just been upgraded to Series 2 status, so it might be worth waiting for the new models to arrive before making your mind up.

Alternative quality miniatures to consider include Rega Kytes, Mission 750LEs and PMC TB1s.

#### SYSTEM TAILPIECES

Over the past two years I configured the following hi-fi system with pretty nice discounts: NAD 314 amplifier, Marantz CD-67 CD player, Aiwa AD-S950 cassette deck, Sony ST-SE520 tuner.

As I consider speakers and cables to be the tailpieces of the system I'd appreciate your help in choosing the best way to get the most out of this set-up.

I listen to a wide variety of music from pop music to symphonic rock (IQ, Pendragon, Camel, The Alan Parsons Project, Yes, Pink Floyd, ELO), but no hard rock! The room is about 3.5mx13m. Because of the earlier

discounts, my budget isn't too tight. Nevertheless, any extra spending of money should be in balance with reasonable value added. Also, I would prefer the speakers to be bi-wirable. *Gert Littooij, Rotterdam, Holland* 

You've got a pair of pretty smooth operators in your CD player and amp so, should it appeal, a speaker with a bit of life might be the best option. Your budget guide isn't very clear, but to get most of what the system's capable of something from £250 to £350 should suffice.

Some of the following options would be worth seeking out and



The Castle Isis.

auditioning – Pendragon albums firmly in hand, of course: Acoustic Energy AE 109, Castle Isis, JBL LX2, Mission 733i.

As for cabling, the element of a system that most consider the tailpiece is in fact a part that's as important as any other – it won't work without it, after all. Your locality would suggest something from the van den Hul range might be good value. Try vdH PB5 interconnects with some Straight Wire Quartet speaker cable.

#### HINTS & TIPS

If you use infinite baffle (sealed) loudspeakers, it's

important they're airtight. Pressing the bass cone in, you should feel a fair bit of resistance. If it moves too freely and you hear a gentle rush of air as you press it in, there's a leak. Try to find out where the leak is, and eliminate it. Most leaks occur around drive units (check that sealing gaskets are in place), and the terminal block at the back. Even a small leak will be audible, increasing bass distortion and worsening control at low frequencies.

Although it's generally good advice to tighten down the screws that hold the speaker units in place, over-



tightening can distort the drive units' chassis and compress the cabinet, causing air leaks. Ported speakers are less affected, but performance can still suffer if leaks occur around drive units. I'm about to buy a new pair of floorstanding speakers to go with the following system: Thorens TD166 MkVI turntable, Marantz CD63 MkII KI-Signature CD player, Aura VA80SE-x amp and Yamaha KX-300 tape deck.

I'm trying to keep the cost down, but can stretch to something like Tannoy Mercury M3s or Heybrook Optimas. Both seem to be highly regarded but, to make matters more complicated, I've seen Mordaunt-Short MS206s advertised at half their normal price – less than the other two options. Would the Mordaunt-Shorts be better because they're normally much more expensive? I can't find any reviews of them.

I listen to mainly rock and jazz with a bit of classical and choral thrown in occasionally. Ross Stickland, Pinner, Middx

#### **BARGAIN BOXES?**

The MS206 is from the range that had just appeared when the brand changed ownership, putting it in the hands of Audio Partnership, part of Richer Sounds – hence the discount.

We never got a chance to review the MS200 range so can't vouch for its compatibility with your system or competitiveness in general.

At the end of the day, however, you want a good speaker that falls within your budget and if the MS is better in dems than the alternatives, then it's a sensible choice.

There are few speakers below £300 that can give the Mercury M3 much trouble, but there are a couple and we'd urge you to listen to them before taking the plunge.

Check out JBL LX2s and B&W DM602 S2s – we've not yet tested the latter yet, but if it's as good as its predecessor then you won't be wasting your time.

O Tannoy's Mercury M3.



#### SYSTEM ENQUIRIES

#### ECCENTRIC BALANCE



My current system is as follows: Sondek LP12/Ittok/Asak, Naim

22/160, Marantz CD63 KI-S, Nakamichi tape, Naim interconnects/cable and Linn Isobarik loudspeakers.

I had planned to replace the amplifier and CD player with a total budget of about £6,000 (the Marantz CD and old Naim amplifiers being relegated to bedroom use), and to purchase a Naim CDX, 102/Hi-Cap/250 to go with the LP12/Isobariks as this would give a better CD source as well as much needed improvements on the amp front.

On audition, the amp upgrade provided all the extra control, detail and welly required, but the CDX sounded completely vile and too much of a contrast to the sound of the LP12. Switching to the Naim CDSII/XPS (which I can't afford) showed that it was indeed the CDX's 'eccentric' tonal balance and harshness that was to blame. Is there a CD player at about £2,000-£2,500 that retains the incredible drive and dynamics of the Naim CDX, but with a more neutral overall balance (similar to the Linn LP12/Ittok/Asak) so that we can switch from vinyl to CD source without really noticing too much difference? Fred Martin. London

That's a tough one. Drive and dynamics but no aggressive tendencies from a source that costs less than your turntable would if purchased today. You're seeking the holy grail of CD players, and it might be necessary to up your budget a bit to get something that can do the trick.

It's not possible to give you a single specific player, but we found the following players to provide an extremely good balance of sonic characteristics without breaking your budget too severely: Acoustic Precision Eikos £1,850+, Helios Stargate £2,550 and Wadia W830 £3,000.





My system consists of an Audio Pro CD2 CD player, Rega Planar 2 turntable, NAD 302 amplifier and a pair of KEF Q-35 speakers on spikes. Interconnects are Supra EFF and speaker cables are Supra PLY (3.4mm).

Marantz's PM-66 KI-Signature.

The problem is that I'm not very satisfied with the sound. My listening room measures 4mx4.5m and a friend told me that speakers like KEF Q-15s would sound better in such a small room.

I'm also considering an upgrade of my system and have about £700 to spend. Do you have any suggestions? Manne Schmitz, Stockholm, Sweden

It seems unlikely that your speakers are too big, or have too much bass extension for your room which, while hardly cavernous, is not unduly small. What you need to do is control the speakers you have, which means upgrading the amp to something with a bit more grip and improving both speaker cabling and support. "As far as cabling's concerned, we'd suggest Goertz M1 – it's expensive, but it'll do wonders for all aspects of the sound and you'll never need to upgrade."

In amps, we'd suggest something like the Rotel RA-971, Marantz PM-66 KI-Signature or a Pioneer A-300R Precision. The latter two might outclass your source (we don't have that brand in the UK) but will serve you well in the long run. As far as cabling is concerned, we'd suggest Goertz M1 – it's expensive at £20/m, but will do wonders for all aspects of the sound and you'll never need to upgrade. Finally, enlarge the speaker's footprint with a plinth. HNE makes granite examples and Mana does a frame/platform combination - both should make the speaker boogie.

System: Nagra reel-toreel, NAD tuner, Quad 520 amp and Epos ES22 speakers.

Problem: I'm delighted with the recent purchase of my Epos loudspeakers. However, they've brought to light

significant shortcomings elsewhere in my system. I mainly listen to radio and have around £5,000 to spend on a replacement tuner, amplifier and a new CD player.

All the dealers I've visited have unconditionally recommended Naim equipment with my loudspeakers, but I prefer a warmer, more

#### PIPE AND SLIPPERS

relaxed sound – like that offered by my comfortable Quad. I like the Meridian 508 CDP and

504 tuner. Would I be better off with an all Meridian system using

• AVI: the definitive Quad upgrade.



#### the 502/557 amps, or trying to get used to Naim amplification? Christopher Wilson, Crawley, Sussex

While Naim's electronics have an excellent reputation and a known empathy with Epos speakers, if you didn't enjoy the demos

you've had so far, there's no point trying to get used to it. We would encourage you to pursue either the Meridian route that you've encountered or to seek out the AVI brand. This British firm has taken on the mantle of Quad in its heyday and produces well built, innovative and good sounding kit - it also makes a particularly nice radio. Prices are akin to Meridian.

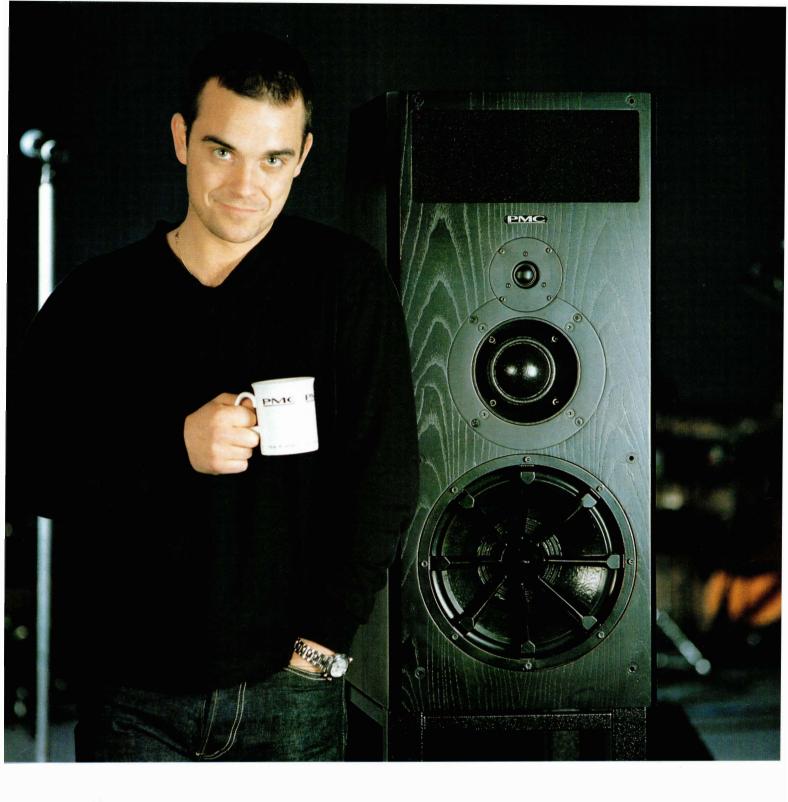
#### 🚽 HINTS & TIPS

When several people come over to hear your

system, one way of telling whether they're really impressed is to see whether they spend most of their time listening to the music with rapt attention, or talking among themselves!

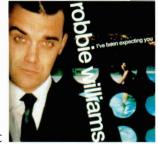
A good system makes music so engrossing, you just want to go on listening. However, if the sound irritates, you try to block it out by talking. So, if your guests find your views on the Euro more interesting than a Beethoven symphony, you're in trouble system-wise!

Paradoxically, it's a good sign if you can hold a conversation over the music as a system plays. If you can do so without having to shout to make yourself heard, it points to excellent working dynamic range. But this is a different thing to wanting to talk over the music because it bores or irritates.

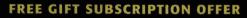




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# COMPENSION

design, while audiophile quality UPOCC internal wiring is used to connect the encapsulated, premium-grade crossover components. The result, AE claims, is high quality sound reproduction offering awe-inspiring bass, speed and dynamics alongside exceptional clarity, transparency and power handling.

And guess what? We've got hold of four pairs of these strikingly handsome floorstanders to give away.

First prize – two lucky winners will each get their hands on a pair of AE520s

> WORTH £850

ant to revive your love affair with music, but need help? Look no further than Acoustic Energy's 500 Series speakers. Derived from the acclaimed Reference Series AE1 and AE2, they combine the latest acoustic engineering with high quality craftsmanship.

The 500 Series uses a new 130mm die-cast driver chassis to house an anodised alloy cone for the midrange and bass drive units. The high-frequency drive unit is a 25mm silk-coated fabric dome which matches the clarity of the rest of the system

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## WIN THE LATEST SPEAKERS FROM ACOUSTIC ENERGY!

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Second prize – a pair of £850 AE509s. This 84cm high, 3-way floorstander boasts the stereo separation and extended bass response you would normally expect of a much larger loudspeaker. As with the 520s, the 509s can be tri-wired and tri-amped for optimum sound quality and audiophile performance.

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janitor in Hong Kong Phooey?

What was the name of the mild-mannered

And who manned the switchboard at police HO?

The Questions

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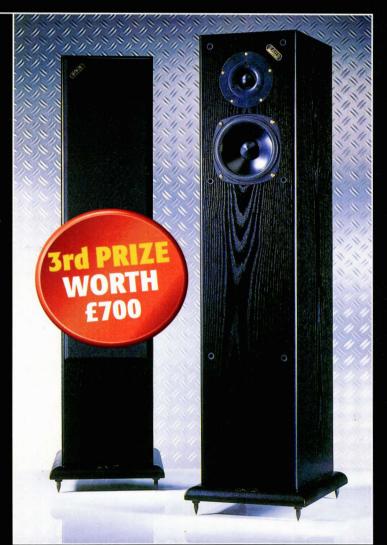
b) Henry c) Penry

a) Sarge b) Rosemary

c) Cagney

d) Lacey

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All winners will be notified by post.
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#### July/August 1999 HI-FI CHOICE 29

#### HIGH-END TEST ATC ANNIVERSARY PACKAGE

## **BILANT** Boxes

#### ATC celebrates its quarter century with a commemorative package. Lee Dunkley investigates.

loucestershire-based active speaker specialist ATC has been in business for 25 years. To celebrate the event it has put together a silver anniversary combo comprising an integrated stereo amplifier with remote and a pair of miniature loudspeakers. The commemorative mood is reflected in the price tag, too, with a unique partnership package retailing at a special price of £2,550.

ATC ANNIVERSARY 😴

Visit Our Website: www.hifichoice.co.uk

The Acoustic Transducer Company (ATC) - and not the Acoustic Transfer Company, as incorrectly suggested in last month's competition - has built a strong reputation in the professional sound arena for its no-compromise studio monitors. It claims an impressive international cast of users including the BBC, Chandos, The Royal Opera House Covent Garden and The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, to name but a few. From this heritage, ATC turned its hand towards the hi-fi market. The company made its *HFC* debut almost nine years ago with the SCM20 speaker.

To buy these components individually would cost a grand total of £3,224: the SIA2-150 amplifier retails at £1,984 with the speakers retailing from £1,000 to £1,240, depending on your choice of real wood veneer finish. So this package gives a rather generous saving of up to £674. But is it value for money?

#### THE AMPLIFIER

My first thoughts were that the SIA2-150 integrated has the look of a professional amplifier but without any of the obvious hallmarks. Its blackened brushed-alloy fascia and beefy styling give it a rack-mount appearance with dimensions of 13x44x32.5cm (HxWxD) and 19kg weight adding to the impression.

Its mighty looks aren't misleading. Delivering a powerful 150 Watts RMS per channel, the amplifier runs warm but the industrial-looking finned heat sink keeps things under control. Their smoothly rounded finish being indicative of ATC's high manufacturing standards.

SIA2-150

Internally, the SIA2-150 employs the same gain reduction circuits as you'd find in ATC's studio monitors. This ensures that even when driven under the hardest conditions, the amplifier will not clip on musical transients, protecting the speakers from possible damage and improving the all-round musical enjoyment at higher listening levels.

Two large silver-coloured controls dominate the fascia. These provide control over input source selection and volume levels, both of which can also be operated via the supplied remote control. The fascia also holds two smaller controls which select standby and tape-monitor functions and have LED indicators.

The rear panel reveals the amp's true domestic flavour. Somewhat disappointingly, there are just four unbalanced gold-plated RCA line level inputs and vinyl-lovers are not catered for as there is no phono input and no internal modification options available. Furthermore, only one tape-loop is provided. It does, however, have a tape-monitor facility which is selectable on the front panel. Speaker terminals are shrouded binding posts and accept either 4mm plugs or bare wires.

"Even when driven under the hardest conditions, the amp will not clip on musical transients, protecting the speakers and improving the all-round musical enjoyment."

A slim and neatly styled system remote control unit is supplied, but there are a number of redundant controls. As well as controlling the functionality of the amplifier, the remote also has a number of basic CD functions. To my surprise, I found I could use it to control the Naim Audio CD3.5 I was using as a source, as it also uses the Philips RC5 command system, providing me with extremely convenient armchair listening.

#### THE SPEAKERS

ATC is respected for its uncompromising approach to drive unit design and is probably best known in hi-fi circles for its range of active loudspeakers. The original aim was to develop a midrange drive unit capable of reproducing acoustic music more accurately than any other. Some 25 years on, the philosophy remains the same and each speaker is still hand-built.

Introduced in 1991, the SCM 10 is a miniature in a class of its O ATC's SIA2-150 amplifier gives clean, enhanced musical presentation.

own. But then, retailing at £1,240 for the sumptuous rosewood or yew finishes (falling to £1,080 for the walnut and £1,000 for the black ash real wood veneers) makes it an expensive little speaker. The baby two-way stand-mounter is constructed from 18mm MDF and measures 38x18x25.5cm (HxWxD), excluding the neatly chamfered grille.

The SCM 10 incorporates a 125mm bass/midrange driver powered by a 45mm handwound, ribbon wire voice coil allowing a maximum cone excursion of ± 20mm. The tweeter is a 25mm unit made in Denmark by Vifa. Cable connections are via goldplated binding posts accepting 4mm plugs or bare wires. There is no bi-wiring facility.

#### SOUND QUALITY

Once set up, I decided to try the SIA2-150 amp with the resident Ruark Equinox speakers. After giving the amplifier time to warm up - ATC suggests three hours for optimum results - I settled down to listen.

Having previously got to grips with the rather appealing characteristics of the Equinox, my thoughts turned to the improved stereo imaging, depth and spacious soundstage provided with the ATC amp in place. The level of detail that the SIA2-150 gave in its clean musical presentation enhanced previously indistinct



ATC ANNIVERSARY PACKAGE HIGH-END TEST

instruments and background vocals. This meant that the switch to the intended partnership of the ATC SCM 10s required a considerable amount of readjustment. To ensure my impartiality I allowed myself, and my lounge, the luxury of several days to get acquainted with the set-up.

A pair of Partington A-4 stands - a Best Buy from HFC 189 - provided the support needed to bring these bookshelf babies up to an appropriate listening height. ATC recommended and supplied QED Qudos Silver speaker cable - coincidentally, another 25th anniversary edition.

As is sometimes the case with bookshelf speakers, they have a tendency to sound a little compressed and restricted, due in part to their compact design. It took me quite some time and experimentation to achieve the optimum positioning for the SCM 10s. Although ATC says that the speakers are designed to be freestanding, I preferred them a little closer to the back wall. Still not completely

O The miniature SCM 10s are designed to be freestanding, but... happy, I had to settle on a compromise and eventually plumped for a position approximately 30cm away from the back wall, preferring the more substantial bottom-end this position provided.

To my mind, though, the SCM 10s have a few shortcomings which were particularly noticeable on pop/rock music. At times, drums and other

"The intelligibility of a number of choral phrases in **Orff's Carmina Burana** appeared clearer and more intelligible capturing the acoustic ambience. If only I could understand Latin."

percussion instruments lacked impact - this was particularly evident on Paula Cole's track Tiger. Fast rhythmic music had good pace and timing, but lacked energy and drive.

Classical and jazz tracks, however, seemed to fare better, presenting wide dynamics,

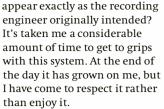
good imaging and a level of detail which demonstrated the system's strengths.

Instruments and vocals which had previously tended to be muddled and lost suddenly took on an enthusiastic level of assertiveness without being overly aggressive or unnatural. For example, the intelligibility of a number of choral phrases in Orff's Carmina Burana selected for its dynamic transients - appeared clearer and more intelligible capturing the acoustic ambience. If only I could understand Latin.

It occurred to me on several occasions that this level of forwardness in some areas was perhaps at the cost of details in the lower register being lost. In fact, there were a number of times when I was convinced some instruments were being masked by this characteristic, which almost led me to think that I was listening to a different recording - as though it had somehow been remixed.

#### CONCLUSION

So does ATC's anniversary combination live up to its manufacturer's claims that your favourite recordings will



The SIA2-150 is a versatile integrated amp that's powerful enough for most domestic situations. The partnership's main strengths are its engaging and detailed soundstage, producing forward and open vocals without becoming too overbearing.

The SCM 10 speakers appear to be designed for classical and jazz tastes with popular and rock music recordings performing less well. They need extremely careful placement, depending on your listening room, to reduce the apparent restrictive characteristic which is, in my opinion, their main drawback. And it is because of this trait that the partnership fails to really excite in all musical quarters.

It may well bring new dimension to many recordings, but for me the SCM 10s were a bit too bass-light and forward.

#### **AMPLIFIER VERDICT**

SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£1,984.00

An impressive sounding integrated amplifier with a dynamic, open and detailed sound.

SPEAKER VERDICT		
SOUND	00000	
BUILD	00000)	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£1,240.00)	

A compact loudspeaker with good transparency but lightweight bass. Better suited to classical tastes.

OVERAL	L VERDICT
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£2,550
loudspeakers.	n that warrants better
■ SIX YEAR GUAI 2 (01285) 760561	RANTEE



July/August 1999 HI-FI CHOICE 31

# KRELL ain't a bad place to be

(REFERENCE)

Krell continues its drive into the one-box arena with an amp for both sound and vision. Jason Kennedy gets Krelled.

t one time, the notion of an integrated Krell amplifier would have been an anathema. But the pace of change on the US market, where manufacturers that stick to two channel separates have a very tough time, is such that even this doyen of the macho amplifier is having to diversify into 'real world' products.

This isn't the first, either – it's the bigger brother to the KAV-300i that I looked at last year (issue 174) and is very similar in many ways. It's fully remote control and has a mode called 'theater throughput' so it can be used as part of a home cinema system in the role of two channel power amp.

The theory is that you could use it as an integrated amp for your stereo music listening while leaving it connected to a surround processor for watching the telly, the switch from integrated to power amp operation requiring a single four-second button push.

What differentiates the 500i from the 300i is the height of the case – this one is twice the size in the upwards domain and nearly twice the output in the power department. The KAV-500i claims 250 Watts a side into 8 and double that into 4 Ohms; suddenly it doesn't seem so hefty! And it's not – I've used bigger integrateds. This one weighs in at 19.5kg and "The Krell's balance seems distinctly on the cuddly side. The AV in KAV does, after all, stand for audio-visual and when it comes to home cinema warmth seems to be a must."

48.3x16x38.9cm (WxHxD): big, but not inconveniently so.

The socketry selection seems rather paltry given the amp's not insubstantial £4,999.99 asking price, consisting as it does of three single-ended inputs, a tape loop and a balanced input. And if you use video sources a processor will take up one of them.

Operationally, the remote takes a bit of getting used to. It features a fair few options that relate to other Krell products – I guess this handset operates the whole KAV range – and the source selectors are secondary legends beneath rather than above the relevant buttons, which had me guessing for a while. But you can adjust balance from your chair, which is a luxury – albeit not one that gets a lot of use in my part of the world.

#### SOUND QUALITY

The KAV-500i took the place of a DNM 3C Twin preamp combined with a Roksan ROK-S1 power amp, a pairing that would retail at about the same price as the Krell were the power amp still in production. But the contrast between the two set-ups could hardly have been greater. The newcomer seemed more comfortable driving B&W Nautilus 802s at low levels (something the usual combo struggles with); however, nothing really happened when the gain was increased.

Usually this system sounds better at high levels, but with the Krell there's a compressing effect which robs dynamic swings of their impact. It's not an effect I've encountered before and it took a while to get to grips with. Dynamic swings on recordings weren't glossed over in the slightest – it was as if compressed passages were emphasised but the life wasn't there when the compression was 'turned off'.

In many ways, the KAV-500i is a very transparent amplifier – it reveals recording styles and locations with consummate ease and I got a good deal of listening pleasure out of it. But there was always a nagging sense that something wasn't quite happening. Switching back to the reference units, it

THEATER

**O** Krell's KAV-500i: the AV stands for audio-visual, but it's no lightweight.

became clear that as well as dynamic restraint the Krell has a rather suppressive effect on spatial information, its musical creations lacking depth and aural tactility.

The amp's balance seems distinctly on the cuddly side. The AV in KAV does, after all, stand for audio-visual, and when it comes to home cinema warmth seems to be a must. You can be sure of one thing: this amp is never going to shout at you. You'll be lucky if it even surprises you.

#### CONCLUSION

It's possible that the less than easy load presented by the N802s gave this Krell some trouble, but at a specified 250 Watts that shouldn't have been the case. I can only surmise that it has been designed with somewhat less critical applications in mind.

It would tame the average bright speaker, for instance, and you're never going to get listening fatigue from overexposure. On the other hand, it doesn't seem to have what it takes to reproduce the life in music, which at this price is a distinct shortcoming.

VERDICT		
SOUND	00000	
BUILD	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£4,999.99	
D		

 An amplifier that will be better suited to background listening/home cinema applications rather than out-and-out audio maniac set-ups.
 FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE

Absolute Sounds (0181) 971 3909

INPUT B-1 S-1 S-2 S-3 TAPE MON CO OO OO OO

32 HI-FI CHOICE July/August 1999



## Affordable excellence from ProAc.

Two stunning new models from ProAc - the Studio 125 and Tablette 2000. Launched to huge acclaim at the Bristol show, each model brings you audiophile sound quality for less than a thousand pounds. Hear them at your ProAc dealer or contact us for details.



Highpoint House, Riding Road, Buckingham Road Industrial Estate, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 7BE

Tel: 01280 700147 Fax: 01280 700148 Website: www.proac-loudspeakers.com



In July 1993 Sonus Faber created a masterpiece - the Guarneri Homage - a unique lute-shaped speaker with the strong tonal personality of a Guarneri violin. The second commemorative speaker in the programme of three tributes to the Grand Masters of the art of violin making is now ready - the Amati Homage. Cremonese violins and violas made by the masters, Guarneri, Amati and Antonio Stradivari were intensely sculpted acoustic masterpieces characterised by a unique ability to combine tonal strength and body with sweetness. Sonus Faber has trodden the same path of overriding passion for tonal character in researching these speakers. The first and patented lute-shaped cabinet comprise many handsawn pieces of solid wood bonded using organic glues and heat in the manner of the great violin masters. Seven coats of natural lacquer give an unsurpassed finish. Mature walnut, maple

## Tributes to the Grand Masters of violin making

## Guarneri Homage

Sonus Faber's unique acoustic monitor dedicated to the memory of Master Violin Maker Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù (1698–1744) in the Violin Hall, Cremona



Amati Homage



<u></u>

and lime woods are chosen for their differing strengths and densities permitting fine tuning of the cabinet structure which is damped internally with copper and lead.

For tuning, cabinets are produced in 'quiet' workshops away from factory noise. For the Guarneri a silk dome tweeter has its own solid maple wood acoustic chamber. Transducers are manufactured according to the free compression driver concept to produce the ultimate musical detail at high speed with both control and power. Tweeters are not damped. The Amati midrange is a highly linear paper carbonium/titanium device. Bass is handled by two extra-rigid paper carbonium cones. The Amati and Guarneri are true musical instruments with exceptional extension and dynamics but which retains a uniquely passionate timbre sweet and accurate. Please contact Absolute Sounds in the first instance for personal dealer referral; musical monitors so rare are destined for the discerning. Details of the complete Sonus Faber range of products from £599 to £11,400 are available on request.

onus fab

Absolute Sounds 58 Durham Road - London SW20 ODE Telephone 0181-971 3909 Facsimile 0181-8797962 Email info@absolute-sounds.com Web http://www.absolutesounds.com

## NATURAL WOOD Works

## **Paul Messenger** finds out whether ProAc's new entry-level speakers live up to the brand's illustrious reputation.

The second ProAc to come under *Choice* scrutiny in the past year, this highly respected, well established and upmarket British speaker brand has built its formidable reputation largely on the basis of export sales, but has more recently been turning its attention to the UK market.

This £1,000 Studio 125 is ProAc's new 'entry level' floorstander – well above most brands' starting price, but a whole lot less expensive than the £3,995 Response 3.8 reviewed last October. And the Studio 125 has much of the charm and character of its bigger brother, sonically as well as physically. Indeed, if you shrunk an R3.8 by about 50 per cent, it would end up looking very like an S125.

Gorgeous veneerwork (our

samples were yew finished), neat little matching plinths, and a hefty and thoroughly solid cabinet build quality go some way towards justifying the price. Various thicknesses of MDF are used, plus bituminous damping pads and acoustic foam lining. The enclosure is reflexloaded by two slightly dissimilar ports, both set into the rear panel, just below a twin terminal.

The simple two-way driver line-up looks rather more prosaic, although the modestly sized main driver (6.5in frame, 120mm diameter cone) does have a cast frame, and both units are nicely rebated to create a flush front panel. The 19mm fabric dome tweeters

O Gorgeous veneer-work and solid build go some way towards justifying the Studio 125's price. are mounted offset from the centre line (the better to distribute edgediffraction effects), while mirror-image construction preserves acoustic and visual symmetry.

A simple halfgrille hides the naughty bits, for those who prefer their speakers clothed, while still leaving plenty of real wood veneer on view. My only real concern – and it's a criticism which also applied to the Response 3.8 – concerns the sloppy fixing of the threaded inserts for the spikes, which need to be both tighter and more secure if proper floor coupling is to be achieved. My first impression of the Studio 125 was of how closely it echoed my nine-month-old recollections of the Response 3.8. It doesn't match its big brother, in terms of scale. weight, openness or top-end sweetness, but it does have a very similar overall character. This is further confirmed by the

confirmed by the far-field averaged room plots, the Studio 125 giving a near-identical in-room balance to the Response

"The 125 always sounds delightfully unstrained, natural and evenhanded. It sets a standard here which few rivals can match."

> 3.8 across much of the bass and midrange. It's a distinctive pattern with two notable characteristics: the balance is unusually smooth and flat from 100Hz up to 2kHz; second, there's a strong mid-bass peak centred on 50Hz.

Above 2kHz, the Studio 125 is rather less impressive than the Response 3.8, showing a significant presence suckout 2.5-3.5kHz, although output above 4kHz is again flat and smooth. The Studio 125 shows a useful sensitivity advantage over its bigger brother, comfortably meeting the 87dB/W spec. Sonically, the excellent broad midband neutrality ensures that the 125 always sounds delightfully unstrained, natural and even-handed. It sets a

standard here which few rivals can match, and this would seem to be the key to ProAc's powerful reputation. The sound is notably 'unboxy', delivering spacious stereo images with fine precision.

The midbass excess is rather less to my taste, with a 'thumpy' tendency I found slightly irritating with heavier rock and dance music. But the extra weight it brought to classical material – and also to film soundtracks – could be rather effective, so I daresay some will deem this a plus.

Although the presence dip seemed obvious enough at first and added a measure of 'pinched' coloration to voices, I found myself quickly adjusting to this, and it should also ensure the speaker will always sound well behaved, even with less than perfect sources and amps. While the dynamic range seemed satisfactorily wide, dynamic expression and tension seemed rather muted.

#### CONCLUSION

At £1,000 for a compact twoway stand-mount, the Studio 125 looks far from cheap, but it's a lot more subtle and refined than most of the competition, both in presentation and sonic neutrality. Indeed, in some respects the performance gets quite close to the much larger and more expensive Response 3.8, which itself makes the Studio 125 quite an achievement.

It would be nice to have more secure spike fixing, and the bass 'thump' might not suit all tastes, but the natural perspectives, evenhandedness and superb presentation adds up to a seductive and persuasive loudspeaker.

VER	DICT
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE F	ROM £1,000)
Pretty, if pricey, with a beautifully n midband, and some	
<ul> <li>TWO YEAR GUAR</li> <li>DNA Marketing (0 or ProAc (01280) 700</li> </ul>	<b>EANTEE</b> 1798) 343414

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#### SUPER TEST SPEAKER CABLE

## SUPER TEST SPEAKER CABLES

Can cables really make a difference to an already healthy-sounding system? Richard Black plugs and plays the latest offerings.

Reviewing interconnects a few issues back, I suggested that maybe the cable case can be overstated. But even that disclaimer was insufficient for one reader, who wrote me an intelligent and knowledgeable letter suggesting partly that I'm the victim of selfdeception (cables do all sound pretty much the same) but also

THE CAST LIST		
Audioquest F-18	£3.60/m	p37
Cable Talk Concert 2.	1 £8.00/m	p37
Chord Co Odyssey	£17.00/m	p39
Ixos Gamma	£4.99/m	p39
Kimber 4PR £9	0/5m pair	p41
Nordost Flatline II	£9.50/m	p41
<b>QED</b> Qudos Silver	£5.00/m	p43
SonicLink AST200	£5.95/m	p43
<b>Straightwire Rhythm</b>	£6.00/m	p45
van den hul CS122	£13.49/m	p45

#### GLOSSARY

CAPACITANCE, RESISTANCE, **INDUCTANCE:** Electrical parameters of a cable. Low resistance is good. Capacitance and inductance vary in roughly inverse proportion and their importance for sound quality is subject to debate. Some amplifiers will misbehave if used with high capacitance cables: this is a fault in the amplifier's design. FIGURE-8: the commonest cable construction, with two identical conductors laid side-by-side to give a cross-section approximately the shape of the numeral 8. For cosmetic reasons, some manufacturers apply an overall round jacket over the top. Spaced pair and twisted pair are variants on this.

**STAR-QUAD:** four conductors, two out and two return, twisted together. Gives slightly higher capacitance than figure-8 and better interference rejection. **BRAIDED, LITZ:** cable constructions continuing the 'Star-quad' idea to more conductors yet.

**SOLID-CORE:** includes cables where each strand of copper is individually insulated from its neighbours. that any differences that do exist between cables are a function of how the amplifier on the sending end reacts to the electrical load that the cable represents.

If that's so, the whole principle of reviewing cables risks becoming seriously invalid because the issue of 'synergy' between cable and amplifier becomes all-important. Even Hi-Fi Choice doesn't have the resources to test ten cables with every amplifier on the market which would seem to be what's required. I always make a point of testing cables with at least two amplifiers - in the case of speaker cables, an EAR valve amp (high feedback, output transformer) and a harman/kardon transistor amp (medium feedback, no output transformer), two amps very different in design if not entirely dissimilar in sound. And that's still only a tiny cross-section.

But even when, in the past, I've tried many amplifiers with a small handful of cables, to test exactly this hypothesis, I've been struck by the consistency of results between different amplifiers when cables are changed.

That's to say that if cable A sounds dry compared with cable B when they're used with amplifier X, that difference tends to remain, qualitatively at least, when A and B are compared using amplifiers Y and Z. This is in some ways quite surprising. Synergy is still not out of the picture, of course: as usual, there's some mileage in mixing and matching cables, amplifiers

#### **HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE**

**E** ach cable was tested with two amplifier systems, a pair of EAR 519 monoblocks and a harman/kardon HK6500 integrated. Speakers in each case were my usual ATC SCM20s and the reference speaker cable was Goertz M1. Sources were a Rotel RCD971 CD player and a Pink Triangle/SME/Highphonic LP deck with Moth phono stage. I used a combination of quick-fire cable alternations (less than two minutes per cable) and longer-term listening. **THE TEST MUSIC** 

José Antonio Guzmán: Ambosio (Sonora SACD 101) Pizzetti: Requiem (Hyperion CDA67017) The Mavericks: Trampoline (MCA 80456) Brahms: Violin Concerto – Oistrakh (EMI ASD2525 – LP)

and any other components to achieve a finely balanced result, but at least it does seem

that there's some mileage, after all, in cable reviewing even within the confines of the practicable.

Phew! Now why these differences should exist is not always so obvious. In the case of speaker cables, there are some fairly obvious factors in the resistance and inductance of a cable (and to a lesser extent its capacitance), but it's fairly easy to prove with simple experiments that this isn't the whole story. Take a low-inductance, low-resistance cable and add to it a small resistor and an inductor to make it match a cable with higher values of those parameters, and you won't get the same sound.

As usual, some manufacturers would like you to believe they've got it sussed: they haven't. I've read every cable 'White Paper' I can get and have yet to see one that doesn't contain at the least a good handful of unjustified and highly questionable assertions. So in the end, it's the old, old story. We'll do our best to guide you, give you clues as to what might suit you, and then it's over to you for the fun part – find a dealer with the enthusiasm, knowledge and patience to help you make your own mind up by auditioning, ideally at home, a handful of top-notch cables.

Don't worry, they don't bite – and you'll soon hear for yourself what all of the fuss is about.

### HINTS & TIPS

**CABLE MATCHING:** Cables are generally somewhat

dependent on the equipment they connect, both sending and receiving. If possible, try out any cable with the actual kit it will be linking up. Although manufacturers would like to sell you matched interconnects and speaker cables, there's no strong reason to buy the two types from any one make. **INTERFERENCE PICKUP: This is** generally assumed not to be a problem with speaker cables. However, it can occur, and is most easily treated with a ferrite sleeve or two, clamped over both 'out' and 'return' wires together (VERY important!) as near to the amplifier as possible. Even gold-plated plugs can oxidise slightly. Every few months, pull cables out and reinsert them, which cleans contact faces. Proprietary plug-cleaning and contactenhancing solutions are available, but I treat them with caution. CABLE BURN-IN: Some folks swear it's real. I side with those who argue that over a few hours or days your

ears get accustomed to the defects of

any equipment and filter them out.

## AUDIOQUEST F-18



This flat cable is a figure-eight design, but with a slight difference, hinted at by its surpris-

ing rigidity: each conduct

each conductor consists of four solid strands of copper laid side by side and insulated from each other along the run. Audioquest describes this as 'flat Hyperlitz' construction, although it has nothing to do with Litz cable. But it does make for a well behaved cable which, with an overall thickness of about 2mm, can disappear under carpets and will stay in place when bent. But as with most solid-core cables, it should be handled

"It does make for a well behaved cable which, with an overall thickness of about 2mm, can disappear under carpets and stay in place when bent."

## CABLE TALK Concert 2.1

with care to avoid fracturing the conductors. The test sample came fitted with basic gold-plated banana plugs, well soldered.

## SOUND QUALITY

Achieving overall no better than average performance for a cable of its price, F-18 exhibited a range of typical cable drawbacks, none of them serious in isolation but overall proving something of a barrier between the music and the listener.

Starting at the bottom of the spectrum, bass is not astoundingly extended and can sometimes sound a bit 'lumpy' emphasising particular notes at the expense of others. That's quite subtle but on recordings with really wellrecorded bass (rare enough!) it's noticeable.

Take, for instance, any jazz record with plucked string bass and there's often an unevenness to the bass line that the best cables seem to avoid. Midrange is uncoloured but on occasion seems to lack some detail, while treble is slightly dry, which reduces the characteristic resonance of solo voices and some melody instruments such as trumpet and violin. And as so often happens, the corollary is that imaging is just a little condensed, especially in the depth department. AUDIOQUEST

F - 18

## CONCLUSION

With par-for-the-course electrical parameters, this cable won't upset any amplifiers and it scores on practicality, but its sound doesn't make it stand out from the crowd, even at its modest price. **RB** 

VERDICT		
SOUND		
BUILD	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£3.60/m	
<ul> <li>Slightly lumpy bass and lack of midrange detail: can also be a bit dry.</li> <li>LIFETIME GUARANTEE</li> <li>A&amp;R Cambridge Ltd, Pembroke Ave, Denny Ind. Centre, Waterbeach, Cambs CB5 9PB</li> <li>(01223) 203203</li> </ul>		
SPECIFICATIONS		
<ul> <li>Topology</li> <li>Conductor Solid Full</li> </ul>	Flat 4-pair	

Conductor Solid Functionally Pure Copper
 Dielectric PVC

"Cable Talk's Concert 2.1 is more of a character cable than a truly natural performer, but a lot about that character is quite attractive."

double bass – over the lowest reaches. Although this can be disconcerting initially – especially in quick-fire comparisons between cables – it's not the sort of defect that's likely to become irritating. But it could lead to problems with loudspeakers that are already a bit that way inclined (as plenty are): lean speakers are likely to be a better match.

As so often, treble is a touch dry and climaxes can become rather edgy. Some higherfrequency sounds seemed to be more affected by the bass character than others, with a couple of trumpet solos receding quite noticeably while violins, for instance, seemed untroubled. Potentially more serious is the imaging which, while lacking a certain discrimination of depth, somehow managed to put largescale forces, in particular, too far back in the frame.

## CONCLUSION

Nothing funny going on electrically: resistance is actually the lowest in the group (by a whisker). But the overall package lacks appeal.

VERDICT	
SOUND	
BUILD	00000
VALUE	
PRICE	£8.00/m
<ul> <li>Can make stereo images recede, and favours the upper bass.</li> <li>LIFETIME GUARANTEE</li> <li>Cable Talk, Unit J, Albany Park, Camberley, Surrey GU15 2PL</li> <li>(01276) 686717</li> </ul>	
SPECI	FICATIONS
Topology	Round jacketed fig-8

Stranded copper
'Cimflex'

## With 🧖

#### an outside diameter of nearly half an inch this is an

imposing cable, but it's not entirely obvious why it need be so big. Its construction – apparently nothing more complicated than a twisted pair of stranded conductors – is pretty much that of high-current mains flex, although the insulation used seems to be higher quality. Its size makes it a bit awkward to handle and to route tidily, although the fairly long 'tails' make it friendly enough at the back of an amp or speakers. Soldered to the review sample were the same simple banana plugs used on several other cables.

## SOUND QUALITY

This is more a character cable than a truly neutral performer, but a lot about that character is quite attractive. Most obvious is the bass coloration, which seems to favour the upper bass – around the region of a bass singer's lowest notes, or the middle strings of a

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## **CHORD COMPANY** Odyssey



othing really bizarre going on here (nor does the maker claim that there is). In fact, this cable is one you could make at home if you fancy buying conductors in bulk: two cores of industry-standard silver-plated, Teflon-insulated, stranded conductor are twisted together in a classic construction. The twisting makes no difference to basic electrical parameters and in most ways this cable closely resembles the (untwisted) QED model also in this test, but twisting does reduce the susceptibility to radiated interference and also makes a cable slightly easier to handle.

"Detail in the midrange and treble is good, even in difficult material such as orchestral violins, and human voice comes over well, too."

## **IXOS** Gamma Series 6006

still haven't entirely managed to work out what Ixos' funky-looking 'Gamma Geometry' is supposed to achieve, and the company's promotional literature doesn't exactly make it much clearer.

Essentially, two perfectly conventional copper conductors, insulated in hard, high quality dielectric, are braided with a 'dummy' core of solid dielectric in such as way as to approximate a figure-8 cable in which the spacing of conductors is slightly variable and the twist, instead of

being a continuous corkscrew as in normal twisted-pair cable, is given rapid clockwise/ anti-clockwise alternations. Interference rejection I'd expect to be similar to conventional twistedpair cable (better than flat figure-8) but I can't see any advantages over twisted pair to justify the extra bulk, inflexibility and, presumably, cost. That said, it handles quite well and looks neat. The fitted banana plugs, although giving good contact in sockets, were not very securely clamped.

Plugs fitted were gold-plated bananas, soldered and insulated with heat-shrink rather than the usual plastic body, heat-shrink being, if anything, both slicker and more robust.

## SOUND QUALITY

Neatly demonstrating that plain-vanilla cable construction is perfectly viable, this turned in one of the best performances in the test. Particularly commendable is the Odyssey's imaging, which stands out from the crowd.

Lateral placing of instruments is very good and depth is very believable, if ultimately still a little behind the best (and much more expensive) cables available. Detail in the midrange and treble is good, even in difficult material such as orchestral violins, and human voice comes over well, too, with just a hint of roughness occasionally on lower male voices.

Decay on percussive sounds is realistic and climaxes are fullbodied, although with just a little added grain at times. Bass, strangely, is rather unpredictably dependent on programme, sometimes seeming almost over-full and sometimes – particularly in dense textures – a trifle shy. Neither of those matters is very serious, though.

## CONCLUSION

Electrical parameters are very similar to several other cables here and no cause for concern. Overall, and taking into account the highish price, this cable still turns in a performance quite worthy of Recommendation. **RB**  CHORD COMPANY ODYSSEY

VERDICT	
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£17.00/m
Relatively vice-free cable with good	
detail throughout the range and generally	
neutral bass.	
TEN YEAR GUARANTEE	
Market The Chord Company, 30a Sarum Business	
Park, Portway, Salisbury SP4 6EA	
(01722) 331674	
SPECIFICATIONS	
Topology	Twisted pair

Twisted pair
Silver-plated copper
PTFE

"Bass seems to be on the whole a strong point. In recordings with subtle bass it can seem indistinct, but in general it has good extension."

## SOUND QUALITY

Sound is inconsistent: at best, good. Bass seems to be on the whole a strong point. Once or twice, in recordings with subtle bass, it seemed a little indistinct, but in general it has well-defined pitch and good extension.

Less assured is the treble, which has the unfortunate – but not uncommon – combination of a recessed quality in the lower regions and some slight sibilance, which can make female voices – particularly en masse – hard on the ear.

Probably for the same reasons, piano sounds a little processed and artificial, at least in the upper octaves. Imaging depth is pretty good and lateral imaging is good going on very good.

## CONCLUSION

Electrically this behaves much like, for example, the QED cable, but with resistance a little better than average. Overall, this cable is a reasonable compromise in the context of its price and can safely be Recommended. **RB** 

VERDICT	
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£4.99/m
Bass is better than treble, which can	

Bass is better than treble, which car become spitty and sibilant – although only slightly.

## LIFETIME GUARANTEE

 ☑ Path Distribution, Unit 2A, Desborough Industrial Park, Desborough Park Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 3BG
 ☑ (01494) 441736

SPECIFICATIONS	
Topology	'Gamma geometry'
Conductor	Stranded copper
Dielectric	PVC



My son says the Arcam Alpha 10 integrated amplifier is the world's most advanced modular amplification system. As you'd expect, it's wonderful for music, however it is its flexible upgrade capability that has really caught the imagination of customers and reviewers alike. This allows the Alpha 10 to be upgraded as further technological advances are made. How nice.

It can be transformed into a state of the art home cinema system adding DAVE, that's the Digital Audio Video Entertainment module. Very sophisticated. This module provides Dolby Digital, Pro Logic and DTS decoding. Add a matching Alpha 10P three channel power amplifier and every movie soundtrack is just like being at the pictures. Lovely.

Or, if you'd rather hear your favourite music all round your home, you could install MARC, that's the Multi Area Remote Control module. It wasn't expensive and it means TIM, that's my son, Totally Into Music, can listen to what he calls music, anywhere in the house. The Arcam Alpha 10 may redefine the meaning of excellence, but it's just like my Tim when it comes to making tea. Absolutely useless.

ARCAM, Pembroke Avenue, Cambridge CB5 9PB, England. Tel: (01223) 203203 www.arcam.co.uk Canada – Emerald Audio Resources, Tel: (905) 880 7170. USA – Audiophile Systems Ltd., Tel: (317) 849 7103 Dolby, Pro Logic are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories Licensing Corporation. DTS is a registered trademark of Digital Theatre Systems Inc.

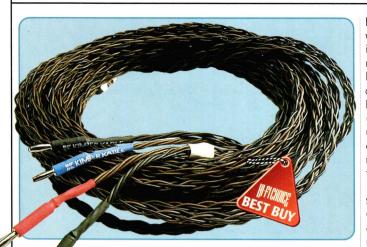








## **KIMBER** 4PR



K imber's lowestpriced cable, this one, although the differences between it and several of its dearer kin are not immediately obvious. In fact, it uses cheaper (although still high quality) dielectric and the strands in each of the eight conductors are all the same, unlike the 'varistrand' construction of others.

Kimber's familiar braiding is a well-established technique which has several genuine advantages, including excellent interference rejection and good handling properties (Kimber is my cable of choice for recording sessions, where its excellent robustness is appreciated.) It also gives a good

"The 4PR more than held its own. The usual trouble spots – imaging, bass extension and detail, treble 'air' – are handled confidently."

**NORDOST** Flatline Gold II

Flatline indeed at 0.6mm thick, this cable has obvious advantages to those who prefer not to flaunt their cables but bury them underneath the carpet. Each conductor consists of four flat copper cores, with a dielectric that is claimed to be Teflon but neither looks nor behaves like any Teflon I've ever seen (Teflon shouldn't melt on a soldering iron, nor should it exhibit as much dielectric loss as this

cable does). Talking of claims, Nordost could usefully quit claiming physically impossible parameters for its cables – it hardly enhances the company's credibility.

Anyway, this is a practical enough cable and comes with good quality 'O-Z' banana plugs fitted which give a good grip in a socket. The review sample was rather carelessly 'unzipped' for termination so that some conductor could be exposed. balance of electrical parameters, with lower-than-average inductance which ensures minimal frequency-dependent losses even over long runs but capacitance within the stability limits of all but the fussiest amps (the ones sold with warnings to use only the manufacturer's own cables, basically). Good-quality nickel-plated plugs were fitted to the review sample.

## SOUND QUALITY

Considering it's not the most expensive cable in this group, 4PR more than held its own. All the usual cable trouble spots – imaging, bass extension and detail, treble 'air' – are handled confidently. Flawlessly, perhaps not (Kimber probably does have a point, after all, in offering more expensive versions), but such flaws as there are do little to interfere with musical enjoyment.

Only in the most critical tests did this cable show any limitation in the bass, although ultimately such tricky sounds as some busy orchestral double basses can just about catch it out. The (plucked) jazz double bass test, however, it passed with flying colours: excellent body and pitch. Choral voices occasionally sounded slightly dry, and imaging lacked the last degree of depth, but apart from that it's a very rosy picture all round. Climaxes are always dynamic and clean, with minimal compression of image size.

## CONCLUSION

What can I say? This is a clear Best Buy. **RB** 

VERDICT	
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£90/5m Pair
Considering the price, this cable's	
very slight dryness is forgivable when	
avarything also is so	right
everything else is so	
everything else is so ■ LIFETIME GUARAI ⊠ Russ Andrews Acces Ho., Skelmergh, Kendal ☎ (01539) 823247	NTEE ssories Ltd, Edge Bank
■ LIFETIME GUARAN Russ Andrews Access Ho., Skelmergh, Kendal (01539) 823247	NTEE ssories Ltd, Edge Bank
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■ LIFETIME GUARAN	NTEE ssories Ltd, Edge Bank , Cumbria, LA8 9AS

"Cables often fall down on image depth, but here it's like the orchestra is brought up to the front, with it all pouring out of the speakers at you."

#### SOUND QUALITY

It all rather depends on what you want from a cable. If your most important criteria are liveliness and dynamics you'll probably like this one. If you're a bass freak you might find it less satisfactory. It's not that bass is particularly thin, but like a couple of other cables in this group it seems rather uneven, with excessive upper bass lending coloration to most low-frequency sounds.

Even odder is imaging: cables often fall down in the area of image depth, usually merging everything at a modest distance. In this case it's more as if the back of the orchestra is brought up to the front, with everything almost pouring out of the speakers at you – exciting, , but a matter of taste. Solo voices and midband detail are on the whole good.

## CONCLUSION

Whatever Nordost may claim, the electrical performance of this cable is typical of medium-spaced figure-8 types: resistance is higher than average but fine for runs of 5m or so. But sound is too mixed for general recommendation. **RB** 

VERDICT	
SOUND	
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£9.50/m
Exciting sound, but a bit too 'in-yer-	
face' – and bass is not always even. ■ LIFETIME GUARANTEE	
<ul> <li>☑ Nordost (UK) Ltd, Unit 7, Aber Park Ind.</li> <li>Est., Aber Rd, Flint, Clwyd, CH6 5EX</li> <li>☑ (01352) 730251</li> </ul>	
SPECIFICATIONS	
Topology	Flat 4-pair
Conductor	Flat solid copper
Dielectric	'Teflon'

## **ROKSAN** Caspian at Musical Images





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## **QED** Qudos Silver

ED79 was the classic budget speaker cable,

stretching back pretty much to the days when cable was cable was cable. It was only a substantially beefed-up variant on bellwire, but was hugely successful and much copied. To this day the formula continues to serve QED well, with the various Qudos models all being derived from it. This one is

in a sense the ultimate QED79, employing as it does silver-plated conductors and high quality polythene dielectric. It's still

"No colorations leap out. Detail in the midrange is good, arguably considerably better than with some dearer cables in this group."

## SONICLINK AST200x2

ST stands

for Aero Space Technology -

comforting to know that your speaker cable will work reliably at 60,000 feet above sea level. Fortunately, SonicLink claims more prosaic justifications for its idiosyncratic choice of materials, including the low dielectric loss of the silicone rubber insulation and its good long-term protection of the conductors from oxidation. In essence this cable, under its round jacket, is a figure-8 type with two

conductors each of stranded, tinplated copper. Another advantage of silicone rubber is its flexibility, and AST200 can be easily routed round corners. The review sample came fitted with good quality gold-plated banana plugs.

## SOUND QUALITY

This proved something of a disappointment. The weakest area seems to be detail, which just doesn't want to happen across the band. Bass, for instance, seemed well extended and uncoloured, but never quite shook off a certain indistinctness - not quite bland,

a basic figure-8 construction, with a fair amount of conductor efficiently packed into a relatively small cross-section, and is fairly pliable although polythene always tends to be a bit stiff. The banana plugs fitted were QED's 'Airloc' types, pressure crimped rather than soldered, but of standard single-spring contact design – OK until the spring weakens.

#### SOUND QUALITY

This is still a budget cable by most reckoning, and on that basis it does what a good budget product should do: everything passably, most of it well. No colorations leap out at the listener, no strange imaging effects intrude - it's all very well behaved. There's a trace of a fairly common bass oddity, whereby bass on its own is slightly emphasised while bass in a complex musical texture is, if anything, light, but any such deviations really are small.

Detail in the midrange is good, arguably considerably better than with some dearer cables in this group, while treble has just the merest suggestion of restriction: not enough, however, to limit the

sense of acoustic space on a good recording or to roughen voices. Imaging is very slightly compressed front to back, but you'd only notice in direct comparison with really good cables, and dynamics are natural. Q ED QUDOS

SILVER

#### CONCLUSION

No surprises in the lab – classic middle-of-the-road behaviour. A more than creditable performance all round, in fact. and a Best Buy for sure. RB

VERDICT	
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£5.00/m
A few minor flav	ws but overall
performance is very assured for the price. ■ TWO YEAR GUARANTEE	
QED Audio Products Ltd, Ridgeway Ho.,	
Ridgeway Cl., Lightwater, Surrey, GU18 5XU 🕿 (01276) 451166	
SPECIFI	CATIONS
Topology	Figure-8
Conductor	Silver-plated copper

Topology	Figure-8
Conductor	Silver-plated copper
Dielectric	Polythene

"This is a good one for vigorous and/or dynamic music - a good headbanger's cable. There's never a problem with coloration, and imaging is good."

but concealing something. In the midrange, tricky sounds like orchestral strings or a heavilylayered rock recording refuse to yield up all their secrets, which can make for tiring listening. And up in the high treble there's the dreaded cable dryness, shaving fractions of a second of decay off percussion instruments and lessening the natural resonance of a well-produced voice.

It's not all doom and gloom, though: choral voices are better served and, while detail arguably doesn't improve at climaxes, it doesn't get any worse, making this a good cable for vigorous and/or dynamic music – a good headbanger's cable. And there's

never a problem with coloration welcome with instruments like solo trumpet which show up that sort of flaw mercilessly. Imaging is good too, if not truly class-leading.

## CONCLUSION

Once again, nothing remarkable electrically and compatibility certainly won't be a problem. Worth a try, perhaps, for lovers of the fast'n'loud, but a mixed RB blessing on balance.

VERDICT	
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£5.95/m
At its best with exciting music, this	
cable seems shy of subtler details.	
FIVE YEAR GUAR	RANTEE
🖾 SonicLink, Derwer	nt Business Centre, Clark
St, Derby, DE1 2BU	
☎ (01332) 361390	
SPECIF	CATIONS
Topology	Round jacketed fig-8

Topology	Round jacketed fig-8	
Conductor	Tin-plated copper	
Dielectric	Silicone	

July/August 1999 HI-FI CHOICE

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E

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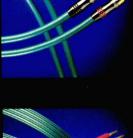
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"Great price, great cable, well made. Nifty name, neat plugs. Five stars. Next..." WHAT HI-FI 5 star review MARCH 98





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## **STRAIGHT WIRE** Rhythm

Straight it might be by name, but beneath the British Racing Green

exterior is a very tightly twisted star-quad assembly with two separately insulated solid-core wires per conductor – a halfway house to Kimber or Litz wire, if you like. Actually, I was slightly concerned to note that the conductors are so tightly twisted that the insulation on the tails is starting to crack, which might eventually allow air to get in and corrode the surface of the copper

– although whether you think that will make any real difference depends on which cable armchair theory you espouse. Despite the solid conductors and fairly chunky construction, this cable is quite flexible. The banana plugs are of good quality and seem well fitted.

#### SOUND QUALITY

Most of this cable's foibles are in the bass. Across the midrange and

## VAN DEN HUL CS122

"This cable seldom strayed into the 'very good' bracket except, perhaps, in its handling of male choir, where it seemed one of the best of the bunch."

treble and in areas like imaging and dynamics, it ranks as good, although seldom straying into the 'very good' bracket except, perhaps, in its handling of male choir, where it seemed one of the best of the bunch. But an early comment on the bass, that it seemed a bit woolly, unfortunately applied almost throughout the listening and inevitably strongly coloured the overall result.

It's not that there's any really obvious boosting or cutting of low frequencies, but there's a pervasive feeling of the lower sections of any band or ensemble being slightly masked off from the listener, whether it be orchestral double bass, electric bass guitar or the bottom end of a piano. If one listens really hard it's all there, but that's the point – one shouldn't really have to listen hard. Otherwise things seem OK, although climaxes are perhaps a bit subdued. STRAIGHT WIRE

RHYTHM

## CONCLUSION

Relatively high capacitance, but not enough to cause problems, and good low resistance. But that bass is a serious drawback to an otherwise promising sound. **RB** 

VERDICT		
SOUND		
BUILD	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£6.00/m	
<ul> <li>Its major flaw seems to be woolly and indistinct bass, which pervades most types of music.</li> <li>■ LIFETIME GUARANTEE</li> <li>CSE, Unit 9, Centre Park Holdings, The Airfield, Tockwith, Yorks, YO5 8QF</li> <li>(01423) 359054</li> </ul>		
SPECIFICATIONS		
Topology	Star-quad	
<ul><li>Conductor</li><li>Dielectric</li></ul>	Oxygen-free copper Polypropylene	

VAN DEN HUL CS122 😒 Visit Our Website: www.hifichoice.co.uk

ne of vdH's hybrid-conductor models, this cable is, on the face of it, a fairly straightforward spacedfigure-8 type with stranded, silver-plated copper, conductors in a Hulliflex jacket. Also concealed beneath that environmentally-friendly jacket is a layer of what vdH calls Linear Structured Carbon, which assists the metal strands in the task of carrying electric current. According to vdH, this results in a reduction in crossover distortion in the cable, compared with metal-

only conductors. That is by no means unarguable, but nevertheless, the company's cables with LSC, either alone or in partnership with metal

"It's impossible to ascribe any particular effect to the LSC Hybrid conductors, but dynamics are good and the sound can often be exciting." strands, have been well received in many quarters. Physically it's a rather bulky but usefully flexible cable, terminated in gold-plated 'O-Z' banana plugs.

## SOUND QUALITY

With so many variables between this and other apparently-similar cables, it's impossible to ascribe any particular effect to the LSC Hybrid conductors, but the result here seems to be less than completely successful. Dynamics are good and the sound can often be exciting, but it seems to lack subtlety. There's also an anomaly in the bass balance, which accentuates the upper bass region but somehow seems to cut lower frequencies severely.

At the top end of the spectrum, delicate sounds like triangle are muffled and decay unnaturally fast, while voices often acquire a degree of rasp or sibilance. Imaging is passable and, rather disconcertingly, the apparent position of an instrument can sometimes seem to vary with the note being played. Almost any music seems to require more effort from the listener if one is to hear it properly, which to me is all wrong.

## CONCLUSION

The LSC has no obvious effect on measurements, which show the expected low capacitance and high inductance and also low resistance. But sound seems no match for the best of vdH's interconnects. **RB** 

VERDICT

SOUND	000000		
BUILD	00000		
VALUE			
PRICE	£13.49/m		
Good dynamics	can make for exciting		
sound, but fine detail suffers and the			
treble is often dry.			
LIFETIME GUAR	ANTEE		
🖾 Van den Hul UK, I	Jnit 12, Imex House, 6		
Wadworth Road, Perivale, Middx, UB3 7JS			
🕿 (0181) 997 4280			
SPECIF	ICATIONS		

Topology	Spaced pair
Conductor	Silver-plated copper plus LSC
Dielectric	'Hulliflex'

#### SUPER TEST SPEAKER CABLES

# **SPEAKER CABLES** CONCLUSIONS

R ather a thin bunch of swing tags from this group, but that's not to say that the whole cable industry has just gone out to lunch: rather, a statistical foible that saw several cables of broadly similar attainments pitted against each other in one group. But that does bring up a point worth making – just because not all cables sound the same, one shouldn't be surprised to find that some types do sound nearly identical.

 $\langle ]$ 

Sometimes, indeed, two apparently dissimilar cables will turn out to be extremely similar in terms of internal construction and basic electrical characteristics, so "Just because not all cables sound the same, one shouldn't be surprised to find that some types do sound nearly identical."

don't panic if you find you can't readily distinguish two cables in a dealer's showroom!

In fact, I'd go so far as to divide speaker cables into three types: low capacitance (DNM being the best-known and most extreme example), high capacitance

QED Qudos Silver £5.00/m

enhanced materials in the form of

low-loss dielectric and silver-plated

reasonable. Sound is well judged:

above average in all areas.

conductors but a price that's still very

It's yer absolutely basic figure-8 cable

(super-thick bell-wire, if you like) with

(principally Goertz and Electrofluidics, with Kimber just about falling into this camp too) and the rest. There can be some clear differences between various examples of 'the rest', but I'd suggest that anyone seriously interested in tweaking a system to the max should at least hear examples of the other two types. Even if you don't like them, it'll give you guidelines about how different cables can be, and what sort of differences, qualitatively, you can expect at most.

As with interconnects, speaker cables can be most conspicuous by their faults in the general area of fine detail, including ambience and imaging, and frequently affecting also the balance in the bass according to level – loud and quiet bass may not be treated the same.

It is, I think, arguable that none of these faults is usually serious, but they are the sort of thing that can have a disproportionate effect on long-term listening pleasure, hence the importance of selecting good cables.

What's very clear is that there is no shortage of variety out there (although you might have to visit more than one dealer to sample all of it) and prices have never been more competitive. Happy listening!



KIMBER 4PR £90.00 (5m terminated pair) The regularity with which Kimber gets recommended is becoming boring – unlike the cables themselves, which are communicative, open and well balanced. This one offers a great deal of the performance of its dearer kin.

## THE BEST IN THE TES



## **CHORD COMPANY** Odyssey £17.00/m

The most expensive cable here, it managed to put up a good case for its higher price with very assured sound in all areas. Particularly commendable is its imaging, which is often a sore point with cables.



**IXOS** Gamma 6006 £4.99/m Same price as the QED and perhaps less of an all-rounder, but bass is good and that alone should make this cable appeal to many. Treble is rather variable and can develop some spit, so do try it with your own speakers if possible.

MAKE	AUDIOQUEST	CABLE TALK	CHORD COMPANY	IXOS	KIMBER
MODEL	F-18	CONCERT 2.1	ODYSSEY /	GAMMA SERIES 6005	4PR
PRICE/M	£3.60	£8.00	£17.00 REC	£4.99 REC	£90 (5M TERM. PAIR)
SOUND	00000	000000	00000	00000	00000
BUILD	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
VALUE	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
GUARANTEE	Lifetime	Lifetime	Lifetime	Lifetime	Lifetime
TOPOLOGY	Flat 4-pair	Round fig-8	Twisted pair	'Gamma geo.'	Braided
CONDUCTOR	Solid FPC	Stranded copper	Silver-plated copper	Stranded copper	Stranded copper
DIELECTRIC	PVC	'Cimflex'	PTFE	PVC	Polythene

	CABLES	COMPAR	ISON T	ABLE	
MAKE MODEL	NORDOST FLATLINE GOLD II	QED QUDOS SILVER	SONICLINK AST200	STRAIGHT WIRE RHYTHM	VAN DEN HUL CS122
PRICE/M	£9.50	£5.00 BB	£5.95	£6.00	£13.49
SOUND	00000	00000	00000	00000	000000
BUILD	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
VALUE	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
GUARANTEE	Lifetime	2 years	5 years	Lifetime	Lifetime
TOPOLOGY	Flat 4-pair	Figure-8	Round fig-8	Round star-quad	Spaced pair
CONDUCTOR	Solid copper	Silver-plated copper	Tin-plated copper	Oxygen-free copper	Silver-plated copper + LSC
DIELECTRIC	'Teflon'	Polythene	Silicone	Polypropylene	Hulliflex

46 HI-FI CHOICE July/August 1999

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## GLOSSARY

CARTRIDGE: The device which tracks the record groove with a flexiblymounted stylus. The movement of the stylus in relation to the cartridge body is used to generate an electrical signal. PLATTER: The circular platform on which a record rests, usually driven by a belt attached to a motor. Sound can vary with different platter materials aluminium, acrylic and glass are among the most commonly used. PLINTH: A turntable's base, which is usually adjustable for level. SUB-CHASSIS: Platform on which the platter and armboard are mounted in suspended designs, its main purpose is to isolate the groove tracing elements from vibration. **SUSPENSION:** This is either compliant, using springs or a rubber-like material, or non compliant, employing a stiff, self-damping substance. TONEARM: The (usually) pivoted

and counterbalanced tube which allows the stylus to trace the groove. **BIAS CORRECTION:** An outward force that counteracts the inward pull created by arm geometry. Most arms allow for adjustment.

CANTILEVER: The part of a cartridge that holds the stylus, vital to performance because it transfers motion to the generator. It needs to be light, rigid and non-resonant . **CARTRIDGE ALIGNMENT:** In order to work accurately, a cartridge must be aligned at the correct angle in relation to the groove. Alignment protectors are available for the purpose. **MOVING MAGNET:** A type of cartridge that creates its electrical signals by moving a magnet in relation to the surrounding fixed coil windings. MOVING COIL: The cartridge type where the magnet is fixed and the coil moves. Usually considered superior to moving magnet types, but output voltage is lower and a higher gain phono amplifier is required. TRACKING FORCE: The amount of pressure which the stylus applies to the groove, adjustable via the arm's counterweight. It's vital to get this right, according to the cartridgemaker's recommendations and your

own listening experiments.

## THE CAST LIST

TURNTABLES		
Michell Orbe 'SE'	£1,725	p50
<b>Pink Triangle Tarante</b>	la £850	p51
<b>Pro-ject Perspective</b>	£750	p53
Wilson benesch Circle	£795	p54
CARTRIDGES		
AT-OC9ML	£330.00	p56
Dynavector DV20XL	£299.00	p56
Lyra Lydian Beta	£599.00	p58
Ortofon MC10 Supr.	£300.00	p58
Reson Reca	£250.00	p59
Sumiko BPS	£249.95	p59

history books and hail the new digital world order.

But the black stuff is proving stubborn. CD has long been the dominant music carrier, and the onslaught of DVD heralds the digital disc's next evolutionary phase. Yet turntables are still being made and they're better than ever – those manufacturers who have remained in the business are engaged in an unshakable love affair that will never fade. The fruit of their dedication is a collection of decks delivering the best levels of performance ever available.

> This is vinyl's golden age. The ongoing fascination that many find with vinyl can be put down to a

number of factors. There's that tactile, hands-on quality that both records and turntables have, a feeling that the format almost lives and breathes. There's the satisfying mechanics of the playback machinery, the sense of experiencing the moment of musical reproduction. And despite limited new vinyl releases, many music fans have already acquired large and treasured record collections, a significant portion of which may be irreplaceable. For them, vinyl playback remains a necessity. But perhaps the best justification for vinyl's continued existence is its enduring quality of

sound. CD has improved markedly since its introduction; the best players can now rival the best turntables in many respects, and budget buyers can obtain a more consistent performance than was easily found with lowcost vinyl playback. But even now, a high quality turntable, properly set up and supported, will involve the listener far more than the majority of CD players. It's a simple fact, and these prime turntables from four of the format's most fervent supporters simply serve to underline it. Each follows the fashion for strippeddown style, exploiting the visual potential of turntable mechanics to create kinetic sculptures beautiful in form and function.

There's also sound sonic theory behind their skeletal construction – it's an attempt to get closer to the performance ideal of an entirely detached motor, arm and platter, perfectly stable and floating in free space.

## 🚧 HINTS & TIPS

Record players are highly sensitive mechanical devices which use a transducer (cartridge) to translate the mechanical undulations of the vinyl groove into an electrical signal. As a result they are highly sensitive to set-up. As a starter ensure that the surface supporting the deck is perfectly level, then use whatever means there is on the deck itself to ensure that the platter itself is level. Suspension systems require varying degrees of tuning to achieve optimum isolation. Cartridge alignment both vertically and laterally is critical to performance and the advantage of dearer tonearms is that they are easier to adjust. Use an alignment protractor to set optimum tracing angle and combine your ears and eyes to set VTA (vertical tracking angle) by adjusting arm base height.

ver since the digital dawn, the imminent demise of vinyl has been predicted. Early adopters and convenienceseekers leaped on the CD bandwagon, eager to scrawl a suitable epitaph for the analogue turntable. 'Nice artwork, shame about the inconvenience,' they cried, determined to consign vinyl to the

## **HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE**

A ll four turntables were tested through a system comprising Densen B-200/B-300 pre/power amp, B&W Nautilus 805 speakers and HNE 805 speaker stands. The preamp has no on-board phono stage – and even if it had it would probably not do justice to this level of turntable – so Roksan's Artaxerxes X with DS1.5 power supply was used. Each manufacturer furnished its own choice of tonearm to create a competitive package, and Ortofon's superb Rohmann moving coil cartridge was used throughout for consistency.

Each turntable was carefully assembled and sited on a Mana support. The Mana is freestanding, but if your floor is particularly prone to vibration you may find wall-mounting a better option. Each deck was precisely levelled, and all necessary adjustments were made.

It was then simply a question of sitting back and listening to the results. Records used are too numerous to list here, but some examples are included in the review text.

Having gauged the performance of each turntable, the cartridge reviews came next. Two turntables were used for the test: Pink Triangle's Tarentella II with a Rega RB300 arm, and Wilson benesche's The Circle with the company's own ACT 0.5 arm. Each cartridge was precisely set up according to its needs, with a combination of A-B comparisons and longer listens making up the test procedure.

## MICHELL Orbe 'SE'

f you go for the exotic styling now commonplace in the ranks of hi-fi turntables, you should thank John Michell. The man behind Michell Engineering has always believed the turntable should be an object of beauty, and his most famous creation

SUPER TES

- the GyroDec - is arguably still the best looking turntable costing less than £1,000. Each of the decks in this group take some kind of cue from that design, either in the use of clear acrylic, the impact of circles and cylinders, or simply by offering stripped-down esoteric beauty at an affordable price.

A few years back, Michell added a new flagship to its range. The Orbe was an extension to the GyroDec theme, mirroring its style but upgrading key components to reach a new level of performance. That was the last new model to emerge... until now.

Both GyroDec and Orbe have been joined by more affordable 'Spider Editions'. The main difference from the originals is the removal of acrylic plinth and dust cover, giving a reduction in costs which is passed to the consumer.

The Orbe 'SE' replaces the original's dual plinth arrangement with two smaller, three-pronged pieces of acrylic called spiders – one stacked on top of the other, and decoupled by three small metal spikes. A trio of spring assemblies attach to the top spider, forming a compliant suspension system identical to that used in both Gyro designs, and a weighted sub-chassis slots neatly over the top.

A warning – the Orbe 'SE' is supplied in almost kit form, and while the instructions are pretty comprehensive, they're also rather dense. But once you've got to grips with the various parts, assembly won't take long.

The motor is the same unit employed by the GyroDec/Gyro 'SE', but the Orbe 'SE' has it housed in a superbly finished brass case weighing in at more than 2.5kg. The housing simply drops through a hole in the sub-

chassis and rests on your turntable support, entirely detached from the deck in order

• The Orbe 'SE''s PSU:

"Whatever I played, this turntable brought it to life. If it's there, the Orbe "SE"s resolving power will let you hear it in perfectly understated style."

to minimise the effect of resonance. The platter is much more substantial than that of the two Gyro designs, being made from a mix of carbon-damped acrylic and vinyl, while a material called Densoseal is a added to the sub-chassis' underside to further improve damping.

But perhaps the most important difference is the inclusion of Michell's QC power supply as standard. This £399 unit is an option for GyroDec or Gyro 'SE' that works sonic wonders and gives push-button speed change.

The result of shedding dual plinths and dust cover is a price 'cut from £1,995 for the standard Orbe to £1,725 for the Orbe 'SE'. A variety of tonearms can be fitted, with six different adaptor plates as standard and others available to order. There's a choice of colour: if the black finish is too brooding, there's a clear option – or plump for a bronze tint. And if you decide later to add the plinth/dust cover

arrangement, that's fine too. **SOUND QUALITY** John Michell

recommends

the use of SME

arms to optimise the

because he feels 'they're the best arms in the world'. But we wanted to hear it perform with Rega's excellent value RB300 arm, a fraction of the price at £174. That brings the cost of turntable and arm to £1,899, and is a combo John happily recommends. As with the other decks across the next few pages, I used Ortofon's £1,000 Rohmann cartridge to

really put it through its paces. After a week's listening I can safely conclude that this turntable is one of the best money can buy. Timing, soundstage depth and sheer realism; a deck like this reminds one just how good vinyl is as a medium. No CD player costing less than a king's ransom comes close to its stunning realism and lucid coherence, and few turntables can match its supreme balance of tone and texture. It's a musical marvel.

An ex-colleague of mine once waxed lyrical about the original Orbe, telling of how utterly it seduced him – with the help of a boy soprano – while soaking in a candlelit bath. It sounded a little deviant at the time, but I now understand just what he meant. The way the Orbe 'SE' gracefully unravelled and effortlessly scaled orchestra and choir in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony brought tingles to all the best places.

Even with the 'lowly' Rega attached, the Michell's class shone through. It captured the dry energy of The Replacements' *All Shook Down* to a tee, clearly separating the band's meandering rhythm • The Michell Orbe 'SE': a very special turntable.

keeping their relationship in perfect balance. Equally, the simple chiming guitar/semi-spoken word formula on Arab Strap's *Philophobia* had never sounded so real and vivid... in fact, whatever I played, this turntable brought it to life, often revealing subtleties I'd scarcely heard before. The texture of fingers on strings, the attack and decay of a distant sound – if it's there, the Orbe 'SE''s resolving power will let you hear it in perfectly understated style.

#### CONCLUSION

With an SME arm on board, no doubt the results would have been even more distinguished. This turntable is good enough to revel in the quality of the best ancillaries, and any self-respecting owner should aim high. But the Orbe 'SE' isn't cheap, and the use of the Rega arm opens up its delights to a wider audience. What's more, it's a combination that really works, which just goes to show how good the Rega can be – and how special this turntable irrefutably is. TB

VERDICT		
SOUND	00	0000
BUILD	00	
VALUE	00	
PRICE	£1,7	25
■ FIVE YEAR GUARANTEE Michell Engineering Ltd, 2 Theobald Street, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 4SE (0181) 953 0771 SPECIFICATIONS		
■ Platter:	carbon-da	nped acrylic/ yl composite
Suspension:	comp	oliant, sprung
External PSU su	pplied:	yes
Speed change:		electronic
Dust cover:		no

## PINK TRIANGLE Tarantella II

The people at Pink Triangle have a healthy sense of humour. They give their products names like Little Pink Thing and exude a relaxed kind of individualism – a desire to deviate from the audio establishment. No surprise, then, that the Tarantella II – named after a manic style of dance originating in Italy – is a very different kind of turntable.

It's pretty wild to look at, too. The plinth is aptly cut in triangular shape, and although it's not pink – it's clear acrylic – there's a pair of red LEDs attached to the underside that illuminate and refract through its 12mm thick profile. Don't worry, when you're listening to your records in the wee hours it all makes sense.

The designer's aim was to make a simple, low-mass structure to store minimum energy and cut colouration, with each of its vital components isolated. A small acrylic arm board is attached by a solid aluminium arm to the shrunken MDF sub-chassis. Compliant suspension is supplied by four sorbothane tubes sandwiched between subchassis and plinth (15mm thick acrylic). The whole structure sits on three inverted cones.

The plinth's triangular shape and the irregular shape of the subchassis -- comes down to function as well as form; each side is a slightly different length to prevent the build-up of sonically damaging standing waves. The deck's motor is bolted to the rear left corner, over one of those inverted cones to ground emitted vibrations. The separate, spiked 'Hornet' PSU isolates power circuitry and gives push-button speed selection. There's no provision for levelling, so you'll have to rely on your support to make fine adjustments.

Tarantella's journey to MkII has been made in two steps: the first, some time ago, involved an upgrade to the motor, the inclusion of a new sapphiretipped bearing and a switch from a round-section belt to a flat one. The deck now features a dished platter and record clamp. But these changes prompted a price hike from £680 to £850 – hefty.

It's also worth noting that, by repute, the Tarantella's reliability record isn't too hot. I experienced this while working on another magazine, when there were severe pitch "The highs are high, the lows are low and the midband imparts the kind of open, free-breathing expression that consistently involves the listener."

its

#### SOUND QUALITY

Despite keeping a watchful eye/ear for any potential reliability problems, it should be stressed that I encountered nothing untoward during the week I spent with the Tarantella II. Indeed, listening to rhythms clearly conveyed, and Björk's vocal given its full, yearning range.

Sure, alongside the more costly combos featured in this group, the Tarantella II lacks a certain subtlety of touch. But, as a turntable and arm partnership at a little over £1,000, few hold a sonic candle to the Pink Triangle/Rega combo.

> Tarantella II: crisp, unfussy style.

problems with our first review sample. I've encountered the deck since without incident, but still have reservations and have taken them into account in the score for build.

CHATT

Buyers may have other practical reservations. Although stable, its design is inherently vulnerable to curious kids and other household hazards. It's not as fragile as it might look, but there's little protection and the suspension system makes the arm awkwardly compliant if you're cueing tracks individually. Other dust cover-less designs such as the Gyro 'SE' are cut from more sturdy cloth. It's the sort of deck on which one feels inclined to fully 'clip' the arm down when it's not in use.

O The 'Hornet' PSU

selection.

gives push-button speed

performance in harness with a Rega RB300 tonearm (£174 – any Rega arm will fit)

and Ortofon Rohmann cartridge (£1,000), a package with a total cost of £2,024, it left me with nothing but the broadest of grins.

I've grown mightily fond of the Tarantella's crisp, unfussy style of music making – it presents a performance of transparency and depth and the MkII is still impressive value for money despite the recent price hike. The highs are high, the lows are low and the midband imparts the kind of open, free-breathing expression that consistently involves – and it does so without a hint of artifice.

Instrumental images and tonal contrasts were sharp and clear: it brought brass and strings to life in Mahler's Fifth and strong focus to the piano/violin interplay in The Waterboys' *The Pan Within*, swinging superbly along with

the track's percussive drive. It made perfect sense of Mercury Rev's angular rock on Yerself is Steam, delivering sharply splintered guitar and superb authority in the bass. And The Sugarcubes' *Birthday* was at its most beguiling – scattered

#### CONCLUSION

Minor concerns about practicality and reliability aside, the Tarantella II is a superb sounding turntable. It's as smooth and fluid as it is dynamic and hard-hitting, and the better the cartridge, the better it performs. It does have competition, notably from the gorgeous Michell Gyro 'SE' and Wilson Benesch Circle – some may find the Pink Triangle a more exhilarating experience, others... well. Turn to our Circle review and you'll see.

#### VERDICT SOUND 00000 BUILD 00000 VALUE 0000 PRICE £850.00 A turntable that looks unlike any other, and offers rare ability to boot. Too quirky for some, but ignore its sound at your peril. ONE YEAR GUARANTEE ☑ Pink Triangle Projects, The Basement, Camberwell Business Centre, Camberwell, London SE5 5HN (0171) 703 5498 SPECIFICATIONS Platter: acrylic Suspension: compliant, sorbothane External PSU supplied: yes Speed change: electronic

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA II Sea Visit Our Website: www.hfitchoice.co.u

July/August 1999 HI-FI CHOICE 51

no

Dust cover:



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## **PRO-JECT** Perspective

bout seven years back, just as the digital acolytes were hastily preparing vinyl's last rites, a new name in turntable design materialised out of the blue. Ortofon UK had begun distributing a promising collection of turntables at very agreeable prices, built by a curiouslyhyphenated, Czech-based concern called Pro-ject.

Chief among these was the Austrian-designed Pro-ject 6 (review: *HFC* 138), a handsome and flexible turntable whose sound quality brought immediate critical acclaim. That deck remains the cornerstone of Pro-ject's range, but the company and its importer have decided the time is right to fuel the vinyl-lover's fetish with two new models – the lowcost Classic and the top-of-therange Perspective, with which we're dealing here.

Much of the Perspective's design will be familiar to those acquainted with the Pro-ject 6. It's built around the same subchassis with three-point sprung suspension, a built-in spirit level and a silicon bath to aid damping. But here the plinth is a 20mm thick slab of clear acrylic, selected for reasons both aesthetic and sonic. The platter is made from a sandwich of cast alloy and vinyl, the latter obtained from recycled records - according to Pro-ject, this creates 'probably the best record interface possible'.

But perhaps the Perspective's most individual aspect of design are its two interchangeable motors, one equipped to play at 33.3rpm, the other at 45rpm. In order to change playing speed, most turntables require one to either shift the belt on the motor spindle, or in the most convenient cases to simply tap a button.

Here, the user has to physically remove the entire motor block by loosening a bolt beneath the plinth, then replace it with the second block. Increased accuracy and reduced resonance are the claimed results, but it's a fiddly way of going about things.

Flexible setting-up facilities are a Pro-ject tradition, and here the Perspective is identical to the Pro-ject 6. Accurate levelling can be achieved by adjusting both the plinth's coned feet and the subchassis' three suspension points, although complete reliance on the integral spirit level is unwise – it's

t **O The Pro-ject** Perspective.

> fine for rough set-up, but not for exact levelling. That silicon bath is useful, too – a rod attached to the sub-chassis can be dipped into its gooey contents, allowing you to adjust damping according to the stability of the turntable's environment.

Another plus-point for the UKbased Pro-ject buyer is the strong value of its importer's package deals. First, Pro-ject makes its own tonearms and they tend to be more than reasonable. The Perspective comes with its latest tubular arm, the '9', included in its £750 price tag. Bought separately it would set you back £350.

"Perhaps the Perspective's most individual aspect of design is its two interchangeable motors, one to play at 33.3rpm, the other at 45rpm."

Second, although Ortofon UK has broadened its scope and metamorphosed into Henley Designs, its connection with Danish-based Ortofon remains equally strong. That means you can buy Pro-ject turntable/Ortofon cartridge combos at quite heavily discounted prices: the Perspective is available with the £550 MC 30 Supreme cartridge for £1,000 (a £300 saving), or with the £1,000 Rohmann (used on all the decks in this test) for just £1,250 – a saving of £500.

#### SOUND QUALITY

Tested in its Rohmann-equipped incarnation, the Perspective immediately impressed with its eager rhythm and timing – a typical Pro-ject trait. It cuts a linear dash through music like a hot knife through butter, slicing music from the grooves with delicious pace and snap. All music types benefit to some degree, the deck's gusto helping to involve the listener and create an enjoyable musical experience – it's no surprise to find rock and dance discs benefitting most.

Throughout the audition, the Perspective seemed to devour the beats as rapidly as I could pull records from the shelves. The Psychedelic Furs' *Pretty in Pink* surged from the speakers, Gigolo Aunts' *Where I Find My Heaven* sounded even more toe-tappingly jaunty than usual and a motorswitch to 45rpm found Suede's *The Drowners* 12-inch full of gritty, rhythmic grind.

But the longer I listened the more evident it became that something was missing something subtle, but ultimately of importance. It's a matter of transparency and fine nuance, of extended treble ambience and solid, convincing bass - it just doesn't give the insight of turntables like the Tarantella and Circle. Slipping on Mahler's Fifth revealed fine dynamics but a lack of air and bass authority; playing the Waterboy's track This is the Sea, the title track from a 180g pressing of the album, found guitar pleasingly rhythmic but acoustic atmosphere missing.

These aren't major flaws in the greater scheme of things, and in terms of musicality the pros easily outweigh the cons. But when considering current turntables at this level and beyond, it's apparent the best have a more insightful mix of strengths; with the Rohmann cartridge attached, that also includes each of the other turntables in this grouping.

## CONCLUSION

Viewed solely as a £750 turntable, the Perspective falls short of the performance obtained by the Tarantellas and Circles of this world, and fails to make the impact of Pro-ject's lower cost decks. However, the inclusion of a decent tonearm ups its value for money, and those Ortofon cartridge deals sweeten the pot considerably – for instance, a Tarantella/Rega RB300 combo with the same Rohmann cartridge would cost an extra £774.

If £1,250 were your limit, and it came down to a choice between the Perspective plus a Rohmann, or perhaps the Tarantella plus a much cheaper cartridge, the Perspective might just prove the more tempting option. **TB** 

## VERDICT SOUND CONCENT BUILD CONCENT VALUE CONCENT PRICE E750.00 Flexible facilities and highly competitive package deals heighten the Perspective's appeal, but the performance of turntable alone is behind the best at the price.

■ TWO YEAR CUARANTEE Henley Designs Ltd, The Old Coach House, The Street, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 8EH (01491) 834700

# SPECIFICATIONS Platter: alloy/vinyl composite Suspension: compliant, sprung External PSU supplied: no Speed change: motor interchange

Dust cover:

yes

#### SUPER TEST TURNTABLES

## WILSON BENESCH Circle

or a firm with such an oldfashioned visage, Wilson benesch has some pretty high-tech ideas. Its Sheffield base is housed in a dramatic 1930s building that used to be the HQ for Campbell's Foods. Inside, the firm's small group of staff beaver away, the place abuzz with industry and a refreshing lack of pretension. There's no sign of CD or DVD, it's all good ol' fashioned analogue; but in the field of material research, Wb is a true pioneer.

It's this eagerness to combine experimental thought with more traditional engineering standards that makes products like the Circle stand out. It's the company's most recent and most affordable turntable, a superbly satisfying creation from both visual and sonic standpoints. It's so perfectly round, so utterly Feng Shui, so in tune with its purpose. Drop a record on its platter and it *belongs*.

It's built to high standards, but the deck's construction is as simple as its form. Its plinth consists of two black MDF discs, BEST BUT

A roundsection belt is employed but doesn't drive the main platter directly, hooking instead around a smaller aluminium sub-platter which sits neatly underneath.

Putting the deck together from the box is a simple job; setting it up for optimum performance takes considerably more time,

"The Circle's sound has a subtlety of touch that's rare at any price, and to find it in a turntable with a base cost of just £795 is really quite exceptional."

each one 30mm thick with a diameter just larger than an LP. On the lower disc is sited a cylindrical motor block and power switch over which the upper disc slots, decoupled by three urethane studs. The upper plinth carries the Circle's suspension, and it's here one of Wb's favourite materials comes into play – carbon fibre.

It's a light yet exceptionally strong substance with excellent self-damping characteristics, and so lends itself well to the purpose of decoupling in a non-compliant suspension system such as this. To that end, two thin carbon fibre rods support the central aluminium sub-chassis from a pair of small aluminium cylinders towards the outer edge, with two thicker rods attached between sub-chassis and armboard.

Wb has also chosen acrylic for the Circle's platter, in this case with a thickness of 17mm. Here a felt mat is supplied to top it off, and its use is recommended – it seems to make the sound a touch smoother and more welcoming. despite the lack of complex suspension to set and maintain. It needs a dedicated, well isolated support, particularly if its environment lacks stability, and care must be taken to ensure its resting platform is exactly level.

Anyone partnering the Circle with an arm and cartridge is sure to be tempted by Wb's own excellent units. The 'Full Circle' package deal includes the unipivot, carbon fibre ACT 0.5 tonearm (£795) and open-body Ply moving coil cartridge (a Matrix without the trimmings) for a combined price of £1,995.

However, a number of different arm boards are available if you wish to fit an outsourced arm – for instance, teaming the £795 Circle with the £174 Rega RB300 would make the purchase significantly more affordable.

#### SOUND QUALITY

Wilson benesch supplied the Full Circle package for this review, a combination we've heard before (*HFC* 174). In this instance, I kept the ACT 0.5 arm but replaced the Ply cartridge with the Ortofon Rohmann in order to remain consistent with the other turntables. The resultant threesome comes to a grand total of £2,590. I also gave another brief listen to the Full Circle to re-assess its value.

The conclusion I'm left with is entirely positive – the Circle is every bit as pleasing to the ear as it is to the eye. Its sound has a subtlety of touch that's rare at any price, and to find it in a turntable with a base cost of just £795 is really quite exceptional. It conveys the kind of even, stable balance that separates the best from the rest, digging out the detail to a fine degree without putting analysis ahead of the musical whole.

With the ACT 0.5 arm installed, this deck slots into a price band beyond the Pro-ject and Pink Triangle/Rega combos, and one naturally expects a consequential step forward in performance. It duly obliged throughout this test, demonstrating a level of resolution that left even the Tarantella in its slipstream. Soundstaging was superbly realistic, with terrific depth given a suitable recording, and both instrumental and vocal images were pin-sharp without being the least bit edgy.

It coped well with every record I threw at it, but seemed at its most impressive with acoustic guitars, orchestral strings and the like. The Mahler sounded bold and vivid, with excellent dynamic contrast.

Switching from the Rohmann cartridge to the Ply, so completing the Full Circle, seemed to take away a little of that natural air, adding a touch of artifice in its place. But that was only occasionally noticeable, and the value-for-money offered by the complete Wb package is considerable.

O The Circle: good Feng Shui.

#### CONCLUSION

Wilson benesch products are known more for outright performance than for aggressive pricing, but the Circle is a bit of a bargain, and the £1,995 Full Circle is a great value package. If that's too steep, swapping the ACT 0.5 arm for a Rega RB300 makes a £969 partnership to which you can add your choice of cartridge. You'd lose some resolution and sound would soften, but performance would remain excellent for the money you'd be paying.

Would a Circle/Rega combo beat the Tarantella/Rega? Without having heard the former, I suspect the Circle's deft touch might win through, although the Tarantella may convey more energy and drive. Whatever, both are superb turntables. And overall, the Circle's combination of sound, style and build quality make it the most desirable of propositions. **TB** 

VERDICT			
SOUND	00000		
BUILD	00000		
VALUE	00000		
PRICE	£795.00		
A beautiful turnta sumptuous sound, al			
reasonable price – clear Best Buy material.			
■ ONE YEAR GUAR, ☑ Wilson benesch, Fa Cottage Lane, Sheffield ② (0114) 285 2656	alcon House, Limestone		
SPECIFI	CATIONS		

Platter:	acrylic
Suspension: non-comp	liant, carbon fibre
External PSU supplied:	no
Speed change:	manual belt lift
Dustcover:	no

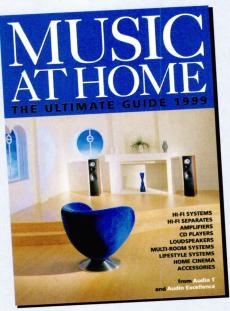




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SHAHINIAN SONANCE SONIC LINK SOUND STYLE STANDS UNIQUE SYSTEMLINE TAG MCLAREN TALK ELECTRONICS TANNOY TARGET TDK TEAC TECHNICS THORENS VAN DEN HUL YAMAHA

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## SUPER TEST CARTRIDGES

## AUDIO TECHNICA AT-OC9ML

DYNAVECTOR

DV-20XL

Visit Our Website: www.hifichoice.co.uk

This beautifully turned-out design from AT exemplifies the aesthetic appeal of a well made cartridge. It's small but, like a perfectly cut jewel or an intricate watch mechanism, the precision craftsmanship is immensely satisfying. This low(ish)-output moving coil design sports excellent fit and finish, and incorporates a goldplated beryllium cantilever supporting a nude square shank stylus. A cleaning brush is supplied and, if you have an old cartridge to trade in as part exchange, its price is cut to £249.95.

#### SOUND QUALITY

Performance is even-handed and well controlled, with a smooth delivery that's easy on the ear.



## Resolution is pretty good at the price – it dug out the full sonic measure of plectrum on guitar strings during The Bible's *Crystal Palace* – but the cartridge's macro-dynamic and rhythmic

qualities are left a little wanting. Compared with the more invigorating MCs at the price, voices sound a little recessed and percussion subdued. Its tone is pleasant, but the instrumental images it produces are a touch soft and smeary. Soundstaging has

decent front-to-back depth but shows a lack of width, and busier mixes sound rather congealed. Performance is civilised and cultured to a degree, and might suit those seeking a smooth performance with relaxed music, but there's more involvement to be had at the price. "Performance is civilised and cultured to a degree, and might suit those seeking a smooth performance with relaxed music."

VERDICT			
SOUND	00000		
BUILD	00000		
VALUE			
PRICE	£330.00		
A beautifully finished cartridge with a sound that's smoothly detailed, but also rather unexciting.			
ONE YEAR GUAR	ANTEE		
☑ Audio Technica, Te Royal London Trading Beeston, Leeds LS11 8 ☎ (0113) 277 1441			
SPECIF	CATIONS		

SPECIFICATIONS		
Type: moving coil		
Weight:	8g	
Output:	0.4mV	
Recommended tracking force:	1.5g	

## DYNAVECTOR DV-20XL

apanese company Dynavector has long been among the most admired of cartridge makers, renowned for a consistently high level of performance. Here we have a neatly constructed moving coil cartridge with a traditionally low output, put together to the maker's usual high standard and featuring an aluminium body and cantilever.

Inside this body lies Dynavector's flux-damping coil, there to soak up excess magnetic flux that can be detrimental to sound. Another 'unique' element in this design is the use of iron to focus the magnetic field.

There's a trade-in offer too: if you already own a Dynavector cartridge, you can recoup 20 per cent of the old model's cost against the price of a new needle.



## SOUND QUALITY

A lithe, rather airy character is apparent the moment its stylus hits the groove, blessed with agile bass and impressive high frequency detail. Its tone is a touch bright, but the conveyance of ambient detail and overall

transparency is extremely fine. The DV-20XL seems to be at its best with light classical, jazz and acoustic music, its nimble footing and fine resolution making for a vivid listening experience. Vocal projection is a touch weak, however, and more rhythmic material can sound somewhat dry and lightweight.

It earns a cautious recommendation, depending on your record collection – if it's predominantly rock or dance, other cartridges might prove more satisfying. **TB**  "A lithe, rather airy character is apparent from the moment stylus hits groove, blessing music with agile bass and hf detail."

VERDICT		
SOUND	00000	
BUILD	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£299.00	
D		

An articulate-sounding cartridge with impressive high frequency resolve, but it sounds a little lightweight at times. Needs a high quality turntable and arm.

## ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

 Pear Audio Ltd, 7 Prospect Place, Almouth, Northumberland NE66 2RL
 (01665) 830862

## SPECIFICATIONS

Туре: то	oving coil
Weight:	8.6g
Output:	0.25mV
Recommended tracking force:	2g

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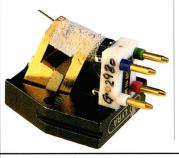
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## LYRA Lydian Beta

his is the entry-level cartridge from Lyra, a specialist brand made in Tokyo by Scan-Tech. It's an 'open' design, its innards exposed by the omission of a main body housing, and therefore demands particular care when handling. But it is an extremely well crafted cartridge, fashioned from high quality materials - as befits the most expensive model in this group.

LYRA LYDIAN BETA

The Lyra's upper body is machined from a solid block of aircraft-grade aluminium alloy, while boron is used for the cantilever. Output is medium for



a moving coil cartridge, and a mirror-faced template is included to aid set-up.

## SOUND QUALITY

This is the highest priced cartridge here – it's also the best sounding. Its performance is crisp, clean and dynamic, full of engaging punch and snap, yet it remains smooth and coherent with everything that's played. Levels of energy and detail are well stocked, and soundstage depth is superb – the sense of perspective it brings to large-scale orchestral pieces is absorbing. Any criticisms at the price? Very few, save for a slight slowing in the bass and perhaps a little lack of

'air'. And despite costing about half as much, one or two other cartridges here can run it reasonably close. But its sound is so satisfyingly musical, so energetic yet so poised, that its price is undoubtedly justified. **TB**  "Performance is crisp, clean and dynamic, full of engaging punch and snap, yet it remains smooth and coherent."

SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£599.00
and thoroughly deser	ning of
Recommendation. ■ ONE YEAR GUAR/ Path Premier, Unit Park, Desborough Park Bucks. HP12 3BG 1 (01494) 441736	ANTEE 2, Desborough Ind. Road, High Wycombe
Recommendation. ■ ONE YEAR GUAR/ Path Premier, Unit Park, Desborough Park Bucks. HP12 3BG 1 (01494) 441736	ANTEE 2, Desborough Ind.
Recommendation. ■ ONE YEAR GUAR/ ⊠ Path Premier, Unit Park, Desborough Park Bucks. HP12 3BG ☎ (01494) 441736 ■ Type:	ANTEE 2, Desborough Ind. Road, High Wycombe CATIONS moving coi
Recommendation. ■ ONE YEAR GUAR/ Path Premier, Unit Park, Desborough Park Bucks. HP12 3BG 2 (01494) 441736 SPECIFIC	ANTEE 2, Desborough Ind. Road, High Wycombe CATIONS

## **ORTOFON** MC 10 Supreme

ORTOFON MC 10 SUPREME 🎯 Visit Our Website: www.hifichoice.co.uk

• rtofon is a true giant of cartridge manufacture with a prestigious past and one simple aim for the future – to be the last company still engaged in cartridge manufacture when all the others are finally swamped by the digital revolution. At this rate, its chances are good: sales are up on last year and cartridges like this keep it firmly in the driving seat.

The basic moving coil MC 10 design has been around for over 20 years, and the Supreme is its pinnacle thus far. Both substantial body and cantilever are fashioned from aluminium, and internal features include a rubber suspension system and a static-reducing carbon fibre plate attached to the armature. You save



£30 by partexchanging any other cartridge, or up to £60 if you trade in an Ortofon.

## SOUND QUALITY

This is a smooth yet detailedsounding cartridge in possession of an expressive midrange, able to separate instruments cleanly and project vocals with aplomb. Its performance is full-bodied and musical, a touch colourful perhaps but an enjoyably cultured listen across a variety of music types. Perhaps the whole is more than

Perhaps the whole is more than the sum of its parts – treble is a

#### touch wispy

and bass slightly muted, and there's less snap and air to its sound than offered by some of its price competition. But it's a more consistent performer and less musically fussy, proving adept at everything from rock to classical.

A fine all-rounder, then, and well suited to a very wide range of turntables. **TB**  "This is a detailedsounding cartridge, able to separate instruments cleanly and project vocals with aplomb."

## VERDICT SOUND OCCO BUILD OCCO VALUE OCCO PRICE £300.00

A full and cultured-sounding cartridge with collective attributes that far outweigh its shortcomings. A capable all-rounder indeed.

## ONE YEAR GUARANTEE

Henley Designs Ltd, The Old Coach
 House, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford,
 Oxon OX10 8EH
 (01491) 834700

SPECIFICATIONS		
🔳 Туре:	moving coil	
Weight:	10.7g	
Output:	0.5mV	

2g

Recommended tracking force:

## **RESON** Reca

he Reca is the only moving magnet cartridge in this group – most fall below this kind of price level – but it's actually a bit of a stonker. If its form looks familiar there's a logical reason: it's based on Goldring's evergreen 1000 Series, and so joins a prestigious line including Roksan's Corus Black.

Construction is simple but effective. A light, rigid polyesterbased material called 'pocan' is used for its one-piece body casing, coupled with the well regarded Gyger S diamond-tipped stylus. It comes at a £130 premium over the standard 1032, apparently owing to higher tolerance parts and strict diamond quality control, but there's a £65 price cut if you





trade in an old cartridge at the same time.

## SOUND QUALITY

Anyone who thinks that moving magnet designs are necessarily inferior to moving coils should listen to the Reca – it's good enough to give plenty of MC models in the £200-£400 bracket a run for their money. It's a spirited performer that puts heart and soul into music, underpinned by solid bass and an enjoyably rhythmic character, and does so without edginess.

Resolution is good, but it's not the most transparent cartridge for the money, and soundstage depth front-to-back is a little constrained. But, with a rhythmic groove resting beneath its stylus tip, its controlled expression makes such subtle omissions easy to ignore. **TB**  "Anyone who thinks that moving magnet designs are inferior to moving coils should listen to this – it's good enough to give plenty of MC models a run for their money."

VERDICT		
SOUND	00000	
BUILD	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£250.00	
E If waying after	high quality maying	

If you're after a high quality moving magnet cartridge, they don't get much better than this.

THREE YEAR GUARANTEE

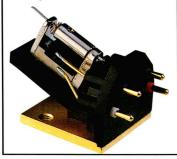
Virtual Reality Audio Systems Ltd, 31
 Alfred Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4BT
 (01277) 227355

SPECIFICATIONS		
🗖 Туре:	moving magnet	
Weight:	6.3g	
Output:	6.5mV	
Recommended tracking	force: 1.65g	

## **SUMIKO** Blue Point Special

ts name sounds like a cigarette, but it's actually an open-bodied, high-output moving coil cartridge, top-of-the range in Sumiko's Oyster Series. Its skeletal construction makes it the most vulnerable of this group, but its overall structure is sound – complete with aluminium cantilever – and electrical engineering is impressive throughout.

The Special is an upgrade from the standard £119.95 Blue Point, incorporating an uprated generator exposed behind the stylus. A brush is included for cleaning, but there's no stylus guard – Sumiko claims removing and reinstalling it makes damage more likely. Fair point, given the cartridge's delicate disposition.



## SOUND QUALITY

min

This is probably one of the most enjoyable cartridges I've tried below £300: pacey and dynamic, crisp and to the point, able to pull musical life from the grooves in toe-tapping fashion. It exudes a no-nonsense kind of sound, playing the notes and hitting the rhythms without unnecessary dressing, soaring through tracks with eager aplomb.

From House of Love to Sibelius, it proved an engaging performer. Bass has pleasing authority and drive, and it passes the percussive test with ease – snapping snares and solid kick drums are an

8315

Point

instant hit. At times it's a touch rough around the edges, and one or two competitors offer better front-to-back perspectives and some buyers may prefer a richer balance. But for me, this Sumiko's direct musical statement makes it a Best Buy at the price. **TB**  "This cartridge is pacey, dynamic, crisp and to the point, able to pull musical life from the grooves in toetapping fashion."

## VERDICI

VERDICI		
SOUND	00000)	
BUILD	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£249.95	
A no-nonsense pe	erformer with	
engaging musical properties. It's one of		
the best around below £300.		
ONE YEAR GUAR	ANTEE	
Path Premier, Unit		
	Road, High Wycombe,	
Bucks, HP12 3BG	noud, mgn mycombe,	
☎ (01494) 441736		
SPECIFICATIONS		
■ Туре:	moving coil	
Weight:	9g	
Output:	2.5mV	

RESON RECA

2g

Recommended tracking force:

# **URNTABLES & CARTRIDGES** NCLUSION

his review is intended as an examination of four high-profile contenders in today's vinyl world. Direct comparison between them is made difficult by their scattered prices and varied package deals; for instance, Pro-ject throws a tonearm in with its £750 deck, and gives heavy discounts on Ortofon cartridges to make the complete puchase considerably easier. Meanwhile, Michell's new effort is considerably more costly, weighing in at £1,725 before you've even considered a partnering arm and cartridge.

However, we have sought to illustrate exactly what you get for your money these days, and whether any extra cash is really worth paying. And we're so good to you, we've even attached a select round-up of six suitable cartridges for your delectation, priced from £250 to £600.

A good turntable manufacturer takes a variety of earthly elements, weaves them together with precision engineering and makes a transcendent music machine altogether more celestial. Each of those gathered here is a well engineered design, and three in particular are excellent examples of the art.

"With turntables like these being made to feed the vinyl resurgence. the specialist niche that the LP now occupies looks set to continue for some time."

I can honestly say that this was among the most enjoyable tests I've undertaken for a very long time. I listen to vinyl (and CD) on a daily basis, but it's rare I get such a cast-iron excuse to trawl through my record collection and return to favourite after favourite, seeing out dusk and heading towards dawn. Ah, what bliss.

Of course, the advent of DVD-Audio and SACD might well shift the sonic benchmark once more. But with turntables like these still being made to feed the vinyl resurgence, and the healthy number of audiophile-standard 180g pressings emerging, the specialist niche that vinyl now occupies looks set to continue for some time. Both the DJ and audiophile fraternities still love the format more than any other, and true love will never die.

## THE BEST IN THE TEST

## TURNTABLES



MICHELL Orbe 'SE' (Above) Superb - no CD player costing less than a king's ransom comes close to its stunning realism and lucidity.

CARTRIDGES

DYNAVECTOR

(Right) Nimble footing and

fine overall transparency.

LYRA Lydian Beta

dynamic performance

(Right) Its crisp, clean and

easily justifies the price tag.

DV-20XL

WILSON BENESCH The Circle (Below) Excellent engineering and a beautifully balanced sound make this a top-notch mid-price deck.

> **PINK TRIANGLE** Tarantella II (Left) Quirky design, but the triangular Pink proves to be a totally engaging performer

## **RESON** Reca

(Right) A moving magnet cartridge to rival many

moving coil models. **SUMIKO** 

**Blue Point Special** (Right) An engaging, no-nonsense performer.

**ORTOFON** MC10 Supreme (Left) A full and cultured-sounding cartridge with collective attributes that far outweigh its shortcomings. A capable, consistent all-rounder.

MAKE	MICHELL	PINK TRIANGLE	PRO-JECT	WILSON BENESCH
MODEL	ORBE 'SE'	TARANTELLA	PERSPECTIVE	THE CIRCLE
PRICE	£1,725	£850.00	£750.00 (INC. ARM)	£795.00
SOUND	00000	00000	00000	00000
BUILD	00000		00000	00000
VALUE	00000	00000	00000	00000
GUARANTEE	5 years	1 year	2 year	2 year
PLATTER	carbon-damp. acrylic/vinyl comp.	acrylic	alloy/vinyl comp.	acrylic
SUSPENSION	compliant, sprung	compliant, sorbothane	compliant, sprung	non-compliant, carbon fibre
EXTERNAL PSU SUPPLIED?	yes	yes	no	no
SPEED CHANGE	electronic	electronic	motor interchange	manual belt lift
DUST COVER	no	no	yes	no

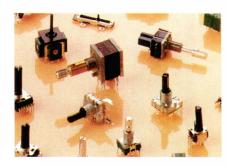
#### CARTRIDGES COMPARISON TAB LE

MAKE	AUDIO TECHNICA	DYNAVECTOR	LYRA	ORTOFON	RESON	SUMIKO
MODEL	AT-OC9ML	DV20XL	LYDIAN BETA	MC10 SUPREME	RECA	BPS
PRICE	£330.00	£299.00	£599.00	£300.00	£250.00	£249.95
SOUND	000000	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
BUILD	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
VALUE	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
GUARANTEE	1 year	1 year	1 year	1 year	3 years	1 year
ТҮРЕ	moving coil	moving coil	moving coil	moving coil	moving magnet	moving coil
WEIGHT	8g	8.6g	8g	10.7g	6.3g	9g
OUTPUT	0.4mV	0.25mV	0.5mV	0.5mV	6.5mV	2.5mV
REC. TRACKING FORCE	1.5g	2g	1.7g	2g	1.65g	3 2g

60 HI-FI CHOICE July/August 1999



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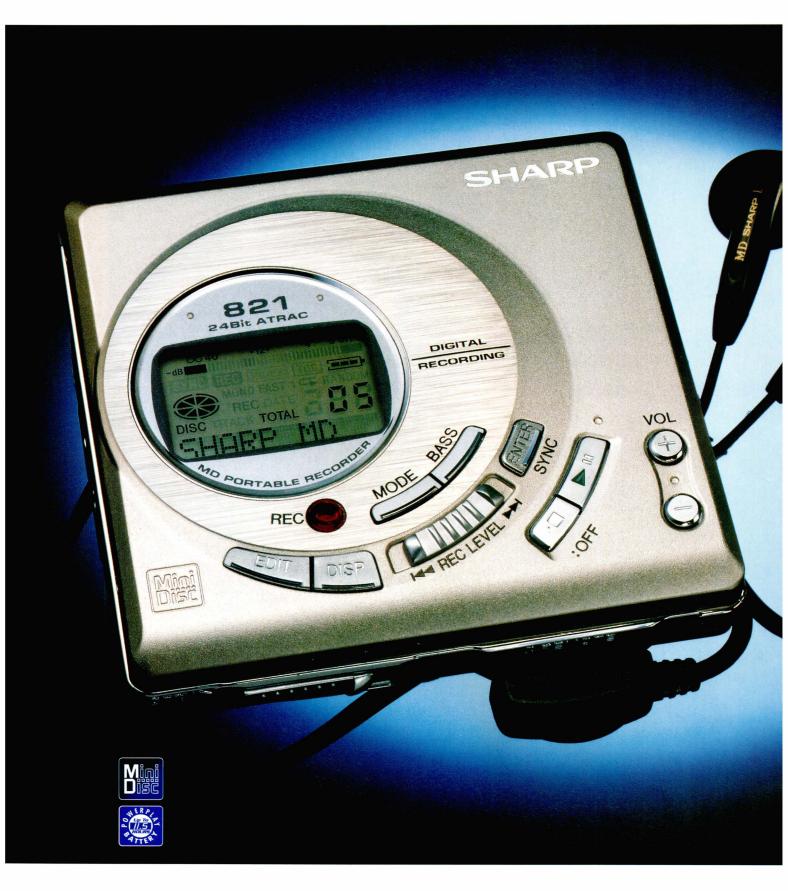
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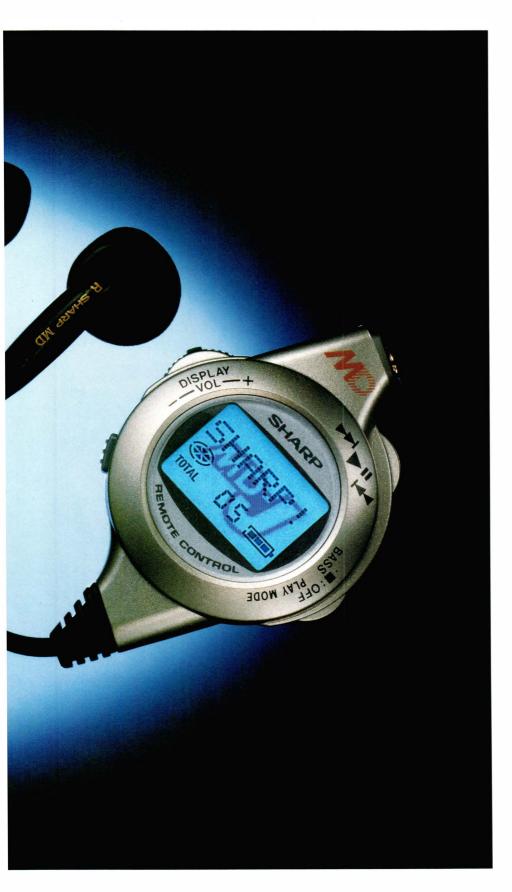








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THE CAST LIST		
Arcam Alpha 8R	£380.00	p78
Creek 4330	£279.00	p71
Denon PMA-535R	£229.99	p67
Edmund Audio ESI10	£400.00	p79
harman/kardon HK-6	30 £229.99	p68
Marantz PM-68	£299.90	p72
Myryad T-40	£399.95	<b>p80</b>
NAD C340	£269.50	p74
Pioneer A-607R	£300.00	p75
Yamaha AX-392	£169.95	<b>p69</b>

## GLOSSARY

DETAILED: A synonym for clarity, and indicates the sound allows access to background sounds, especially in the presence of louder foreground sounds which with lesser equipment tends to blot out or mask. DYNAMICS: The range between the loudest and the softest sounds on a recording. Also the audible level differences associated with subtle instrumental or vocal phrasing. WARM: The tonal balance associated with excess output in the mid to upper bass frequencies.

FORWARD: A forward sound is one in which the middle and upper middle frequencies sound more prominent than the bass or treble.

**GRAINY:** Many amplifiers (and other components) have what appears to be a roughness in the treble, often described as 'grainy'.

SYNTHETIC: Catch-all word for sound with the aural fingerprint of the means of reproduction. A loudspeaker may sound box-like for an example, or an amplifier metallic or grainy. FLAT: The perceived absence of a depth dimension, also used to describe an apparent lack of dynamic range. THIN: An excessively treble-rich balance, or one which is lacking in midband presence.

**CONTROL:** Best identified by its absence in amplifiers whose output is modulated by factors other than the music, for example a power supply that 'ducks' each time a loud passage comes along.

his test examines a representative group of new budget amplifiers priced between £169 and £400 – starter territory for an amplifier if you want a result that corresponds to accepted ideas of high fidelity.

An integrated amplifier is simply a box that boosts the low level output of your music sources to a level suitable for driving speakers. Boosting line sources like compact disc players is a matter of applying uniform gain across the audio frequency spectrum, but phono sources require extra gain and frequency-related equalisation – a more complex and costly task.

Now that vinyl is essentially a legacy medium, many amplifiers omit phono inputs altogether, or make it an option via a plug-in module, which means you only pay for the facility if you want to use it. Some amps continue to fit phono inputs as standard, but there's a real possibility this will take a hit on overall performance compared with a dedicated line level amplifiers at the same price.

The issue of exactly what amplifiers do with the signal before handing it over to the loudspeaker terminals continues to be a matter of hot debate.

Mass-market manufacturers continue to feel obliged to include the kind of facilities that they believe the market wants, which means tone controls, loudness controls (another tone control), and usually a bypass or direct switch to take them out of circuit.

It's a sensible compromise on paper, but the reality is that tone controls and bypass switches still affect the signal path for the worse, even if they're not being used – although this is not, of course, to say that all tone controlfree amplifiers necessarily sound better. Another factor is good physical build, which can have an impact on sound quality.



The remaining differences are down to the inherent integrity and talent of those who build the amplifiers, which still leaves a lot of variables and a wide spectrum of performance standards.

Music reproduction can be exciting and engaging – it should fill the senses and be capable of suggesting almost any emotion. Good music, well reproduced, should even be dangerous with the right material, and a good hi-fi system is completely and utterly dependent on the quality of the amplification.

Finally, and this is a personal yardstick, a worthwhile amplifier should act as an advocate for difficult and unfamiliar music.



GROUP A	£169-£230
GROUP B	£231-£300
GROUP C	£301-£400

## THE PRICE BANDS

We divide our candidates into groups based on price (see right). Each band is colour-coded as above.

## HINTS & TIPS Like elastic bands, amps

need to be stretched before they fulfil themselves. They need running in (which may take a week), and warmed up prior to each listening session (typically for an hour). Amplifiers also sound best when used on proper equipment supports, ideally with no other component on the same surface, or perched on top. If an amp must be stacked with other equipment, put it on top to ensure proper heat dissipation. If tone controls are fitted, set them to zero (12 o'clock), and bypass them if possible. If there is a direct input switch, so much the better.

## AMPLIFIERS GROUP A

There are few obvious parallels in this trio other than the selling price, although all are the progeny of mainstream companies and all are at least moderately well equipped. The honour of providing the least expensive amplifier in the test goes to Yamaha for its AX-392, which is typically well turned-out and surprisingly powerful for an amp that only costs £170. The harman/kardon HK-630 is from its new range, and is very much a chip off the old block, with an extended bandwidth, comparatively high-current design. The Denon PMA-535R seems to have it all: strong features, remote control, a healthy power output and technology derived from previous audiophile-oriented models. Denon PMA-535R £229.99 harman/kardon HK-630 £229.99 Yamaha AX-392 £169.95

## AMPLIFIERS GROUP B £231-£300

Four very disparate amps make up our middle group. The one which appears best geared to audiophiles on a budget is the Creek 4330, a surprisingly compact amplifier which can be specified with a variety of options, making it an amp that can suit almost any system.

The Marantz PM-68 and the Pioneer A-607R are more fully equipped as standard, and ostensibly have more mainstream appeal - especially the Marantz, which is the first non-SE or KI Signature model we've looked at for a while. The NAD C340 extends the reach of the recently reviewed C320, and includes the same impedance-matching circuitry that helps make light work of potentially troublesome loudspeaker loads. Creek 4330 £279.00 Marantz PM-68 £299.90 **NAD C340** £269.50 Pioneer A-607R £300.00

## AMPLIFIERS GROUP C £301-£400

The top group in the test includes an improved version of an existing model from a brand with one of the highest recognition factors of any specialist hi-fi manufacturer -Arcam. The Alpha 8R looks like just another warmed-over Arcam, and is virtually indistinguishable from existing and previous Arcam amps, but that isn't the whole story. The other two amplifiers are from much younger companies. Myryad has been in existence for a few years and has grown rapidly. The T-40, a well built and attractively packaged minimalist design, is its entry-level amplifier. The Edmund ESI10 is even more simply equipped, and is the launch product from a new brand associated with **REL of subwoofer fame.** Arcam Alpha 8R £380 00 Edmund ESI10 £400.00 Myryad T-40 £399.95

## HOW THE TESTS WERE DONE

The amplifiers were subject to the standard battery of tests, including a close physical examination, and unsighted panel based listening tests in a high-grade system chosen to extend the amps fully without being unrealistic electrically or sonically.

Hands-on (sighted) listening employed a range of speakers and CD players and Paul Miller's computerised measurement test programme. Each player was thoroughly run-in and warmed up prior to being auditioned, and kept running during the panel test runs to keep the AC mains condition consistent. Two days of panel testing included a large number of repeats, with no panel member knowing the identity of the amplifier on test, and with levels matched between test runs. The system used for these tests

included Wilson Benesch ACT Two loudspeakers for the unsighted tests and others including Tannoy R1 and R2 (the new floorstanding version of the R1) for the other tests.

The ACT Two isn't completely representative of the kind of speaker that would be used with amplifiers such as the test group, but they have a conventional floor column bandwidth, are neither hard to drive nor insensitive and, well, they sound damn good – as you might expect for about £9,000.

The main CD player was a Primare D30.2. Speaker cables and interconnects

were from Nordost, including the new Quattrofil screened cable.

#### THE LISTENING PANEL

Thanks as always go to the men and, well, more men of our listening panel, industry luminaries one and all, who contributed their listening skills and time for the greater good – and the promise of a free lunch. This month's batch of celebs included David Inman (Castle Acoustics), Steve Cross (Ruark Loudspeakers), Mike Martindale (Arcam) and Lee Dunkley (*Hi-fi Choice* panel virgin of the month, although he has had extensive experience with panel testing for The Consumers' Association). This time we decided to break the habit of a lunchtime – then we thought: 'Oh, what the hell,' and ate at the local Pizza Express anyway.

#### WHAT MUSIC DID WE USE?

Claire Martin *Riverman* from *Take My Heart* (Linn Records AKD 093) Paula Cole *Tiger* from *This Fire* (Warner Bros 9 46424-2) Weber *Clarinet Quintet allegro* – Anthony Michaelson etc (MF028) Prokofiev *Piano Concerto No 1 in D Flat, Op 10 allegro brioso* – Martha Argerich/Charles Dutoit/Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal (EMI 5 56654 2 3).

In addition, a number of other titles were used for hands-on testing.

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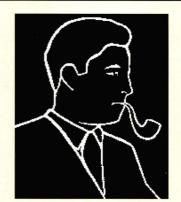
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# DENON PMA-535R

ith the benefit of hindsight, it seems that Denon might want to have its DENON cake and eat it. This new model, based (it says here) on the UK Audiophile series and the S-1 high-end range, boasts an impressive roster of audiophile attributes including nonscanning microprocessors, quality selected passive components, a 'leakage-cancelling' power transformer and proprietary high current output transistors matched to a full gadget set, remote control and typically nondescript mid-market physical build.

The well stuffed front panel includes bass and treble controls, loudness, a 'source direct' switch to undo some of the damage wreaked by the others, a record select speaker switching for two speaker pairs and a headphone switch. There is also a record selector which allows the phono, CD, tuner or aux/DVD input to be used as a tape source independently of the main input selector, or which can be used to copy from Tape 1 to 2 or vice versa. There are six inputs, one of which is a moving magnet phono input.

Last but not least, the amplifier is supplied with a chunky but compact full-system remote which covers input selection and volume setting, and just one option missing from the native controls on the amplifier proper, namely mute. The speaker selection sockets are, in fact, screw-down terminals which accept bare wires,

"The well stuffed front panel includes bass and treble controls, loudness. a 'source direct' switch to undo some of the damage wreaked by the others, a record select speaker switching for two speaker pairs and a headphone switch."

but they're none too robust and 4mm plugs can't be reliably connected. Indeed, the whole amplifier is lightly built.

#### SOUND QUALITY

One panel member summed this amplifier up in one pithy sentence. 'The bits are all there,' he declared following the Prokofiev piano concerto excerpt. 'They just need assembling with more care.' The Denon is an effective performer in many ways, with musical detail practically falling over itself to

make its way through the system, but it can sound rather flaky.

'A bit flat and uninspiring' and 'thin in places' were typical verdicts, but there was also a smattering of more positive comments. 'The voice sounds in control' (Paula Cole), and 'this amplifier does all the things it should do' were two, while another panellist wrote about sibilance in the Claire Martin track, but on balance considered that it was 'offset by other qualities'. The Martin vocal is recorded very close and any tendency to sibilance is usually all too obvious, and indeed there were several mentions of this from the panel in each of the two presentations.

Hands-on testing placed the Denon in the bottom half of this group, trailing the harman/kardon. When warmed up, the Denon tended to sound like many amps do when used cold: emphasising transients, and lacking body and depth, with a rather flattened impression of image depth and a slightly insubstantial quality, especially with larger speakers, though there was never any shortage of real world power.

be avoided.

4 NOISE

A good features count turns out to be the PMA-535R's principal asset.

#### CONCLUSION

This is a long way from being a poor amplifier, but it leaves something unsaid and sometimes sounds a bit garbled in the telling. The problem isn't so much these failings, but that the Denon is up against very solid competition at about the same price, and in some cases even below. A good features count, including a well equipped back panel and remote control, turns out to be the PMA-535R's principal asset. AG

#### VERDICT SOUND 00000 BUILD **೧೧**೧೧೧ VALUE 00000 £229.99 PRICE Allegedly based on the UK-oriented Audiophile range, the reality is suspiciously close to standard midmarket, international model standards. TWO YEAR GUARANTEE 🖾 Hayden Laboratories Ltd, Hayden House, Chiltern Hill, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 9UG (01753) 888447

## THE LAB REPORT

enerally, the PMA-535R is a fairly Utraditional, mass-produced remotecontrolled amp with no significant flaws and, equally, no great claim to technical fame. Noise is about 'average' at -83dB (re. 1Watt/8 Ohms), channel balance is very good at 0.2dB over a 60dB range and the low 0.07 Ohm output impedance assists its compatibility with different speakers.

Distortion increases to a maximum of 0.05 per cent at high frequencies (re 8 Ohms) but, in this amp, is current-related. Specifically, it reaches a minimum of 0.03 per cent, 0.04 per cent and 0.08 per cent



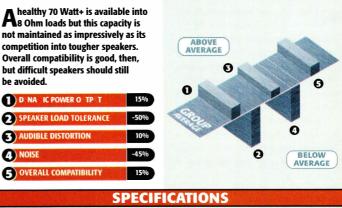
into loads as low as 4, 2 and 1, respectively, when delivering between 3-4A current.

Lower current means more crossover distortion and higher current means greater stress, both resulting in steadily increasing levels of distortion. With a difficult 4 Ohm speaker, for example, this suggests the PMA-535R gives its ideal performance at just 2-5 Watt output.

This might not seem very much, but it's a very typical mean power level for any amplifier driving sensitive speakers (90dB+) to moderate listening levels.

This amp packs more than a few Watts when necessary. In practice, it will deliver 101W, 180W, 182W (9.5A) and 98W (9.9A) into 8, 4, 2 and 1 Ohm loads, respectively, under dynamic conditions to 1 per cent THD. PMi

## **HOW IT COMPARES**



SPECIFICATIONS			
SPECIFICATION	RATED	ACTUAL	
Continuous power output, 8 Ohms	50W	75W	
Distortion 20Hz-20kHz, 1Watt/8 Ohm	0.01%	0.05%	
Input sensitivity (CD/Aux)	150mV	147mV	

July/August 1999 HI-FI CHOICE 67

#### MEGA TEST AMPLIFIERS £169-£230

harman/kardon

HK 630

# MAN/KARDON HK-630

he HK630 is a lowcost integrated

ARMAN

/KARDON

HK-630

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amplifier with a power amp rated at 40 Watts/channel (8 Ohms), which increases modestly to 60 Watts into 4 Ohms, albeit at a slightly higher distortion level. On the whole, this is a straightforward amplifier, but the front panel styling is individual and effective.

There are some specific claims relating to the amp's HCC (High instantaneous Current Capability) circuit, for example, which claims to deliver up to 40 amps peak, and relating to the wide bandwidth, low negative-feedback topology and to the use of discrete components instead of integrated circuits, all of which have been standard harman/ kardon fare for a long time.

The control set includes bass and treble controls, independent switching for two pairs of speakers and a source direct switch. The number of inputs is limited to four at line level, including tape and a moving magnet phono input. Tape monitoring is possible and headphones can be connected.

Around the back, you'll find two sets of 4mm binding post speaker terminals (a welcome sight on a budget amplifier), input sockets and preamp out and main amp input sockets, with NAD-style easily removable links. Although this does enhance flexibility - for example, providing an easy way of connecting an outboard Dolby or

"Although not the optimum choice for use with larger speakers, the little harman/kardon always seemed in control, with crisp bass lines and even crisper upper harmonics and treble detail."

other processor - there's no ready way to attach a second amplifier for biamping purposes.

Included with this amplifier is a remote control handset which will operate the basics of a complete harman/kardon system.

#### SOUND QUALITY

There were complaints that the HK-630 was a 'bit artificial' and 'lacked detail' and also that it was 'lacking balls' (whatever that might mean). There were consistent comments that it tended to sound rather 'spiky', a point made about the strings in the Weber and also about the Claire Martin vocals by two panellists.

But on the whole, these were seen as cosmetic failings in an amplifier that was generally lifelike and communicated enthusiasm in the music. So 'the Claire Martin track moves along and expands nicely', the powerful Paula Cole bass line 'remains in control in a way that eludes a number of the other amplifiers', while another panellist compared the HK-630 with a previously auditioned, and fairly well-liked amplifier at a similar price, and concluded it was 'much better, with more impact and detail' and had a 'stronger, more focused soundstage'.

Although not the optimum choice for use with larger speakers, the little harman/kardon always seemed in control, with crisp bass lines and even crisper upper harmonics and treble detail. The two frequency extremes sometimes overshadowed the midband, which consequently seemed a little two dimensional, and perhaps also accounts for the earlier comments that this amplifier was a little raw.

But the overall impression remains positive: this is an amplifier that generally contrived to sound tuneful and detailed and

#### O This is a straightforward amp, but the front panel styling is distinctive.

was capable of keeping several balls in the air at once without muddle or congestion.

#### CONCLUSION

The HK-630 won't set the world alight – it's a little too raw and undisciplined for that – but it is Recommended as a cracking budget design, with a clarity and a joi de vivre that set it apart from the crowd and which retains a strong measure of clarity even when the music becomes dense and complex. Just avoid brash, forward-sounding speakers. AG

VER	DICT
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£299.99
Well conceived an	mp has energy
tempered with control	ol, but can be strong
stuff with unsympath	netic ancillaries.
TWO YEAR GUAR	RANTEE
🖾 Gamepath Ltd, 25	Heathfield, Stacey
Bushes, Milton Keynes	MK12 6HR

## THE LAB REPOR

301W (17.4A)

respectively,

arman quotes a number of interesting figures for its diminutive HK630, including some +/-40A of 'High Instantaneous Current Capability'. The fact that this 40A isn't referenced to any particular amount of distortion nor the term 'instantaneous' linked to any quantifiable length of time, suggests it be taken quite loosely.

For all we know, this '40A' could only be available for a fraction of a millisecond at tens of per cent distortion. Back in the real world, we discover that the HK630 is capable of 90W, 161W, 262W (11.5A) and



Despite its modest 40W rating, this amplifier is actually better able to drive a wider range of speakers than its competition in this test.

It's a powerful and resilient design with no significant foibles to mar its performance.

#### **POWER OUTPUT** D) DY

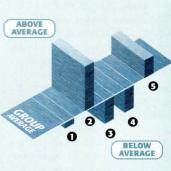
SPECIFICATION

2 SPEAKER LOAD TOLERANCE	60%
<b>3</b> AUDIBLE DISTORTION	-30%
4 NOISE	-30%
S OVERALL COMPATIBILITY	25%

Continuous power output, 8 Ohms

Distortion 20Hz-20kHz, 1W/8 Ohms

Input sensitivity (CD/Aux)



ACTUAL

65W

0.02%

168mV

SPECIFICATIONS

RATED

<0.09%

150mV

40W

# 2 (01908) 317707 **HOW IT COMPARES**



EPORT
NW (17.4A) into 8, 4, 2 and 1 Ohm loads, spectively, at <1 per cent THD/10msec.
This is well short of the mystical 40A but

still exceedingly generous for a budget

amp, as long as you appreciate that any

'grunt' in excess of 9A is accompanied by

at least 0.3 per cent THD. Still, most loud-

speakers will be generating higher distor-

tion when dealing with these momentary

peaks in power. Distortion is a benign

second harmonic for much of the time and

there's very little variation (just 10dB) across the audio spectrum. Good news for sound quality, although the very extended response (only -1.6dB at 100kHz) leaves it wide open to the ultrasonic rubbish kicked out by some CD players. Some variation in performance might therefore be expected. PMi

# YAMAHA AX-392

AHAMAY

0

e've already tested the Yamaha AX-592, the AX-392's senior partner, and which shares most of its basic design, although the control set is slightly slimmed-down.

A fairly bulky model, Yamaha hasn't spared the horses with the front panel design, which comes complete with a flap-down aluminium door which conceals the lesser-used controls. There aren't too many of them with this design, though: just the standard bass, treble and balance controls, and the control described in the AX-592 review as 'redundant, a variable loudness control.

The senior model also boasted two separate bypass controls, but there's just one here, a CD direct switch to bypasses the bass, treble, balance and loudness circuits – but only for the source component connected to the CD input. Front panel controls other than those described include a rotary input selector, balance, a tape monitor switch and two switches for the two independent loudspeaker circuits. Yamaha has also fitted a headphone socket.

Rear panel fittings include no surprises other than the kind you probably don't want to find – namely, screw terminals for the loudspeakers that don't readily accommodate 4mm plugs.

Build quality is lightweight and slightly rattly, although control feel is good. A simple system remote control handset completes the package. There are just two other feature of note: one is the healthy 60 Watt/channel rated power output, the other is the low selling "Yamaha hasn't spared the horses with the front panel design, which comes complete with a flap-down aluminium door which conceals the lesser-used controls. There aren't too many of them with this design, though."

price. At £170, this is the least expensive model in the group.

#### SOUND QUALITY

The general panel view, and this was certainly reflected in my hands-on listening, is that the Yamaha AX-392 is an amplifier that tends to underplay its hand a little. It's rather forward in balance, yet it has a rather soft and sometimes even indistinct bass.

From the hands-on testing, the various speakers that were deployed to test the amplifier sometimes seemed to be its master rather than the other way around, so it was often difficult to pin its characteristics down firmly.

Adjectives like 'anaemic' and 'unresponsive' made occasional appearances in the panel comments, but it was also described in more benign terms such as 'fairly detailed and warm in presentation' and 'a good balance, if a bit lazy and rounded'.

There were a few more positive – if slightly maverick – comments, including 'deep, controlled bass, and good diction' and 'relaxed and flowing feel', along with this sumup comment: 'There's a degree of subtlety here that's been missing so far – easy listening.'

From the hands-on sessions, the comments about a 'deep controlled' bass seem slightly out of kilter, but the general verdict – that the amplifier was at worst inoffensive and at best fairly detailed and enjoyable, if slightly bogged down by the wider bandwidth speakers in the test – seems about right. In particular, the midband is open, detailed and fairly uncoloured, and with compact speakers of moderate sensitivity, this is a good choice. • Price worked against the AX-592, but the opposite applies with this model.

#### CONCLUSION

The AX-392 wasn't described in quite the same glowing terms as the AX-592, but where price worked against the dearer model, the opposite applies here. Given the very attractive selling price, the Yamaha is good enough to warrant a second – and perhaps third – look. There's nothing to set the market for sub-£200 amplifiers alight here, but it's a decent enough performer. AG

## 

SOUND	
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£169.95

This neat and uncomplicated amplifier might fail to set the audiophile antennae aquiver, but it makes enjoyable music and its failings should not present a problem.

TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

☑ Yamaha Electronics UK Ltd, 200 Rickmansworth Rd, Watford, Herts WD1 7JS
☑ (01923) 233166

## THE LAB REPORT

The amplifier is rated at 60 Watts per channel but will deliver some 92W, 153W, 200W (10A) and 186W (13.7A) into 8, 4, 2 and 1 Ohm loads under dynamic conditions up to 1 per cent THD. This seems healthy enough but there are obvious signs of VI-limiting (increasing distortion) as the amplifier drives loudspeaker loads tougher than 4 Ohm beyond 70 Watts or so.

Even in 'CD Direct' mode, distortion proved higher than expected at 0.07 per cent (20-20kHz, 0dBW). Of much greater concern is the nature of this distortion: a



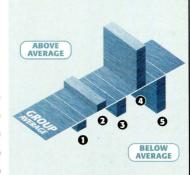
stream of high, odd-order harmonics that are rarely witnessed with amps but more commonly observed in under-par digital equipment. Combine these 'features' and you've a plausible explanation for the 'lazy sound' described by the panel.

We've noted the 2.9V input overload margin before with Yamaha amps, leaving it open to clipping – at any power level – when partnered with high (3V+) output CD players. Fortunately, these are few and far between, although margins closer to 10V remain a more typical target for most

manufacturers. Another feature of the earlier Yamahas is the amazingly low -93dB noise figure (re 1Watt/8 Ohms) – technically excellent but, in practice, may simply 'open the window' to the ravages of RFI. PMi

This amplifier's exceptionally wide
S/N ratio (low noise) might release
the full dynamics of some systems
but, by the same token, they might
simply reveal some rather less
hospitable distortion mechanisms
lying heneath

DYNAMIC POWER OUTPUT	-10%
SPEAKER LOAD TOLERANCE	10%
3 AUDIBLE DISTORTION	-20%
4 NOISE	55%
5 OVERALL COMPATIBILITY	-45%



SPECIFICATION	RATED	ACTUAL
Continuous Power Output, 8 Ohms	60W	70W
Distortion 20Hz-20kHz, 1W/8 Ohms	0.02%	0.07%
Input Sensitivity (CD/Aux)	150mV	180mV

HOW IT COMPARES

## <u>SUPRA</u>

EFF-ISL analogue "Best Buy"- Hi-Fi Choice, 04/9 EFF-IXLR balanced (XLR/XLR)

EFF-IXLR balanced (XLR/XLR) EFF-ID co-ax digital (phono/phono) EFF-IV 75 ohm video (phono/phono) DAC-X analogue (phono/phono) DAC-XLR AES/EBU digital (XLR/XLR) ZAC Fibre optic (TosLink) NEW for 1999



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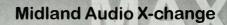
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# **CREEK AUDIO** 4330

he Creek 4330, reviewed previously in HFC 171 and retested following some minor internal modifications, is the smallest and neatest amplifier in the group. The front panel is home to a volume control, a rotary input selector, a tape monitor switch plus volume and power switching, and expanses of black brushed aluminium. The back panel includes side entry screw terminals which are best suited to bare wire terminations.

The 4330 has a passive preamplifier and a MOSFET output stage rated at 40 Watts, and with a high short-term peak current capability, and new, more benign current limiting. The circuit is servo controlled and DC coupled. MM and MC input boards are listed (£49 and £59), as is an active line board (£49) - not necessary with CD sources, but some tuners or cassette decks may require as much as 10dB extra gain.

There's even a line output and headphone output board (cost £55) in the extensive options list. The 4330 is also available with a remote control motorised volume pot and in a version with high grade alloy case and with a higher power output (50 Watts/channel) at £355 and £499 respectively.

The meagre input provision is limited to a moving magnet phono input which can be adapted for use as a line input, four line inputs and a tape circuit.

#### SOUND QUALITY

Something of a transformation seemed to come over this amp once it had been thoroughly run in and warmed up. What started life as a slightly coarse, dry sounding design blossomed into something more meaningful. It is still a little dry sounding, but it has a strong sense of control; it 'grabs the speakers and makes them move' as one put it, while another commented that 'this amplifier has a strong sense of drive'.

The hands-on listening wasn't guite so favourable to the Creek, mirroring the previous test. The 4330 is indeed a gutsy performer, with a propulsive quality and strong timing cues with the right kind of material, but it also seemed rather congested and lacking in ambience, and the lowest level of subtle detail seemed rather muted - the reason for the dryness, perhaps.

It's tempting to describe this as a rock music amp – indeed, one of the panel made just that point, although not completely seriously.

"Something of a transformation seemed to come over this amp once it had been thoroughly run in and warmed up. What started life as a slightly coarse. dry-sounding design blossomed into something more meaningful."

Our final remarks come from the panel. This amplifier delivers 'a full reproduction range, with no one frequency band favoured over any other'; 'it has a big sound, with widely spread soundstaging'; is 'an enjoyable amplifier that takes everything in its stride, although it is a little hard on the vocals' and 'it sounds very clean'.

## CONCLUSION

'Hands up' time: this amplifier performed significantly better in this test than on its previous outing, and although the reasons are not altogether clear, a system with an easier speaker load and

n paper, the 4330 might look like

O the least powerful unit in its

substantial reserves of current would

tend to suggest that it's better able

group. In practice, however, its

to cope with difficult speakers

DYNAMIC POWER OUTPUT

3 AUDIBLE DISTORTION

5 OVERALL COMPATIBILITY

SPEAKER LOAD TOLERANCE

than its peers.

#### O The 4330 has an extensive options list including motorised volume pot.

CREEK

with a higher resolving power may have helped, and a slightly underachieving group average may also have played a part. Here is an enjoyable design that takes everything in its stride and retains much of the passion and presence of the source, albeit a little short on subtle low level detail and recorded ambience.

The bottom line is of an enjoyable, credible design, and its compact nature, the simple control set and long options list are attractions in their own right. Recommended. AG

VERDICT		
SOUND	00000	
BUILD	00000	
VALUE	00000	
PRICE	£279.00	
	e, but sophisticated and if you take advantage	
• •	s list, the 4330 is an	
undeniably effective	e communicator.	

TWO YEAR GUARANTEE Creek Audio Ltd, 2 Bellvue Road, Friern Barnet London N11 3FR 2 (0181) 361 4133

## THE LAB REPORT

nice we last tested Creek's 4330 inte-S grated amp, this MOSFET-based design has witnessed some 're-management' of its power, although its overall character remains unchanged. Specifically, noise is very low at -90dB (re. 1 Watt/8 Ohms, Awtd) even if this does expose some slight sensitivity to RFI.

The volume control also experiences a loss in channel balance with errors of 3dB at -60dB, but the moderate 20kOhm input load, healthy >16V overload margin and relatively low 450mV sensitivity all promise good compatibility with today's high (2V) output CD players. Distortion, too, is

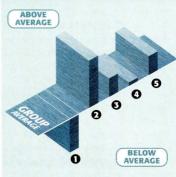


predominantly second harmonic in nature but increases from around 0.006 per cent midband to 0.06 per cent at HF.

Continuous power output is up from 40/65W into 8/4 Ohms to 50/85W, respectively, while the output impedance remains a usefully low 0.015 Ohms. Don't be fooled by its slim casework, because the 4330 is capable of sustaining musical peaks up to 71W, 136W and 248W (11.1A) into 8, 4 and 2 Ohm loads with a massive 339 Watts (that's 18.4A) into 1 Ohm. This is powerful stuff and, though broadly in line with the model of two years ago (HFC 171), it does hold up even more impressively through

> the important 4-2 Ohm region. Excellent tolerance of the most difficult speakers is assured. PMi

## **HOW IT COMPARES**



SPECIFICATIONS			
SPECIFICATION	RATED	ACTUAL	
Continuous Power Output, 8 Ohms	40W	50W	
Distortion 20Hz-20kHz, 1W/8 Ohms	0.05%	0.045%	
Input Sensitivity (CD/Aux)	400mV	445mV	

25%

25%

CREEK

A U D I O

4330

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#### MEGA TEST AMPLIFIERS £231-£300

# **MARANTZ** PM-68

arantz makes several ranges of amplifiers, often based on the same superstructure, as it were, but with different levels of hand-tweaking. They're sold under the SE or KI Signature (the highest level) banners or, as here, in standard versions without any special suffix.

The PM-68 is a powerful mid-market amplifier that sells for £300, which makes an interesting comparison with the PM-66, which offers little more than half the power, but in a much highergrade form, for £400 in KI Signature trim, or for £230 as the SE - amplifiers that received Best Buy and Recommended status respectively in previous issues.

As one of Marantz's larger and more powerful integrated amps, the PM-68 is an imposing product which weighs more than 12kg and is designed to deliver 95 Watts per channel into 8 Ohms, or 155 Watts into 4 Ohms from its LDPS (Linear Drive Power Supply).

There's no shortage of connection possibilities, with six line inputs (including two tape circuits), the ability to field two pairs of speakers singly or together, and a record selector that can be set to track the source selected for listening, or to copy from either tape input to the other.

There is also a record off position, but the best way to optimise sound quality is to use the 'source direct' switch to bypass the tone, tape select and balance controls. Headphones can be connected, and the speaker terminals are 4mm binding posts.

"The PM-68 is an imposing product which weighs more than 12kg and is designed to deliver 95 Watts per channel into 8 Ohms, or 155 Watts into 4 Ohms from its Linear Drive Power Supply."

The PM-68 is supplied with a full system remote which even includes basic controls for Philips code-compatible TVs, which could make it a handy choice in a simple TV-inclusive system.

#### SOUND QUALITY

There were mixed feelings from the panel about this amp, but it was clear by the end of the sessions that it lacked consistency and its balance made listening hard work with at least some programme material. A degree of

midband haziness and some loss of weight and focus were noted, along with a rather hard quality amounting, according to one, to 'shriekiness' with the Weber piece, in which the clarinet produces a sound particularly rich in high frequency harmonics.

By contrast, one listener felt the bass was lacking in weight and drive, while by other accounts the bass was 'a bit heavy handed' (Prokofiev). The same listener felt orchestral strings were 'very warm', although on second hearing he described the amp as 'messy'.

In separate hands-on testing, the Marantz did indeed sound a bit hard-nosed, with a prominent mid/top and a shallow, listless bass when used with extended bandwidth speakers. However, compact speakers (which tend to be less sensitive than big ones, and so are often prime candidates for amps such as this) performed rather more evenhandedly. Even at its best, though, the Marantz was less comfortable and organic than many, and the epithet 'hard work' seems about right.

at home

A) NOISE

O Marantz's Philips-compatible remote could be used in a TV-inclusive system.

#### CONCLUSION

The conclusion one is forced into on the evidence of the Marantz amplifiers we've looked at recently is that there is real benefit to be gained from the SE and KI Signature enhancement programmes. Most of them have a certain warmth and grace – unlike the PM-68, which is alarmingly prosaic in performance. Next please... AG

#### VERDICT SOUND (00000)BUILD 00000 VALUE 00000 PRICE £299.90 Big power, big features, but it's all achieved at the cost of subtlety and transparency. TWO YEAR GUARANTEE Marantz Hi Fi UK Ltd., Kingsbridge House, Padbury Oaks, 575-583 Bath Road, Longford, Middlesex UB7 OEH

(01753) 680868

## THE LAB REPORT

his richly-biased amplifier runs very warm but, thanks to the generous enclosure and substantive heatsinking, this waste energy is circulated efficiently away. Nevertheless, I wouldn't advise that the PM-68 be cooped up in any sort of 'hi-fi furniture', nor would it make an ideal repository for a CD player - unless, of course, you like your CDs well done.

The high bias and compensation both lead to very low levels of distortion (typically less than 0.004 per cent) right across the audioband at 1W/8 Ohm. The PM-68 is



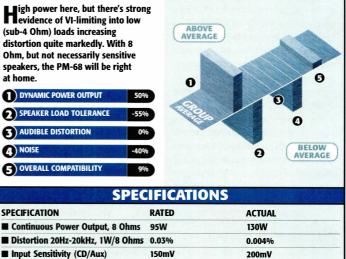
also evidently free of crossover 'nasties'. Noise is moderate at -85dB (re. 1W/8 Ohms, A-wtd) and the channel balance just acceptable at 1.3dB over a 60dB dynamic range. Separation, however, is truly excellent - just like Marantz's CD players, in fact.

The +7.3dB kick at a viciously low 2.3Hz (and not, as suspected, a sample fault) is a real surprise, however, that appears prior to (what I assume is) a DC servo.

This could cause problems with some reflex-loaded speakers, bearing in mind some music CDs have a relatively high sub-bass/DC content

And power? Plenty on tap, including 130W on a continuous basis, building to 165W, 300W, 345W (13.1A) and 169W (13A) into8, 4, 2 and 1 Ohm loads under dynamic conditions. PMi

## **HOW IT COMPARES**









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#### MEGA TEST AMPLIFIERS £231-£300

NAD

0

his is only the second NAD amplifier to

use the impedancesensing circuit premiered with the C320, and is designed to deliver lots of current into low impedance loads without starving higher impedance loudspeakers of voltage

drive. The amplifier measures the electrical parameters of the load, and switches secondary windings on the main transformer to suit. Earlier generations of NAD amps performed the same trick manually. The circuit employs long time constants to avoid unwanted hunting between the two states.

NAD doesn't spell it out quite like this, but the benefit is primarily cost-related. To deliver the same power into all kinds of load would otherwise mean a much bigger power supply, which would be bound to cost considerably more. Note the silent 'you' between 'cost' and 'considerably'.

Other design features include a quality motorised volume pot and lower levels of feedback than NAD normally employs - and it claims to use less than most anyway. The preamp output and main amp input are connected by removable links and switchable soft clipping is included, both standard NAD features.

The speaker relays are of a new type said to offer a longer lifespan than previous models, and some external components are of somewhat better quality according to NAD, including a thicker aluminium front panel and chassis, but the C340 case still feels rather rattly and insubstantial to us.

d Amplifier C 340

A system remote control is included and rear panel system link sockets are provided for use with other NAD components. Native controls include tone and tone defeat and a set of input selectors.

#### SOUND QUALITY

The C340 worked very well in combination with some obscenely expensive loudspeakers - not just the test Wilson benesch model, but also a more electrically punishing (if less aurally revealing) model from Eggleston Works.

With these speakers and others the NAD was capable of strutting its stuff, often at quite high volumes, without any sense of aural strain and with no apparent danger of overheating.

It should be said that the ability to cope electrically and to make music are two quite different skills, and the NAD's ability in the music stakes is of a very particular kind. best summed up by one panel member who noted that it was

'The NAD was capable of strutting its stuff, often at quite high volumes, without any sense of aural strain.'

'by no means a high resolution amplifier' and that it steered 'a safe [musical] path'. His sum-up remarks were to the effect that the NAD sounded 'quite musical and enjoyable, but not special'.

This represents pretty much the consensus and is precisely in tune with the hands-on listening. which showed the NAD to be consistently easy and smooth, with a real feeling for image depth - there seems to be just a subtle hint of excess in the upper bass and an equally subtle suggestion of HF roll-off – but lacking a little in bite and dynamics.

There were some remarks from the panel about occasional sibilance and hardness with voice, but they were occasional and did little to spoil the party.

some instances.

A) NOISE

DYNAMIC POWER OUTPUT

SPEAKER LOAD TOLERANCE

3 AUDIBLE DISTORTION

5 OVERALL COMPATIBILITY

• The C340 is consistently smooth, with a real feeling for image depth.

#### CONCLUSION

The C340 is another clear success for NAD, but this isn't an amplifier for everyman. The emphasis here is absolutely on its train-like ability to cope with just about any kind of load, and when plaving music it is the comfort factor that comes across, which is no bad thing for an amplifier destined for use with moderately priced source components and speakers. Recommended. AG

VER	RDICT
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£269.50
	is that this is a higher
power version of the passim, and it has	
	sentially unburstable
and euphonic.	
■ TWO YEAR GUA Market The Audio Club, 1	
Aylesbury, Bucks HP1	
<ul><li>(01296) 482017</li></ul>	19 JKI.

#### THE LAB REPORT

easured, as auditioned, in 'Soft-Clip' W mode, the C340 really does avoid the abrupt descent into distortion as the amp's output attempts to exceed the maximum voltage available from its rails. Instead, distortion slowly creeps up from 0.1 per cent at 55W/8 Ohms to 0.5 per cent at 65W and, finally, 1 per cent at 68W/8 Ohms.

This gives the impression of the C340 being more powerful, and perhaps more capable, than it really is, though with 86W, 169W and 310W (12.5A) available into 8, 4 and 2 Ohm loads under music-like conditions, it'll rarely get into trouble.

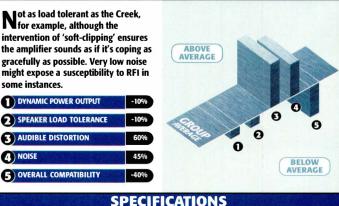


The dynamic output stops at 174W into 1 Ohm as the C340's protection circuitry cuts in at 13.2A.

Distortion is low and very consistent at 0.005 per cent through much of its dynamic range and across the full 20Hz-20kHz audio spectrum. Channel balance is excellent but input overload margins are only moderate at 5.6V. But noise is exceptionally low at -93dB (re. 1W/8 Ohms). This is some 10dB lower than many other amplifiers in this test and while technically impressive may actually serve to expose any rough-sounding RFI in unsympathetic systems and listening

environments (despite compliance with EMC regulations). This observation was made with Yamaha's AX-392 although, in other respects, the two amplifiers are auite different. PMi

#### **HOW IT COMPARES**



IFICATION	
RATED	ACTUAL
50W	62W
0.03%	0.005%
Not Given	297mV
	RATED 50W 0.03%

PIONEER

A - 6 0 7 R

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## **PIONEER** A-607R

he A-607R has a busy front panel with an almost symmetrical control lavout – a volume control is at the centre and there are a number of rotaries to take care of bass, treble, balance and source selection on each side.

Additional switching controls two pairs of speakers, the loudness circuit, tape monitoring, record selection (CD, tuner, source and off, which gives a noticeable improvement in sound quality), muting and direct, to bypass the tone, loudness and balance circuits. The controls are accompanied by enough LED telltales to turn night into day. Almost.

Design highlights include the use of a toroidal transformer (unusual in a chunky mainstream design such as this) and individual heatsink extrusions for each output power device to avoid high frequency linkage. There are also a number of features designed to reduce power consumption in standby (1 Watt) and in operating modes (such as a 'silent' control microprocessor, local off circuits for tone and phono inputs and the use of S-MOS logic devices, which operate without a base current, instead of digital transistors).

Intriguingly, although Pioneer doesn't make the connection in its literature, each of these factors ought to enhance sound quality. The main technical thrust of the amp, however, is the use of active devices called HEX power MOSFETS in the output stage

which, compared with normal MOSFETs, are claimed to offer a lower output impedance across a wider bandwidth, giving a better damping factor characteristic and improved linearity.

The screw-down speaker terminals fitted are not designed for 4mm plugs. The amplifier can be patched into a Pioneer system and the basic features controlled by the simple system handset.

#### SOUND QUALITY

One of the joys of reviewing highfidelity components is having your expectations confounded. The A-605R, the A-607R's younger brother, was only modestly successful in previous tests, but the A-607R turned out to be more than just a chip off the old black.

'I liked this one a lot. The Claire Martin track has a great sense of ease about it, and it really came across well, sleazy and relaxed as it should be, and with lots of detail,' said one panellist. Another agreed: 'It's very atmospheric, with lots of detail... I particularly liked the imaging, which is very open to me and atmospheric.

'The Pioneer is more than just well equipped, it also has authority, focus, good rhythmic drive and a strong sense of detail.'

The Pioneer's ability to conjure detail from the groove also attracted admiring comment, such as 'a nice sense of detail' (Prokofiev), although this might have been partly an artefact encouraged by a perceptibly bright tonal balance.

It's not the kind of brightness that makes you want to cover your ears,' as one remarked. And on the Weber piece: 'It's qualitatively different to others amplifiers, rather like taking a veil away'... where the track starts off as an unaccompanied vocal in a small studio acoustic, and then brings in changes filtering and special effects when the wham-bang stuff begins, it really sounds as the producer must have wanted it this way!

• The Pioneer A-607R turned out to be more than just a chip off the old block.

#### CONCLUSION

ECOMMEN

The Pioneer is more than just well/over-well equipped (delete as appropriate) and high-tech, it also has authority, focus and good rhythmic drive, along with a strong sense of detail.

It remains a little ragged compared with amplifiers like the ultra-accomplished Arcam Alpha 8R, but the clincher is attractive pricing and a high power yield. Recommended. AG

VER	DICT
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£300.00
A clear improvem this is punchy, articu the forward, bright s	late and balanced on
■ ONE YEAR GUAR	
House, Hollybush Hill, Berks SL2 4QP.	Stoke Poges, Slough,
(01753) 789789	

#### THE LAB REPORT

ike others of its ilk, this is another very well-built and ostensibly compatible design. Importantly, though, some 80W is available under continuous conditions into 8 Ohms, this increases by a healthy +2.6dB to 145W into 4 Ohms, suggesting Pioneer has specified a very 'stiff' power supply.

A maximum +3dB increase is possible, in theory. The corollary of this, in practice, is less dynamic headroom than might otherwise be anticipated. Hence, some 95W/180W is produced under dynamic conditions into 8/4 Ohms, respectively. However, Pioneer's electronic protection



does limit the amplifier's current output to around 12.5A into loudspeaker loads lower than 4 Ohms. This amounts to about 300W into 2 Ohms and 160W into 1 Ohm under dynamic conditions - enough for most musical instances, I'd suggest!

Otherwise, distortion increases from a low 0.003 per cent through midband frequencies to 0.06 per cent at high, treble frequencies. Noise is better than average at -89dB (re. 1W/8 Ohms), though 'average' for this group of unusually low-noise designs! Chunky, low-resistance cables are recommended to benefit from the A-607's low 0.03 Ohm output impedance which, in turn, renders the amp less susceptible to the peaks and troughs of the speaker's impedance trend (see Oasis, HFC 177). PMi

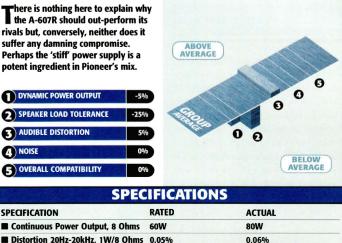
4 NOISE

SPECIFICATION

■ Input Sensitivity (CD/Aux)

#### **HOW IT COMPARES**

200mV



260mV

#### MIEGA TIEST AMPLIFIERS £301-£400

## **ARCAM** Alpha 8R

t's often more instructive to examine an amplifier from the back rather than the front, and the Alpha 8R is a case in point. Features include two sets of BFA speaker connectors, one of which is permanently connected and the other switchable. Another unusual item is a switch adjacent to the phono input which can be used to turn it into a line level input.

ARCAM

Best of all is a switch labelled 'processor/normal'. This operates with the AV/DVD input, converting it from a standard input into one that operates at fixed gain, and is intended to benefit those with AV systems, allowing the Alpha 8R to act as a slave main channel amp without the need to reset the input gain each time it's used.

From the front, the Alpha 8R looks just like most other recent Arcam hi-fi hardware, although there have been subtle detail improvements over the years. If it doesn't look exactly classy, the 8R does look well balanced and reasonably attractive.

Features include a five position rotary input selector, tape monitor switch, bass, treble and balance controls along with a direct switch

"A switch labelled 'processor/normal' operates with the AV/DVD input, converting it from a standard input into one that operates at fixed gain and is meant to benefit those with AV systems."

that bypasses the last three and delivers a small but significant improvement in sound quality.

Improvements to the 8R over the earlier Alpha 8 include an enhanced power supply, although the same toroidal transformer is specified, along with a higher grade volume control, still from Alps. Oh, and the Alpha 8P comes with a palm-sized remote control handset with just three buttons: volume up, down and mute.

#### SOUND QUALITY

All tests were conducted with the tone controls bypassed and using the unswitched speaker outlet.

Ine panel clearly liked this amp. 'A subtle and communicative amp, opined one, and this turned out to be almost the universal view. 'Clear, detailed and focused... light, airy and spacious." (Weber) and 'three dimensional, with rich tonal colours,' (Prokofiev) were other views, and there is a sheaf of other similar comments.

Carrie

There were some criticisms of a suggestion of sibilance in the Claire Martin track, for example but then, she does seem to be singing with the microphone stuffed deep inside her throat, and the Arcam may simply have been telling the truth. There were also some complaints about some hardness with some material, but they were not consistent enough to be a significant factor.

No such complaints arose in the hands-on tests, which simply served to underline the Arcam's overall strengths – in particular, its strong resolving power and almost architectural solidity and soundstage presence. These remained consistent factors with the full set of test loudspeakers, implying that it is comparatively insensitive to the nature of the load.

rcam has 're-voiced' its 8R by

should always have been...

1) DYNA IC POWER OUTPUT

2) SPEAKER LOAD TOLERANCE

3 AUDIBLE DISTORTION

5) OVERALL COMPATIBILITY

Continuous Power Output, 8 Ohms

Distortion 20Hz-20kHz, 1W/8 Ohms 0.01%

4 NOISE

SPECIFICATION

#### CONCLUSION

It doesn't always happen, but in many of the group test sessions there are products that simply stand out head and shoulders above the crowd. Recently we had one such gem with a Sony CD player, and in the Arcam 8R we have another.

Arcam doesn't claim to have done a great deal to improve this model over its predecessor, but seems confident that that little went a long way, and this certainly seems well justified in our tests. An easy Best Buy. AG

VE	RDICT
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	<b>£380.00</b>
	ement on previous cam amplification, this

drives anything short of the 12:15 from Paddington with conviction and flair. TWO YEAR GUARANTEE A&R Cambridge Ltd, Pembroke Avenue, Denny Industrial Centre, Waterbeach,

Cambridge CB5 9PB 2 (01223) 440964

#### THE LAB REPORT

n the two-and-a-half years since we tested Arcam's original Alpha 8 (HFC 162), its designers have added a remote control and tickled-up the small-signal circuitry in a bid to improve sound quality. In practice, PCB revisions have worsened stereo separation (66dB from 83dB at 1kHz) and, despite the improved volume control, far worse channel balance errors of 3.5dB at -60dB. On the other hand, distortion has decreased by about 5dB across the audioband, even if there's still a significant difference (0.002 to 0.06 per cent) from midband to high, treble frequencies.

THERE INTER

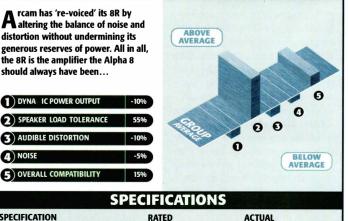
Interestingly, its S/N ratio has actually decreased from 88dB to 85dB in this instance and may tend to blanket any RFI that might otherwise harden its sound.

The 8R remains very powerful indeed, offering some 95W, 170W, 275W (11.7A) into 8, 4 and 2 Ohm and a full 405W (or 20.2A for 10msec, 22.2A for 5msec!) into momentary loads of just 1 Ohm without any sign of strain. But under continuous conditions, the 8R's electronic protection will kick in if HF power exceeds 60-65W, shutting the amp down. Excellent compatibility with different speakers is assured,

> while the 17kohm input load faced by partnering CD players isn't as severe as the 14kohm specified

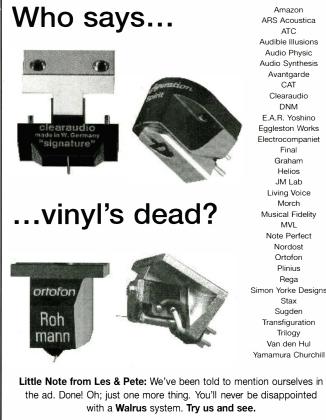
#### **HOW IT COMPARES**

50W



65W

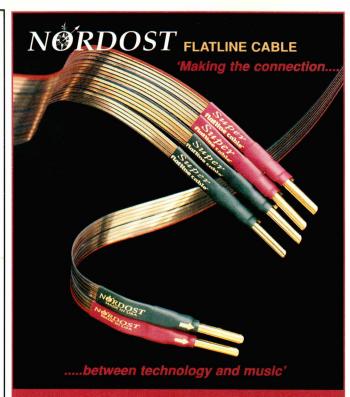
0.06%



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**Dynamic Duo** 

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	[SG71]	[SG72]	[SG73]	[SG74]	
Scart plug / 6 phono plugs	£15.99	£19.99	£24.99	£29.99	
Scart plug / S-VHS plug + 2 phono plugs, signal out of scart	[SG81] £15.99	[SG82] £19.99	[SG83] £24.99	[SG84] £29.99	
Scart plug / S-VHS plug + 2 phono plugs, signal into scart	[SG81A] £15.99	[SG82A] £19.99	[SG83A] £24.99	[SG84A] £29.99	
*** High specification custom	cables	made to	order i	n anv le	ngth ***
	cupics		)mp		
Firewire IEE1394 cables					
4 pin to 4 pin 2.0m [KLFW1] £34. 4 pin to 4 pin 4.5m [KLFW2] £44		pin to 6 pi pin to 6 pi		[KLFW3] [KLFW4]	£34.99 £44.99
	.,,,	, pin to o pi		[((2) (*4)	-44.33
Optical leads					
			0-		<b></b>
Toslink connector to Tos	link conne	ctor to		nm (Minidis	
3.5mm (Minidisc) plug to	slink conn	ector	3.5	mm (Minid	
1.0m [KLDO11] £9.99 1.0m	[KLD021]	£9.99	1.0m	[KLDO31]	£9.99
1.5m [KLDO1] £12.99					
	KLD0225		2.5m	[KLD0325	J±14.99
5.om [KLDO15] £19.99 5.om	KL0025]	119.99			

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restrictions). Complete with memory card slot for additional storage capacity\*, PC docking MP3 software suite (requires Windows 95/98), headset and battery. Order [RIO] £179.99 \*Optional extra: 16MB plug in memory card to extend playing time, order [SM16] £69.92 Keene Special deal Rio MP3 player plus 16MB memory card just £240.00, order [RIOKIT

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## EDMUND AUDIO ESI10

dmund Audio is an offshoot of the REL subwoofer brand run by Anthony Lord, son of REL's founder, John, and the ESI10 is its first product. Aimed at the no-nonsense audiophile-on-abudget end of the market, there

aren't a lot of toys to play with just a handful of inputs, a volume control, two pairs of speaker terminals, a mono switch (almost unheard of these days) and a mute switch. Round on side two you'll find a power amp input.

The two sets of speaker outputs aren't equipped with switching, so what are they for? Simple: they can be used to connect two sets of standard monowire speaker cables for bi-wiring purposes. Alternatively, one set could be used to connect a subwoofer.

REL recommends connecting its subwoofers using loudspeaker connections. It's true that normal 4mm binding posts can normally be persuaded to accept two sets of cables at a time, but Edmund has chosen to fit touch-proof flush mount sockets, which don't have this flexibility.

The input arrangements are equally worthy of note. The test sample was fitted with six line inputs, including a tape monitor circuit, but the ESI10 is available to order at the same price with a phono input in place of one of the line inputs. It can also be specified with a black fascia

"The ESI10 is conventionally constructed, but it uses thick panels and feels extremely solid. The power supply appears well endowed, which helps justify the claimed 85 Watt/channel output."

instead of the nice shiny chrome finish supplied here.

The ESI10 is conventionally constructed, but it uses thick panels and feels extremely solid. The power supply appears well endowed, which helps justify the claimed 85 Watt/channel power output, and the power amplifier itself is bipolar, presumably with plenty of standing current judging by the fact that it runs warm.

#### SOUND QUALITY

In two separate presentations to the panel, the ESI10 was greeted unenthusiastically on the whole.

On the first hearing, one listener described the Paula Cole track as sounding 'warm but slightly dry and grainy' and complained that the balance was 'soft-centred' and 'lacking in slam' in a track that lives and dies by this quality. Another wrote similarly that he felt rather 'disengaged' listening through this amplifier, and also described the sound as 'thin'.

The second presentation redressed the balance to a degree, although one confessed to not liking the sound much, but being 'unable to put [his] finger on why'. Another compared the Edmund Audio amp to a Harry Enfield character - 'nice but dim' commenting further that it was 'slow, soft around the edges and, at the end of the day, easily forgotten'. He also felt it was 'not a patch' on the Arcam Alpha 8P, the (unidentified) amp that preceded it in the test run referred to.

I've had experience with two samples of this amp, and am a little more enthusiastic than the panel, but there is no doubt that it's a little too characterful for its own good in some surroundings and that can sound a bit dull and ∧ The FSI10 can be specified with a black fascia instead of the chrome here.

grainy, although keeping the amplifier constantly under power helps oil the wheels.

#### CONCLUSION

EDMUND

The ESI10 is a good first product even though it looks rather home made, but on this showing it needs to pull a little more from the hat before it equals the best. At the moment it lacks brilliance, refinement and perhaps subtlety, but its honest engineering is mirrored in a solid and fundamentally musical sound. AG

VE	RDICT
SOUND	00000
BUILD	00000
VALUE	00000
PRICE	£400.00
New straight li of REL is a fundan unexciting perform	
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Edmund Audio,	North Road, Bridgend

ndustrial Estate, Bridgend CF31 3TF (01656) 768777

#### THE LAB REPORT

Ithough this amplifier's power output A is rather generally specified as '21V into 80hm or 85W', its practical capacity is closer to 78W (20Hz-20kHz) with just one channel driven. Anyway, 21 Vrms across 8 Ohms vields 55W not 85W, an unfortunate miscalculation that rather undermines my confidence. Still, under dynamic conditions, there's 105W, 165W, 158W (8.9A) and 103W (10.2A) available into 8, 4, 2 and 1 Ohm loads, respectively.

However, up to about 60W or so, there's also an increase in distortion of around 10dB between 8, 4, 2 and 1 Ohm load conditions. Beyond 60W output, the effects of



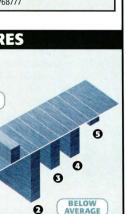
VI-limiting become even more obvious and distortion climbs steadily away until reaching 1 per cent at the values quoted above. Contrast this with Arcam's Alpha 8R, for example, that maintains a low (typically 0.01 per cent) distortion regardless of load or output until it clips 'for real'.

Distortion is also an issue at low signal levels through, presumably, crossover effects that cause a rash of odd-order harmonics that increase from 0.02 per cent at 1kHz to 0.3 per cent at 20kHz. This is at the crucial 1W/8 Ohms power level where most amplifiers are 'ticking-over' with sensitive loudspeakers. All things considered,

these issues most likely explain the less flattering remarks made by Alvin's listening panel. **PMi** 

#### **HOW IT COMPARES**

n this instance, the barchart really does tell it all, for the Edmund is clearly out-classed by its rivals in ABOVE this test group. Time was when such oversights might be forgiven. But in today's market? Not a chance. DYNAMIC POWER OUTPUT 2) SPEAKER LOAD TOLERANCE -35% 4 NOISE Ø 5 OVERALL COMPATIBILITY SPECIFICATIONS SPECIFICATION RATED ACTUAL Continuous Power Output, 8 Ohms 85W 78W Distortion 20Hz-20kHz, 1W/8 Ohms 0.03% 0 30% ■ Input Sensitivity (CD/Aux) 200mV 228mV



#### MIEGA TEST AMPLIFIERS £301-£400

## MYRYAD T-40

rom humble beginnings, Myrvad's affordable T series now stretches to four products – a tuner, a CD player, a power amplifier and the T-40 integrated

amplifier tested here. Bi-amping is possible with the T-40 and a matching

power amp, and multi-room applications are also listed in the Mvrvad literature.

The T-40 is a neatly turned-out design, with six inputs selectable by a row of light-touch buttons with LED telltales. Two are tape selectors, and of these one supports tape monitoring. Balance and volume controls and a headphone socket complete the front panel furniture.

Around the back, you'll find all gold-plated circuitry and brass 4mm binding posts, and a dualpurpose input: the phono input can be switched to line operation, an idea similar in principle to the Arcam Alpha 8R, except Myryad has separate phono input sockets for the two settings, which means the two could remain connected simultaneously, although they still need to be switched manually on the back panel.

Build quality and presentation of this amplifier are notably good. The panelwork is a little thicker and less rattly than with some of the Myryad's competition, a meaty toroidal transformer can be seen through the ventilation slats, and the fascia is a quality aluminium

"Build quality and presentation are notably good. The controls have a good operational feel and clean panel graphics."

extrusion, while the controls have a good operational feel and clean panel graphics, all of which help reinforce the basic proposition that here is a quality product.

#### SOUND QUALITY

Ultimately our panel felt that the Myryad T-40 is a rather ordinary sounding amplifier. 'It's difficult to rate, but clearly sounds muddled and uninteresting... [with a] harsh, nasal edge, and generally below par compared with the [Arcam and the Edmund] that preceded it on this test run'.

'It sounds unengaging and brash, with no shine or brilliance,' was a typical comment, while another panellist felt the bass a little 'soft and undefined', giving a 'veiled effect' overall.

'Competent but no better' was another sum-up, while in a subsequent presentation one panel member concluded that although the Myryad does little to actively draw the listener in, he felt the amp was competent in the sense that its 'sins are of omission rather than commission'.

In the hands-on tests, the Myryad seemed reluctant to go for it. The amp sounded basically decent, but failed to lend sufficient gravitas or to drive the music hard enough when called for, and for this reason it ultimately failed to stir the juices.

There are times when music should sound dangerous - indeed the Paula Cole test track has just such moments - and here the T-40 failed to deliver.

Similarly, the superbly recorded Weber clarinet quintet highlighted a lack of the fine resolving power and clean articulation necessary to make it sing.

There were some more tangible failings, in particular a rather thin bass line and a slightly granular sound, lacking in sweetness. It also seemed a little breathless when used at high volume levels:

O The Myryad T-40: sensibly equipped, particularly well built and presented.

this is by no means the most powerful amplifier on test.

#### CONCLUSION

There isn't a lot wrong with this amplifier other than a slight lack of refinement in certain areas, and a price tag that puts it up against some quite impressive machinerv from other quarters.

That said, it's sensibly equipped and particularly well built and presented – and don't forget it's part of an attractive series of matching components. AG



0.01%

284mV

#### THE LAB REPORT

yryad's specification for the T-40 is very conservative. Its 50W power rating is easily exceeded by the 70W possible in practice, while some 90W, 155W, 230W (10.7A) and 262W (16.2A) is available under dynamic (music-like) conditions into 8, 4, 2 and 1 Ohm loads, respectively. So, while the T-40 isn't as lusty as Arcam's 8R, it's sufficiently tolerant of difficult speakers to not limit your choice. The 0.03 Ohm output impedance also provides immunity against dips in the speaker's HF impedance trend, provided you employ a similarly low resistance speaker cable.



This, the low 0.002 per cent midband distortion and the low -89dB noise (re 1W/ 8 Ohms, A-wtd) all point to moderate-tohigh levels of compensation at work in the T-40 though, as we discussed in Oasis in issue 190, the use of feedback need not necessarily compromise sound quality.

The rest of the design takes a similar 'belt and braces' approach, offering good stereo separation, a channel balance of 0.7dB over a 60dB range and a healthy 12V input overload margin to cope with the most extreme of CD players. DC offsets are low and the amplifier provides good immunity from the ravages of RFI.

A technical success then, if not a subjective hit with Alvin's colleagues on the listening panel. PMi 4 NOISE

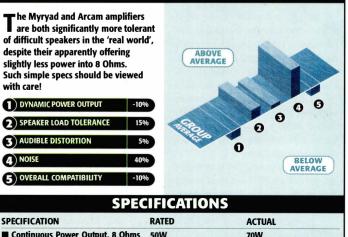
Distortion 20Hz-20kHz, 1W/8 Ohms

■ Input Sensitivity (CD/Aux)

#### **HOW IT COMPARES**

<0.1%

250mV





### PRESTIGE - £2250

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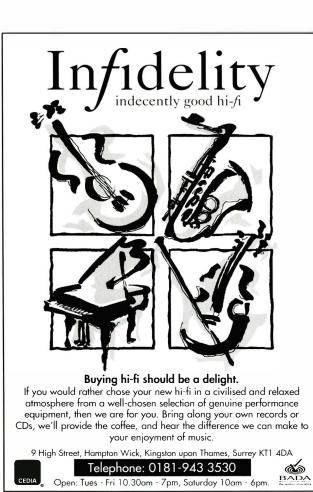
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x Hadcock special Tonearm			
<b>00</b> (£ 600)			
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arver Platinum loudspeakers	£	650	(£2700)
riston RD 80 Turntable (no arm)	£	100	
inell Type K & Huyden K4 stand	£	400	(£ 900)
udioNote P4 Monos	£2	2700	(£4000)
udioNote Dac3 Sig	£1	850	(£2850)
udioNote ANV i/connect 2m	£	250	(£ 500)
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#### MIEGA TEST AMPLIFIERS £169-£400

# AMPLIFIERS CONCLUSIONS



#### ARCAM Alpha 8R £380.00

This amplifier is a cracker. It stood out as exceptional each time it was inserted into the blind test programme, and is close to being as good as they get at this price. The 8R features power supply and related improvements over its predecessor and clever AV system integration features.

#### **CREEK AUDIO** 4330 £279.00

The first surprise was how small this amplifier is in the flesh – but how long the options list turns out to be. Essentially a stripped-down amp for the audiophile who doesn't need his or her ego cosseted with a plethora of unnecessary controls, it has a kick like a mule – and sounds pretty good, too.

HARMAN/KARDON HK-630 £229.99

Not the planet's most refined or disciplined amplifier, the

baby harman/kardon is nonetheless a talented performer

which signally fails to curb the music's enthusiasm and

flair, where they are present in the first place. Aesthetic

treatment is good, and the HK-630 is capable of driving

most loudspeakers with confidence, if not necessarily at



#### NAD C340 £269.50

This bigger, higher power version of C320, an established favourite, has an automatic impedance matching circuit which makes light work of system compatibility issues. Musically, it offers good imaging and tonality without being quite as explicitly detailed as some of its competition, and it's also an ergonomic improvement on its predecessors.



#### **PIONEER** A-607R £300.00

One panel member thought this model was almost as good as the Arcam Alpha 8R, which is not bad for a hairy, button-bedecked cheapie like this. In fact, it's a little rough around the edges, but it is still detailed and dynamic. his test set out to explore the capabilities and limitations of ten amplifiers starting in price at below the strategically important £200 price point, but the reality is that none of them is seriously likely to embarrass those with 'normal' listening tastes, loudspeakers and standard size rooms.

They all generate enough power before they begin to audibly run out of steam to allow more or less realistic volume level most of the time, although none of them preserve dynamic range effectively at elevated volume levels. Some, of course, go louder than others, and there will always be those people, loudspeakers and rooms that simply demand more, in which case the power/price curve is a steep one.

To achieve twice the apparent loudness from a given system – leaving aside how 'twice as loud' is defined in practice – will almost certainly do serious damage to your bank account.

Remember in this context that a few Watts here or there makes no practical difference. The volume ceiling of a typical 30 Watt amplifier might not be audibly different under most circumstances to that of a 40 Watter, and there are other factors at play in determining maximum volumes. These include the amp's ability to deliver high current levels, its short-term power output, exactly how it misbehaves when approaching the limits of its

AMPLIE	FIER C	OMPAR	ISON	TABLE	
MAKE	ARCAM	CREEK AUDIO	DENON	EDMUND AUDIO	HARMAN/KARDON
MODEL	ALPHA 8R 🎽	4330	PMA-535R	ESI10	HK-630 🗡
PRICE	£380.00	£279.00	£299.99	£400.00	£229.99
SOUND	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
BUILD	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
VALUE	00000	00000	000000	00000	00000
GUARANTEE	2 years	2 years	2 years	2 years	2 years
SIZE (WXHXD) IN MM	430x85x330	420x60x230	434x120x338	430x67x266	443x91x359
WEIGHT	5.4kg	4.5kg	7.3kg	6kg	6.4kg
RATED CONTINUOUS POWER OUTPUT, 8 OHMS	50W	40W	50W	85W	40W
ACTUAL CONTINUOUS POWER OUTPUT, 8 OHMS	65W	50W	75W	78W	65W
RATED DISTORTION, 20HZ-20KHZ, 1W/8 OHMS	0.01%	0.05%	0.01%	0.03%	<0.09%
ACTUAL DISTORTION, 20HZ-20KHZ, 1W/8 OHMS	0.06%	0.045%	0.05%	0.3%	0.02%
RATED INPUT SENSITIVITY (CD/AUX)	260mV	400mV	150mV	200mV	150mV
ACTUAL INPUT SENSITIVITY (CD/AUX)	300mV	445mV	147mV	228mV	168mV

very high volume levels.

performance envelope and, indeed, how the loudspeakers handle the power. On the whole then, wattage ratings are not what define the essential differences between these amplifiers.

So if it isn't power, what does set one amplifier apart from the next? Is it their features? The usual view is that tone controls do little to enliven the performance of most systems and that loudness controls do even less, although that's really something of an oversimplification - there are some systems, budget ones especially, where a little subtle rejigging of tonal balance may make just the difference between 'so what?' and music that is really gripping. Of course, there are other kinds of features. Anyone with a cassette or digital recorder might appreciate the ability to make recordings off CD, say, while listening to the radio tuner, and those models with separate tape source selectors allow this.

A number of this month's test group also allow for the phono input to be switched to use as a line input, although it's worth noting that in these cases there is usually a small aural price to pay, and your main source should always be connected to a standard input - or even, if you don't use an analogue recorder, the tape input. Some amps have two sets of speaker terminals, and some have removable pre/power amp links – or, in the case of Arcam, dedicated inputs which can make life easier when used with external AV processors.

One gadget that really does make a difference is remote control, which surely helps make listening more spontaneous and allows level adjustment to be optimised from the listening seat. On the whole, though, these things don't make a crucial

difference to the quality of audio life to most people. No, what defines the really important difference, the one that makes listeners sit up and take notice, is the quality of the musical experience they provide. The listening panel provided excellent testament to this, by consistently identifying real differences, as you can read, for example, in the Arcam review.

The simple and unavoidable fact is that some amplifiers

sound like they're just going through the motions, while others bring music to life in a way that is difficult enough to describe on paper, but which is ever harder to gainsay in life. To say that there are substantial differences that a good amplifier can make to the pleasure of listening might sound like a tautology, but it is nevertheless undeniable perhaps even more so with this group than some previous budget amplifier groups.

#### **BEST BUYS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

BEST BUYS: Our famous Best Buy swing-tag is awarded to hi-fi equipment which offers an excellent standard of performance at an attractive price. Best Buy winners are superb all-round components.

**RECOMMENDED:** Recommended products are first-class audiophile propositions, losing out to Best Buy status only because of a higher price or less competitive overall sound quality.

#### **UNDERSTANDING OUR BAR-GRAPH MEASUREMENTS**

ehind Hi-Fi Choice's unique bargraphs are some of the most advanced measurements made anywhere on the planet. They are provided by our Technical Editor, Paul Miller, using both GPIB-controlled measurement hardware and his own, award-winning, PC-based Virtual Instrument software. Each bar-graph value is derived from a weighted statistic of several key measurements and is displayed relative to a notional zero per cent which represents the group average for that particular category.

**THE BAR-GRAPHS** ABOVE BELOW

O DYNAMIC POWER OUTPUT: A measure of power up to one per cent distortion under realistic, music-like conditions, using a brief (20msec) transient signal and an 8 Ohm speaker load. **O SPEAKER LOAD TOLERANCE:** This indicates how ably the amp maintains a given level of performance into progressively lower-impedance and more difficult speaker loads.

 AUDIBLE DISTORTION: Rather than quote a single figure for distortion at one frequency and level, this bar value represents a measure of distortion and its consistency across the whole audio band and the amplifier's dynamic range. **ONOISE:** This is a direct representation of the amplifier's A-weighted Signal-to-Noise (S/N) ratio at 1 Watt output into a model 8 Ohm load. **OVERALL COMPATIBILITY:** This new category measures the amplifier's ability to drive different loudspeakers, its susceptibility to radio-frequency interference (RFI) and its ability to handle today's high-output CD players.

#### **RIVAL BUYS**

#### NAD C320 - £200

Smaller version of the C340 tested this issue, offers broadly the same euphony and better definition than previous NADs, with impedancematching circuit offering a substantial measure of load independence.

#### TECHNICS

SU-A800D Mk 2 - £300 Arguably a little undisciplined, this remains an enthusiastic and capable amplifier with plenty of widgets. Remarkably, it is packaged as a twobox design, despite the price.

#### ROTEL RA-971 - £200

First-rate, relatively simply equipped amplifier which is well constructed and has plenty of real world power, the RA-971 is arguably the quintessential beer-budget amplifier.

ARCAM Alpha One – £230 Modestly powered, the Alpha One looks much like the other, more expensive Arcams, including the model tested in this months group, and it sounds much like them too.



#### MARANTZ

PM-66 KI Signature - £400 The PM-68 might have failed to stir the music buds in this month's test, but this refined version of a simpler model certainly does. The PM-66 KI Signature (above) is an excellent all rounder which sounds as good as it looks.

MUSICAL FIDELITYE1 - £199 Svelte, but a little too laid back-looking for some, the exterior treatment is a perfect metaphor for the way this amplifier performs, but this is more than routinely decent.

MAKE	MARANTZ	MYRYAD	NAD	PIONEER	YAMAHA
MODEL	PM-68	T-40	C340	A-607R	AX-392
PRICE	£299.90	£399.95	£269.50	£300.00	£169.95
SOUND	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
BUILD	00000	00000	00000	00000	00000
VALUE	000000	00000	00000	00000	00000
GUARANTEE	2 year	3 year	2 year	1 year	2 year
SIZE (WXHXD) IN MM	439x159x375	436x94x316	435x110x290	420x128x335	435x151x309
WEIGHT	12.3kg	6.5kg	7.6kg	7kg	7.6kg
RATED CONTINUOUS POWER OUTPUT, 8 OHMS	95W	50W	50W	60W	60W
ACTUAL CONTINUOUS POWER OUTPUT, 8 OHMS	130W	70W	62W	80W	70W
RATED DISTORTION, 20HZ-20KHZ, 1W/8 OHMS	0.03%	<0.1	0.03%	0.05%	0.02%
ACTUAL DISTORTION, 20HZ-20KHZ, 1W/8 OHMS	0.004%	0.01%	0.005%	0.06%	0.07%
RATED INPUT SENSITIVITY (CD/AUX)	150mV	250mV	Not given	200mV	150mV
ACTUAL INPUT SENSITIVITY (CD/AUX)	200mV	284mV	297mV	260mV	180mV



## Five Stars

Paul Messenger explains why you should visit an independent

Why use a specialist hi-fi dealer? The short answer is because he knows one hell of a lot more about hi-fi than you do. And if you've gone to the trouble of picking up a specialist magazine on the subject, you're obviously interested in something rather more than a mini system from the nearest electrical superstore.

You've probably bought this magazine for one of two reasons. You're looking for advice (presumably unbiased and good) on choosing and using your hi-fi system, and/or you're checking out the ads to decide where to go and buy it.

The independent specialist dealer doesn't know everything, and he doesn't know much about you, but if music's an important part of your life, he's the only guy around who's able (and hopefully willing) to help you choose the equipment which will give you the best long term satisfaction.

#### **Power of the Press**

Dealers sometimes moan to me about the power of the press, and the disproportionate influence of its 'Best Buy' and multi-star ratings. Well, I've been in the press for twentysomething years, and still feel more ignorant than powerful.

The more I mess around with hi-fi gear, the more I become aware of our lack of real understanding of the subtleties involved, and the more I appreciate the importance of the dealer's skills and experience, in bringing together components so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We hacks get paid to write words, often about components in isolation, because individual product reviews are still the staple diet of the press. They can sometimes provide a useful guide to the way a product performs, but only under the particular circumstances in which the review was conducted.

The hi-fi reviewer attempts, with varying

degrees of success, to evaluate a particular component, and find something interesting (and hopefully positive) to say about it. That's about the end of it, and it's on to the next product.

The magazine prints the review, and that very process magically confers a measure of authority. Experienced hi-fi enthusiasts, who read reviews over a period of years and try out various products themselves, soon start to realise the limitations of that approach. Some reviews are better than others, but none can get to grips with the real heart of the problem - whether a given product will improve your musical satisfaction, in your system and your room.

#### The Role of the Dealer

The dealer's role is very different, and potentially much more valuable. He has the chance to talk one-on-one. If he's good at his job, he'll use that opportunity to find out what you as an individual are looking (or listening) for.

His motivation is very different too. Sure he wants to make a sale. That's the lifeblood of any shop. But he also knows that if something he sells really does deliver long term satisfaction, there's a very good chance you'll come back again to see if he can repeat the trick some time in the future.

If you go into a shop and demand a particular CD player, on the basis that it got seven stars (out of five) in last month's magazines, the shop will probably simply take the line of least resistance and sell it to you. (Or switch-sell you to a similar price alternative, if he's fresh out of stock

#### TOP 20 UK SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS

#### LONDON

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SW11 ORANGES & LEMONS 61/63 Webbs Road, Battersea 0171 924 2040

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Chelmsford RAYLEIGH HI-FI 216 Moulsham Street 01245 265245

East Grinstead AUDIO DESIGNS 26 High Street 01342 314569

Kingston-upon-Thames INFIDELITY

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Rayleigh, Essex RAYLEIGH HI-FI 44a High Street 01268 779762

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RAYLEIGH HI-FI 132/4 London Road

01702 435255 Uxbridge UXBRIDGE AUDIO 278 High Street, 01895 465444

#### MIDLANDS

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Birmingham SOUND ACADEMY 152a High Street, Bloxwich 01922 493499

Leicester CYMBIOSIS 6 Hotel Street 0116 262 3754

Northampton LISTEN INN 32 Gold Street, 01604 63787 Shrewsbury CREATIVE AUDIO 9 Dogpole 01743 241924

#### NORTH

Cheadle (Stockport) AUDIO COUNSEL 14 Stockport Road 0161 428 7887 Oldham AUDIO COUNSEL 12/14 Shaw Road 0161 633 2602

Sheffield MOORGATE ACOUSTICS 184 Fitzwilliam St 0114 275 6048

#### SCOTLAND

Edinburgh RUSS ANDREWS HI-FI 34 Northumberland Street 0131 557 1672

Glasgow STEREO STEREO 260 St. Vincent Street 0141 248 4079

## For Value

specialist dealer if you are searching for real hi-fi satisfaction

of that particular flavour-of-the-month.)

If you go in and say you're looking for a CD player, and want his advice on what to choose, things are liable to become more interesting. The onus is now on the dealer to show what he can do. His first task is to ask the right questions to try and get some idea of what you might be after.

Asking the questions is the easy bit. The real skill comes in using the information to come up with a shortlist of likely contenders, and then conducting a demonstration so that you have a real chance to play a central role in the decision making process.

Putting together a successful hi-fi system might not be as difficult as it was twenty or thirty

"If music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority."

years ago, but it's just as easy to make a mess of things. Put the 'wrong' combination of components together and it'll still sound a lot better than any cute little mini system package. It might even rate a five star review. But it won't match the potential of a carefully balanced and properly installed system, and it certainly won't cater for your own particular preferences and personality.

We British are notoriously undiscriminating consumers, at a mass market level at least. The majority of the population don't even bother to drive a car they're thinking of buying, never mind take the trouble to listen to hi-fi equipment.

The majority will therefore end up with hyperstore mediocrity, and hi-fi that's about as tasty as supermarket bread. But if music is an essential ingredient in your daily diet, you owe it to yourself to become a member of the discriminating minority.

You know full well that your music collection is as individual as your wardrobe, and just as

precious too, so it's worth taking the time and trouble to search out the dealer and equipment that will make that collection come alive, and give you a new buzz every time you play your favourite discs.

The independent specialist may not beat the chain store on price, but he continues to thrive in a hostile environment because real hi-fi is so much more than a matter of price. The people who work in these shops are themselves enthusiasts, often with many years of experience in meeting customer's needs, and the very necessary expertise to ensure that the whole thing is properly set up to deliver the best results.

The better the hi-fi, the more important it is to get the fine details right at the installation end of things, but even the least expensive equipment can be made to sound a whole lot better if good care is taken over the fine details - the support furniture, the cabling, the positioning of speakers and so on.

Without expert assistance even high class hi-fi can give mediocre results. With it you'll stand a very good chance of ending up with something rather more than a consumer durable - something which will be a source of considerable pleasure and genuine emotional satisfaction for decades to come.

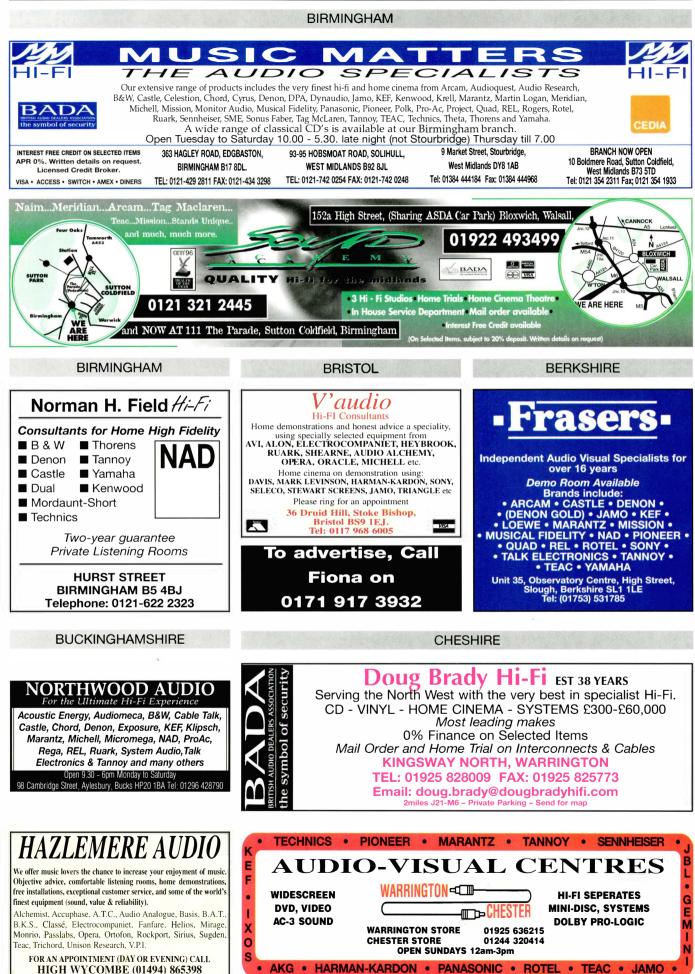
I agreed to write this signed piece, irrespective of the specific sponsors, because I believe the independent specialist dealer plays a vital role in giving customers long term hi-fi satisfaction.

#### Paul Messenger

The specialist Dealers listed here are professional and enthusiastic. Give your nearest a ring for a demonstration.

#### **STAR QUALITIES**

value for money	****
service	****
facilities	****
verdict	****





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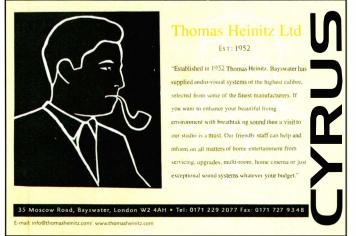




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• Atacama SE24 speaker stands, vgc, £40. Cable Talk Broadcast 2 interconnects, 1m: £60, 0.5m: £45. As new. Kent (01322) 342142.

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Mr I Burton, 25 The Oval,

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• Spendor SPI speakers on Target HJ12 stands £275 ono. Also Tannoy M2 (cherry) on Epos stands (£100). Tel: (01628) 524896 (Bucks).

• TDL RTL3SE, 1 year old, mint, boxed, cherry finish. £225, postage £10. Tel Dundee (01382) 205560 or 566085.

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#### WANTED

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#### **BUYING TIPS**

Buying secondhand can be a great way to pick up a bargain. A formerly-expensive secondhand component might well prove a better long-term bet than a brand-new product engineered down to a price. Do some research on which brands and products have a good service back-up, so if something does go wrong, you can get it fixed. Unless you purchase from a secondhand hi-fi dealer, you're unlikely to get any warranty. So it's up to you to ensure the fitness of any gear that you buy. Products such as speakers should be less prone to breakdown than amplifiers, and amps should be more reliable than CD players. But any abused component could be troublesome – have a proper dem, and judge the seller as well as the goods!

92 HI-FI CHOICE July/August 1999

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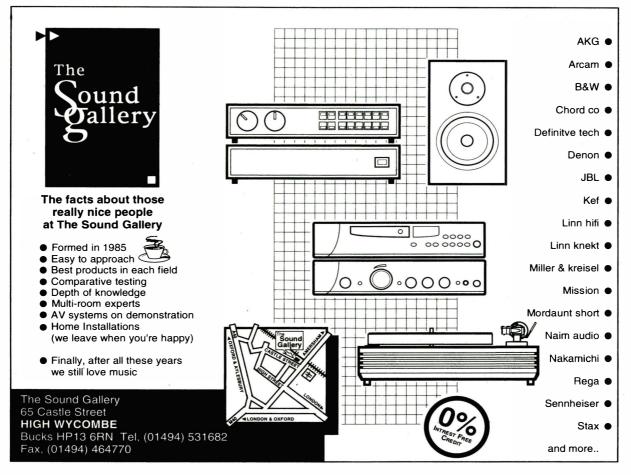
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#### **Our Three Step Guide to Buying Hi-Fi**

The Hi-Fi Choice Price Guide and Directory are extremely simple to use, but contain all the information you need to select and buy the perfect hi-fi system. Here's how it works.

STEP DISCOVER which products fall within your budget by using our Price Guide, which starts on this page. The product listing is updated using manufacturers' data every other month, and aims to include every hi-fi component currently available in the UK. (But please fax us on 0171-917 5512 with any omissions!) It is an alphabetical listing divided into different types of hi-fi component, and also into price bands.

STURP PRODUCTS whose names are printed in RED are those we have reviewed, which you can read about in the Directory (starts after 4 the Price Guide). Here you will learn which items have been singled out for our famous Best Buy, Recommended or Editor's Choice awards, denoting products of exceptional quality and value. The Directory is sorted by product type and listed alphabetically, and the beginning of each

section provides essential information about each kind of hi-fi component. STEP FIND your nearest hi-fi store in our Dealer Directory (at the end of the Directory) to book a demonstration of the hi-fi equipment B

you want to hear. Remember to take your own LPs or CDs!

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G - Number of line-level inputs. '20W'- Rated RMS output power per channel into nominal load of 8 Ohms. UP TO £250

230

100

140 170

80

120

200

200 140

180

230

240

230

250 200

140 170

180 150

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130

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229

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180

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150

180

230 170

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280 300

500 475

493 350

355

450

300

500 450

330

265 330

430

300

Akai AM1100	ø	50W
AMC 3020		
	0	20W
AMC 3025A AMC 3050A	0	30W
	0	45W
Arcam Alpha One	0	35W
Ariston AX910	0	30W
Cambridge A1 Mk III	0	30W
Cambridge A1 Mk3 SE	0	30W
Cambridge A3i	0	60W
Cambridge A500RC	õ	50W
Denon PMA-250SE	0	
Denon PMA-350SE		30W
	Θ	50W
Denon PMA-535R	Θ	50W
Denon PMA-100M	Θ	80W
Goodmans Delta 900A	Θ	100W
H/K HK630	0	40W
H/K HK3270	G	65W
JVC AX-A372BK	Θ	40W
JVC AX-R5BK	ø	45W
Kenwood KA-1080	õ	60W
Kenwood KA-3080R	0	
		70W
Kenwood KAF-3010R	0	70W
Marantz PM-48	Θ	50W
Marantz PM-57	Θ	50W
Marantz SR-47	0	40W
Marantz PM-66SE	Θ	50W
Musical Fidelity E1	0	30W
NAD 310	0	20W
NAD C320	õ	40W
NAD 312	Θ	25W
Pioneer A-105	Θ	30W
Pioneer A-204R	Θ	25W
Pioneer A-300R	Θ	50W
Pioneer A-305R	Θ	50W
Pioneer A-407R	Θ	45W
Pioneer A-405R	ø	45W
Rega Brio	õ	30W
Rotel RA921	õ	20W
Rotel RA931		
Rotel RA971	0	35W
		70W
Sansui AUX-410R	Θ	50W
Sansui AUX-510R	Θ	70W
Sherwood AX 4050R		50W
	Θ	2000
Sherwood AX-7030R	6	95W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210		95W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210	<b>6</b> 0	95W 40W
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Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Teac AR-600	<b>3</b> <b>9</b> <b>9</b> <b>9</b> <b>9</b>	95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W
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Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE220R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Teac AR-600 Teachnics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-A600 Mk3	<ul> <li>3</li> <li>4</li> <li>5</li> <li>5</li> <li>6</li> <li>6</li> <li>7</li> <li>6</li> <li>7</li> <li>7&lt;</li></ul>	95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W
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Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-FE20R Teac AE-2000 Teachate SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-A600 Mk3 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-4700 Mk3 Yamaha AX-592		95W 40W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Yamaha AX-39		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Yamaha X-392 Yamaha AX-9 Yamaha AX-92		95W 40W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Yamaha AX-39		95W 40W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-F248E Teac AF-2000 Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Techni		95W 40W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Techn		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V600 Mk3 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Teachare SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 T		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE280R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V600 Mk3 Yamaha AX-9 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-492 <b>E251 TO E500</b> Arcam Alpha 9 Audio Analogue Puccini Audiogram MB1		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 45W 60W 50W 85W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-FE28R Teac AF-2000 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 T		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 25W 30W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE220R Sony TA-FE220R Eas CAR-600 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 45W 60W 50W 85W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-FE20R Sony TA-FE20R Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Te		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 25W 30W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W 85W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE220R Sony TA-FE220R Eas CAR-600 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 9 Audio Analogue Puccini Audiogram MB1 Aura VA-100 II Creek 4330		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 90W 25W 37W 25W 37W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W 85W 85W 70W 40W 40W 40W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technic		95W 40W 60W 50W 90W 25W 30W 37W 45W 50W 50W 85W 60W 50W 85W 85W 85W 40W 40W 40W 40W 40W 50W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 50W 50W 25W 30W 37W 70W 45W 85W 70W 45W 70W 40W 70W 40W 70W 40W 70W 40W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE220R Sony TA-FE282R Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620		95W 40W 60W 50W 90W 25W 30W 25W 30W 25W 30W 45W 60W 50W 85W 40W 50W 70W 40W 40W 40W 70W 40W 40W 50W 50W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Teac AR-600 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technic		95W 40W 60W 50W 90W 25W 30W 25W 30W 25W 30W 45W 60W 50W 85W 45W 50W 70W 40W 40W 50W 70W 40W 40W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 5
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE220R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 MK3 Yamaha AX-392 Yamaha AX-392 Yamaha AX-392 <b>E251 TO E500</b> Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7 Arcam Alpha 7 Arcam Alpha 7 Arcam Alpha 9 Audio Analogue Puccini Audiogram MB1 Aura VA-100 II Creek 4330 Creek 430 Creek 4		95W 40W 60W 50W 90W 25W 30W 25W 30W 70W 45W 60W 50W 85W 85W 85W 70W 40W 40W 70W 40W 40W 50W 70W 40W 65W 70W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE220R Sony TA-FE282R Feac AR-600 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620		95W 40W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 50W 85W 50W 50W 50W 70W 40W 40W 40W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 5
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics		95W 40W 60W 50W 90W 25W 30W 90W 25W 30W 70W 45W 50W 50W 85W 70W 40W 40W 40W 50W 70W 40W 60W 70W 40W 60W 70W 40W 60W 70W 40W 60W 70W 60W 70W 60W 70W 60W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 7
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE220R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 MK3 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 ZESE TO ESEO Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 9 Audio Analogue Puccini Audiogram MB1 Aura VA-100 II Creek 4330 Creek 430 Creek 4		95W 40W 50W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 50W 45W 85W 40W 40W 50W 40W 40W 50W 40W 40W 50W 65W 50W 65W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 5
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V600 Mk3 Technics SU-V600 Mk3 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-492 <b>E251 TO E500</b> Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 9 Audiogram MB1 Aura VA-100 II Creek 4330 Creek 430 Creek 4330 Creek 430 Creek 430 Cr		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 50W 25W 30W 37W 45W 60W 50W 85W 60W 50W 85W 70W 45W 70W 45W 70W 45W 70W 45W 70W 40W 50W 65W 65W 65W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technic		95W 40W 50W 50W 50W 90W 25W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 30W 50W 45W 85W 40W 40W 50W 40W 40W 50W 40W 40W 50W 65W 50W 65W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 50W 5
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V600 Technics SU-V600 Mk3 Technics SU-V600 Mk3 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-99 Yamaha AX-492 <b>E251 TO E500</b> Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 7R Arcam Alpha 9 Audiogram MB1 Aura VA-100 II Creek 4330 Creek 430 Creek 4330 Creek 430 Creek 430 Cr		95W 40W 60W 50W 50W 50W 25W 30W 37W 45W 60W 50W 85W 60W 50W 85W 70W 45W 70W 45W 70W 45W 70W 45W 70W 40W 50W 65W 65W 65W
Sherwood AX-7030R Sony TA-FE210 Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-FE320R Sony TA-F248E Teac AE-2000 Technics SU-V300 Technics SU-V500 Technics SU-V620 Technics SU-V620 Technic		95W 40W 60W 70W 70W 40W 70W 70W 40W 40W 70W 40W 40W 70W 40W 40W 65W 70W 40W 40W 65W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70W 70

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Sony TA-FB920R Sony TA-FB300ES Sony TA-F3000ES Talk Electronics Storm 1 Teacharts SU-A800D Mk2 Technics SU-A800D Mk2 Thule Audio Spint IA60 Token KS0 Yamaha AX-592 E501 TO £700 Alchemist Kraken APD6A		65W 80W 40W 50W 55W 70W 60W 55W 100W	300 400 500 280 300 400 449 350 280
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Aria Simply Four T	0	11W	1,650	Magnum MP120
Art Audio Integra ATC SIA2-150		30W	1,499	Magnum MP660
Audio Note Soro Line PP	0	150W 20W	1,984 1,200	Magnum MP330 Monrio ADN-N
Audio Note Oto Line SE Audio Note Oto Phono SE	0	12W	1,200	Monrio Asty L
Audio Note Soro Line SE	0	12W 18W	1,500 1,699	Moth 30 Passive Moth 30 Phono
BB Audio BB 30-60	0	30W	1,495	Moth 30 Line stage
Beam-Echo SA-50 Bow Technologies Wazoo	0	50W 50W	1,950 1,795	Musical Fidelity X10-E Musical Fidelity X-LP
Bryston B-60	Θ	60W	1,249	Musical Fidelity X-PRE
Copland CSA14 Copland CSA28	0	60W	1,199 1,249	Musical Fidelity E20 NAD PP-1
Copland CTA402	õ	35W	1,698	NAD 114
CR Dev Romulus V3 CR Dev Athena	0	35W 38W	1,198 1,499	NAD 116 Naim Prefix
CR Dev Remus V3	0	60W	1,989	Naim NAC92
Credo LIM 702 Credo LIM 703			1,191 1,249	NVA P50 Parasound P/HP-100
Densen DM-10	0	75W	1,375	Parasound P/HP-850
EAR 859 EAR 834	0	13W	1,999	QED Discsaver DS-1
Golden Tube Audio SI-50 Mkll	0	40W 50W	1,999 1,100	Rega EOS Rega Cursa
Graaf Venticinque	0	20W	1,790	Roksan Artaxerxes 10
Jadis Orchestra LFD Integrated 1	0	65W	1,345 1,099	Rose RV-23 Rotel RQ970BX
Marantz PM-17KI Sig Meracus Intrare	0	60W	1,300	Rotel RC971
NAD S300	0	60W	1,095	Rotel RC972 Sunfire Phono
Praecisa Sonoro	Θ	100W	1,800	Talk Electronics Hurri
Primare A30.1 Restek Fantasy 2	6	100W 100W	1,500 1,499	Technics SU-C1000 M Thule Audio Spirit PR
Sonic Frontiers Anthem Integrated	0	25W	1,299	Trilogy 905
T+A R1200R Thule Audio Space IA250B	0	90W 250W	1,750 1,799	Trilogy 904 Trilogy 900
Woodside ISA230 Line	Θ	30W	1,099	
Woodside ISA230 Disc YBA Integre DT	<b>0</b> <b>0</b>	30W	1,249 1,650	£501 TO £2,00
OVER 52 000	-	-		Adyton Chorus
OVER £2,000				Alchemist Kraken Pre Alchemist Forseti Pre
Adyton Opera	0	50W	2,595	Alchemist Signature
AMP Flux System 2 Aria Simply 845	6	50W 24W	3,000 3,195	Aria Feather One Aria Mystery Two
Audio Note Meishu Line		9W	2,750	Aria Mystery One
Audio Note Ongaku Audio Research CA50	<b>6</b>	26W	56,000 3,399	Art Audio Headline Art Audio VPL
Belcanto SETi40		40W	4,450	Art Audio Conductor
Belcanto Orfeo 30SI Cary CAD-300SEI	0	35W 11W	5,450 3,995	Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor
Conrad-Johnson CAV-50	0	50W	2,495	Art Audio Conductor
EAR V20 Electrocompaniet ECI-1	0	24W 100W	2,495 2,195	Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA
Gamma Rhythm	Θ	18W	2,499	Audio Note M2 Line
Gamma Rhythm Ref Gamma Moment	0	20W 40W	3,499 19,999	Audio Note Discover Audio Note M2RIAA
Jadis DA30	ø	30W	2,690	Audio Prism Mantissa
Jadis DA60 Krell KAV300i	6	60W	4,483	Audio Research LS8 Audio Research PH3
Krell KAV300r	Ĩ	13044	3,333	Audio Research LS9
McIntosh MA6400E McIntosh MA6800E	Θ	100W	3,999 5,999	Audio Synthesis Pro Audio Synthesis Pass
Meracus Onesta	0	75W	2,595	Audio Synthesis Pass
Musical Fidelity A1001 Pioneer A-09	0	200W 45W	2,500 4,000	Audio Synthesis Pass Aura CA-200
Rowland Concentra	0	100W	5,500	AVI S2000MP
Sonus Faber Musica T+A R1500R	0	135W	2,295 2,015	AVI S2000MP+P Beam-Echo SP-21
Tube Tech Unisis Sig. Int.	•	30W	2,300	Bryston .4
Tube Tech Synergy PPS	0	150W	6,900	Bryston BP5 Bryston BP20
PREAMPS				Bryston BP-25
KEY				Canary Audio CA-60 Canary Audio CA-60
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(may be an option on some o	ther i	models)		Chord Phono
UP TO £500		12.0		Chord CPA 1800 Concordant Exhilerar
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Arcam Alpha 9C Aria Simply Phono	0	Ph	400 500	Conrad-Johnson PV- Conrad-Johnson PV-
Art Audio Minuet			499	Conrad-Johnson PV-
Audio Analogue Bellini Audio Note M Zero	0	Ph	495 299	Conrad-Johnson EF- Conrad-Johnson PF-:
Beam-Echo PP-21		Ph	499	Copland CSA303
Bryston BP1 CR Dev Themis	0	Ph Ph	438 349	Copland CTA301 MI CR Dev Carmenta
Creek OBH-9		en	160	CR Dev Argento
Creek P43/R Creek P52	6		350 499	Credo CMP004 Credo CMP005
Crimson CS610C	6 6	Ph	450	Cyrus aCA7
Cyrus aEQ7 Densen DP-Drive/DP-02		Ph	498 350	Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R Densen Beat B-200
DPA Enl'ment phono		Ph	275	Densen DM-20
EAR 834P EAR 834L	-	Ph	349	DNM 3 Start DNM 3A Start
EAR 834P/MC	0	Ph	449 499	DPA Enlightenment
Electrocompaniet ECP-1 Henley HMC50		Ph	495	Dynavector L200
Henley HMC100			150 350	Dynavector P100 Dynavector L100
Hi Q Sound LCP2 LFD Mistral Linestage	6		149 449	Earmax Pre ECA Vista S
LFD LSO Linestage	6		499	ECA Vista HD
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EC-4.5		Ph	880 1,195	Audio R Boulder

Magnum MP120	0		330	Electrocompaniet EC-4.6	0		1,750	Boulder L5AE
Magnum MP660	0		500 500	Exposure XIX Exposure XVII	-	-	800 850	Boulder L5M Boulder 2010
Magnum MP330 Monrio ADN-N	0	Ph	295	Golden Tube Audio SEP-2	6	Ph	990	Canary Audio CA-801
Monrio Asty L	Θ		500	Golden Tube Audio SEP-3	Θ		1,995	Cary SLP-98L
Moth 30 Passive Moth 30 Phono	0	Ph	149 249	Graaf WFB Two Graaf WFB One	0	Ph Ph	1,350 1,750	Chord CPA 2200 Chord CPA 3200
Moth 30 Line stage	0		349	Henley HMC200	•		600	Chord CPA 4000
Musical Fidelity X10-D	0	-	120	Hi Q Sound MCB2	•	Ph	545	Conrad-Johnson PF-R Conrad-Johnson PV-12A
Musical Fidelity X-LP Musical Fidelity X-PRE	0	Ph	130 200	Hi Q Sound MCL2 Jadis DPL2	0		645 1,590	Conrad-Johnson Premier 15
Musical Fidelity E20	0	Ph	400	Krell KAV250p			1,999	Conrad-Johnson Premier 14
NAD PP-1 NAD 114	-	Ph	40 270	LFD MC1 Phonostage LFD LS1 Linestage	•	Ph	949 999	Conrad-Johnson Premier 16LS Conrad-Johnson Art
NAD 116	6	Ph	430	LFD MC2 Phonostage	0	Ph	1,499	CAT SL1 Ultimate
Naim Prefix			360	LFD LS2 Linestage	0		1,599	CR Dev Kastor
Naim NAC92 NVA P50	6		485	LFD LSB Linestage Linn Wakonda	0		1,999 750	Credo LPR 001 DNM 3C Primus
Parasound P/HP-100		Ph	130	Linn Linto			850	DNM 3C Twin
Parasound P/HP-850 QED Discsaver DS-1	0	Ph	400	Linn Kairn Lumley LV1.5	0		1,400 895	DNM 3C Six EAR 802MC
Rega EOS		Ph	398	Lumley LV1	G		1,150	EAR G88
Rega Cursa	Θ	Ph	450	Lumley PV1.5	Θ	Ph	1,700	EAR P52
Roksan Artaxerxes 10 Rose RV-23	0	Ph	395 450	Lumley PV1 Matisse Atom	0	Ph	1,700 1,000	Gamma Era Ref Graaf GM13.5B
Rotel RQ970BX		Ph	130	McIntosh C712	G	Ph	1,999	Jadis DPL
Rotel RC971 Rotel RC972	0		150 225	Meracus Ingredi	0		925	Jadis DPMC Jadis JPL
Sunfire Phono	ø	Ph	430	Meridian 501 Meridian 562	Θ		695 765	Jadis JPP200
Talk Electronics Hurricane 1	ø		500	Meridian 562V			<b>9</b> 95	Jadis JP30MC
Technics SU-C1000 Mk2 Thule Audio Spirit PR100	6	Ph	300 400	Meridian 502 Michell Iso/Lithos	0		1,295 599	Jadis JPS2 Jadis JP80MC
Trilogy 905			375	Michell Orca	0		1,650	Jadis JP200MC
Trilogy 904	-	Ph	375	Michi RHC-10		-	795	Krell KRC3
Trilogy 900	Θ	Ph	499	Michi RHQ-10 Michi RHA-10		Ph	1,150 1,150	Krell KRC-HR LFD Disc Preamp
£501 TO £2,000				Micromega Tempo P	0		1,150	Mark Levinson 25S
Adyton Chorus			1,995	Muse Model 3 Musical Fidelity F25	6	Ph	1,990 1,500	Mark Levinson 380 Mark Levinson 380S
Alchemist Kraken Pre	0		549	Myryad MP100	G	FA	600	Matisse Fantasy
Alchemist Forseti Pre	G		999	NAD 118			1,000	Matisse Reference
Alchemist Signature Pre Aria Feather One	0		1,499 795	Naim NAC92R Naim NAC72	6		650 745	McIntosh C22 McIntosh C40
Aria Mystery Two	ø		1,750	Naim NAC102	o		1,080	McIntosh C39
Aria Mystery One Art Audio Headline	0		1,750	Quad 77 Pre	0	Ph	850	Meracus Pretare
Art Audio Headine Art Audio VPL	0		700 741	Quad 99 Pre Rega Hal	0	Ph	1,300 998	Naim NAC82 Naim NAC52
Art Audio Conductor Phono			750	Roksan Artaxerxes X/DS1.5		Ph	1,150	Roksan ROK-L1.5
Art Audio VP1 Art Audio Conductor	0		952 1,250	Roksan ROK-L2.5 Rose RV-23S	0	Ph	1,250 525	Rowland Synergy Rowland Coherence
Art Audio Conductor Export			2,000	Rotel RC995	Θ		525	Sonic Frontiers Line 1
Audio Note M1 Line Audio Note M1 RIAA		Ph	550 550	Shearne Phase 6 Pre Shearne Phase 1 Pre Ref	0		999 1,499	Sonic Frontiers Line 2 Sonic Frontiers Line 3
Audio Note M2 Line		Fn	999	Siemel MC20	U	Ph	650	T+A Pre DA3000
Audio Note Discovery			999	Siemel MM20		Ph	650	Technics SU-C3000
Audio Note M2RIAA Audio Prism Mantissa	0	Ph	1,099 1,995	Siemel TU10 Siemel TR20	0		1,599 1,599	Trilogy 918 Woodside SC26 Line & Phone
Audio Research LS8	0		1,449	Sonic Frontiers Anthem Pre 1P		Ph	899	YBA 1
Audio Research PH3 Audio Research LS9		Ph	1,490	Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	•	Ph	1,999	
Audio Synthesis Pro Passion	0		1,949 595	Sonographe SC26 Sugden Audition Pre	0		995 549	POWER AMP
Audio Synthesis Passion	0		695	Sugden Masterclass Pre	0		1,995	KEY
Audio Synthesis Passion 8S Audio Synthesis Passion 8M	0		1,295 1,695	Sumo Athena II Line Sumo Athena IIB/II LS	0 0		767 987	'20W' - Rated RMS of
Aura CA-200		Ph	700	Sumo Athena III	Θ		987	channel into nominal
AVI S2000MP AVI S2000MP+P	0	Ph	949 1,199	Sumo Artemis uP Sunfire The Classic	0		1,595 1,630	UP TO £500
Beam-Echo SP-21	0	Ph	1,116	T+A P1200R	õ		965	Arcam Alpha 8P
Bryston .4	Θ	_	642	TAG McLaren PA10 TAG McLaren PPA20	Θ	Ph	849	Arcam Alpha 9P Creek A43
Bryston BP5 Bryston BP20	0	Ph	889 1,126	TAG McLaren PA20	Ø	Ph	1,499 1,499	Creek A52
Bryston BP-25			1,326	Talk Electronics Hurricane 2	G		650	Crimson CS620C
Canary Audio CA-606 Canary Audio CA-601	0		1,295 1,595	Talk Electronics Hurricane 3 Talk Electronics Hurricane 4	0		900 1,550	Cyrus XPA Cyrus Power
Cary SLP-50	õ		995	Talk Electronics Hurricane 5	õ		1,900	Earmax Headphone
Cary SLP-74 Cary PH-301	Θ	-	1,795 1,795	Technics SU-C2000 Thorens TTP-2000F	0	Ph	700 699	Earmax Headphone Pro LFD Mistral Power
Chord Phono		Ph Ph	1,795	Thule Audio Spirit PR150B	6	Ph	699	LFD Mistral Power LFD PAO Powerstage
Chord CPA 1800	G		1,905	Trilogy 901	G	-	750	Magnum MF120 Marantz MA-500
Concordant Exhilerant Concordant Exquisite			900 1,950	Trilogy 906 Trilogy 902	G	Ph	995 1,595	Marantz MA-700
Conrad-Johnson PV-10AL	ø		995	Tron Retro	0		1,000	Moth 30 Stereo
Conrad-Johnson PV-10A Conrad-Johnson PV-12AL	6	Ph	1,295 1,990	Tron Nucleus Phono Tron Nucleus	ø	Ph	2,000 2,000	Moth Phones-01 Moth 30 Mono/40
Conrad-Johnson EF-1	0	Ph	1,990	Tube Tech Seer Line	ø		935	Musical Fidelity X-CANS
Conrad-Johnson PF-2	0	Ph	1,990	Tube Tech Mac Phono	-	Ph	1,150 1,970	Musical Fidelity E30 Musical Fidelity X-A50
Copland CSA303 Copland CTA301 Mkll	6	Ph	1,099 1,249	Tube Tech Prophet van Den Hul Pre-amp	0		1,970	Myryad T-60
CR Dev Carmenta	ø		659	Wilson Benesch Stage One		Ph	995	Myryad MA 120
CR Dev Argento Credo CMP004		Ph	699 1,246	Woodside SC27 Line Woodside SC26 Line	Θ		949 1,557	NAD 912 NAD 214
Credo CMP005			1,876	XTC PRE-1	G		1,250	NAD 216THX
Cyrus aCA7 Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	0	Dh	798 826	Yamaha CX-2 YBA 3	0	Ph	650 1,199	Naim NAP90/3 Parasound HCA-750A
Densen Beat B-200	0	Ph	1,000	YBA Integre	6		1,199	Quad 99 Stereo Power
Densen DM-20	0	-	1,200	YBA 2	Ø		1,999	Rega Maia
DNM 3 Start DNM 3A Start	00	Ph Ph	1,000 1,650	OVER £2,000	1			Rotel RB971 Rotel RB981
DPA Enlightenment pre			795	Adyton Temper			2,495	Rotel RB991
Dynavector L200 Dynavector P100	0	Ph	995 1,495	Adyton Modus ATC SCA2	0		2,695 2,599	Shearne 3.5 Talk Electronics Tornado 1
Dynavector L100	0	-n	1,995	Audio Note M3Line			2,650	Technics SE-A1000 Mk2
Earmax Pre ECA Vista S	Θ		1,895 760	Audio Prism Avanti Audio Research LS15	0		7,995 3,399	£501 TO £2,000
ECA Vista S ECA Vista HD	6		880	Audio Research LS15 Audio Research LS25	0		4,999	Alchemist Kraken Pwr
ECA Prisma		Ph	880	Audio Research REF 1	0		8,495	Alchemist Forseti Pwr
Electrocompaniet EC-4.5			1,195	Boulder L3AE	0		2,100	Alchemist Signature Power
								July/August 1999

0	Boulder LSAE			3,400
0	Boulder L5M Boulder 2010	Ø		3,800 22,000
0	Canary Audio CA-801	õ		3,750
0	Cary SLP-98L Chord CPA 2200	0		2,595 2,530
0	Chord CPA 3200	0		3,785
0	Chord CPA 4000	G		6,675
5	Conrad-Johnson PF-R Conrad-Johnson PV-12A	0	Ph	2,490 2,590
0	Conrad-Johnson Premier 15		Ph	3,995
19 19	Conrad-Johnson Premier 14 Conrad-Johnson Premier 16LS	0		4,495 7,995
19	Conrad-Johnson Art	0		14,995
9	CAT SL1 Ultimate CR Dev Kastor	0	Ph	5,950
19 19	Credo LPR 001	0		2,995 2,815
0	DNM 3C Primus	0	Ph	2,550
0	DNM 3C Twin DNM 3C Six	0	Ph Ph	3,800 5,050
95	EAR 802MC	Θ	Ph	2,599
0	EAR G88 EAR P52	0	Ph Ph	9,999 15,999
00	Gamma Era Ref	0	Ph	7,999
00 99	Graaf GM13.5B Jadis DPL	0		3,750 2,900
25	Jadis DPMC	0	Ph	2,900
95	Jadis JPL	Θ		4,200
55 95	Jadis JPP200 Jadis JP30MC	0	Ph	4,290
95	Jadis JPS2	0		6,690
99 50	Jadis JP80MC	0	Ph	10,166
95	Jadis JP200MC Krell KRC3	ø		15,900 2,998
50	Krell KRC-HR	ø	-	6,949
50 50	LFD Disc Preamp Mark Levinson 25S		Ph Ph	4,499 2,950
90	Mark Levinson 380	0		3,995
00	Mark Levinson 380S Matisse Fantasy	0		6,495 2,500
00	Matisse Reference	0	Ph	3,500
50	McIntosh C22	Θ	Ph	2,999
45 30	McIntosh C40 McIntosh C39	0	Ph Ph	4,999 5,999
50	Meracus Pretare	õ	Ph	2,195
00 98	Naim NAC82 Naim NAC52	0		2,225 3,450
50	Roksan ROK-L1.5	0		2,250
50	Rowland Synergy	Θ		4,999
25 25	Rowland Coherence Sonic Frontiers Line 1	0		14,999 2,499
99	Sonic Frontiers Line 2			3,299
99 50	Sonic Frontiers Line 3 T+A Pre DA3000			4,999
50	Technics SU-C3000	0	Ph	2,640 2,997
99	Trilogy 918	0		2,775
99 99	Woodside SC26 Line & Phono YBA 1	6 0	Ph	2,233 3,500
99		T	2.14	
95 49	POWER AMPS			
95	KEY			
67 87	'20W' - Rated RMS outp			
87	channel into nominal loa	nd of a	8 Ohm	S.
95 30	UP TO £500			
50 65	Arcam Alpha 8P	50W		260
49	Arcam Alpha 9P	70W		400
99 99	Creek A43 Creek A52	50W 70W		399 499
50	Crimson CS620C	50W		450
00 50	Cyrus XPA Cyrus Power	50W	-	298 498
00	Earmax Headphone	100W		<b>498</b> 375
00	Earmax Headphone Pro	0.1W		475
99 99	LFD Mistral Power LFD PAO Powerstage	60W 50W		449 499
50	Magnum MF120	85W		365
95 95	Marantz MA-500 Marantz MA-700	125W 200W		250 400
00	Moth 30 Stereo	200W		249
00	Moth Phones-01 Moth 30 Mono/40	0.1W		299 469
35	Musical Fidelity X-CANS	40W 0.1W		130
50	Musical Fidelity E30	100W	1	500
70 00	Musical Fidelity X-A50 Myryad T-60	50W		<b>500</b> 300
95	Myryad MA 120	60W		480
49 57	NAD 912 NAD 214	30W		200 370
50	NAD 216THX	125W		470
50	Naim NAP90/3 Parasound HCA-750A	30W		460 450
99 99	Quad 99 Stereo Power	75W 85W		450 500
99	Rega Maia	85W		450
	Rotel RB971 Rotel RB981	70W		200 300
95	Rotel RB991	200V	V	500
95 99	Shearne 3.5 Talk Electronics Tornado 1	35W		489 450
50	Technics SE-A1000 Mk2	50W 70W		350
95 99	E501 TO E2,000	CALCULAR ST	A COLORED	
99 99	Alchemist Kraken Pwr	55W	1	549
95	Alchemist Forseti Pwr	150V		1,399
	Alchomict Cignoture Downer	1001	1	1000
00	Alchemist Signature Power	100V	V	1,999

#### H T F Π Р R I C Ð **GUIDE**

18W

70W

100W

50W

60W

100W

200W

80W

100W

10W

60W

100W

160W

400W

250W

100W

200W 200W

250W 300W

600W

350W

650W 250W

500W

80W

120W

250W

180W

275W

300W

125W 250W

350W

150W

180W

300W

500W

999W 75W

-W 160W

125W

175W

300W

200W

300W

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200W

160W 75W

150W 250W

350W 100W

50W 55W

110W

220W

75W

240W 300W

600W 190W

145W

200W

45W 100W

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999W 150W

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200W

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350W

415W 130W

250W

70W

140W 150W

275W

100W

35W

50W

23W 130W

32W

100W

200W

120W

250W

180W

80W

125W

20W

2,500

3,750

3,995

3,599

4.699

4,699 6,499 2,695 3,995

4,595

2,199

4.000

4,999

POWER AMPS (CONTINU	JED)
Arcam Alpha 10P	100W
Aria Power 35	35W
Art Audio Quintet	15W
Art Audio Quintet SE MB	??
Art Audio Concerto	50W
Audio Analogue Donizetti	60W
Audio Note The P	40W
Audio Note P Zero	9W
Audio Note P1	12W
Audio Note P1SE	12W
Audio Note P2	20W
Audio Note P2SE	18W
Audio Note Conqueror	8W
Audio Prism Antares	35W
Audio Research D130	130W
Audio Research VT60	35W
Aura PA-100 Aura PA-200	100W
Aura PA-200 C	100W
AVI S2000MM	150W
Bryston 2B-LP	75W
Bryston 3B-ST PRO	150W
Bryston 3B-ST	150W
Bryston THX3B	150W
Bryston 7B-ST PRO	500W
Bryston 4B-ST PRO	300W
Bryston 7B-ST	500W
Bryston THX4B	300W
Bryston THX7B	500W
Canary Audio CA-706	40W
Canary Audio CA-708 Chord SPM 400	50W
Chord SPM 600	100W 130W
Conrad-Johnson MV-55 Copland CSA515	50W
Copland CTA505 CR Dev Amphion	67W
Credo PMP 804	12W
Creek A52SE Crimson CS630C	100W
Cyrus aPA7	150W
Densen B-300	100W
Densen DM-30	100W
DNM PA Start	45W
DNM PA1 Start	45W
DPA Enlightenment pwr	100W
Dynavector HX75	75W
Earmax Power ECA Lectern S	25W
ECA Lectern HD	50W 50W
Electrocompaniet AW60FTT	60W
Exposure XVIII Super	70W
Golden Tube Audio SE-40	40W
Golden Tube Audio SE-300B MkII	8W
Graaf Venticinque P	25W
Hi Q Sound MCM	70W
Jadis DA5	40W
Krell KAV150a	150W
Lexicon 212	120W
LFD PA1 Powerstage	60W
LFD PA2 Powerstage	75W
LFD PA2M Powerstage	90W
Linn LK100	50W
Linn LK240	120W
Linn AV5105	100W
Lynwood Ruby	120W
Magnum MF330	150W
Magnum MF660	125W
Magnum A500SE	200W
Magnum A50SE McIntosh MC7100	200W
Meracus Ciere Meridian 555	60W
Meridian 556	60W 100W
Meridian 557	200W
Meridian 505	160W
Michell Alecto Stereo	50W
Michell Alecto Mono	100W
Michi RHB-05	100W
Michi RHB-10	200W
Micromega Amp	100W
Monrio Asty P Moth Stereo 60	100W
Moth 30 Mono/100 Muse Model 100	100W
Musical Fidelity X-A200 NAD 218THX	200W
Naim NAP140	200W 45W
Naim NAP180	60W
Naim NAP135	75W
Naim NAP250	70W
NVA A60	43W
Papworth TVA50 Parasound HCA-1000A	50W
Parasound HCA-1500A	125W 205W
Quad 77 Power	85W
Quad 909	140W
Quad 707	140W
Quad 99 Monoblock	150W
Rega EXS	70W
Rega Exon	125W
Roksan Caspian Power	70W
Roksan ROK-S1.5	100W
Rose RP-190 (Dual Mode)	75W
Shearne Phase 3	50W
Shearne Phase 3 Reference	50W
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Gamma Aeon

	Shearne Phase 5 Mono
600 ,500	Sonic Frontiers Anthem Amp 1 Sonographe SA250
, <mark>393</mark> ,500	Sonographe SA400
,500	Sugden Audition Power Sugden A21a Power
595 550	Sumo Polaris III Sumo Model Five
599	Sumo Andromeda III
750 999	T+A A1210 T+A PA1220R
,000	T+A A1500
,499 ,599	T+A PA1500R TAG McLaren 60P
,695 ,890	TAG McLaren 100P Talk Electronics Tornado 2
,999	Talk Electronics Tornado 3
700 ,200	Talk Electronics Tornado 4 Technics SE-A2000
,250	Thorens TTA-2000
,399 750	Thule Audio Spirit PA100 Thule Audio Spirit PA150B
,160 ,160	Trilogy 948 Trilogy 948T
,262	Tube Tech Syrinx
,545 ,756	Tube Tech Unisis Sig, Pwr Woodside SA240
,815	Woodside MA100
,850 ,886	Woodside STA50 XTC POW-2
695	Yamaha MX-2
,950 ,425	YBA 3 stereo
,850 ,995	OVER £2,000 Adyton Cordis 1.6
,299	Adyton Cordis 3B
, <mark>899</mark> ,949	Aria Smart 845 Aria Smart 300B
,876	Art Audio Tempo
599 800	Art Audio Quintet SE Art Audio Maestro
948	ATC SPA2-200PRO ATC SPA2-150
800 ,200	Audio Note P3
,000 ,650	Audio Note Quest Audio Note Yubi
995	Audio Note Conquest
,995 ,895	Audio Note Tomei Audio Note Neiro
880	Audio Note Ankoru
,480 ,095	Audio Prism Debut Mk II Audio Prism Mana
850	Audio Research VT50
,100 ,790	Audio Research 100.2 Audio Research VT100 MkII
,425 715	Audio Research VT200
749	Audio Synthesis Desire Decade Beam-Echo DL7-35
990 850	Belcanto SET40 Belcanto Orfeo 30S
000	Belcanto SET80
599 ,999	Border Patrol 300B SE Border Patrol 300B SE (WE)
650	Boulder 102AE
750 ,200	Boulder 102M
005	Boulder 500AE
985	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M
685 825	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M Boulder 2060 Boulder 2050
685 825 ,485	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M Boulder 2060 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999	Boulder 500AE Boulder 2060 Boulder 2060 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301
685 825 ,485 ,595	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M Boulder 2060 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 <b>750</b> 895	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M Boulder 2060 Boylot 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 <b>750</b> 895 ,400 ,590	Boulder 500AE Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bnyston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-303 Cany Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E Cary 3005E Sig Cary CAD-805
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 <b>750</b> 895 ,400 ,590 ,150	Boulder S00AE Boulder S00M Boulder 2060 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-572SE Cary CAD-300SE Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 <b>750</b> 895 ,400 ,590 ,150 ,950 ,100	Boulder 500AE Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200B
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 <b>750</b> 895 ,400 ,590 ,150 ,950 ,100 ,000	Boulder S00AE Boulder S00M Boulder 2060 Boulder 2050 Granary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-572SE Cary CAD-300SE Cary CAD-300SE Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 <b>750</b> 895 ,400 ,590 ,150 ,950 ,100 ,150 950	Boulder 500AE Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200D Chord SPM 1200D Chord SPM 1200D
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 <b>750</b> 895 ,400 ,590 ,150 ,950 ,100 ,000 ,150	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M Boulder 2050 Boylson THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 ,750 895 ,400 ,590 ,100 ,000 ,150 950 ,599 879 ,490	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200D Chord SPM 1200D Chord SPM 1200D Chord SPM 1200D Conrad-Johnson MF-2500 Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 750 895 ,400 ,590 ,100 ,100 ,100 ,000 ,150 950 599 879 ,490 ,000 850	Boulder S00AE Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 ,750 895 ,400 ,590 ,100 ,000 ,150 ,950 ,100 ,000 ,150 ,950 ,100 ,000 ,879 ,490 ,000 850 ,770	Boulder 500AE Boulder 500M Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Conrad-Johnson MF2250 Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A
685 825 ,485 ,595 ,999 ,095 750 895 ,400 ,590 ,150 ,950 ,150 ,950 ,150 ,950 879 879 ,490 ,000 850 850 877 ,700 090 ,705	Boulder S00AE Boulder S00M Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200C Conrad-Johnson MF2250 Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 8A CAT JL1 CR Dev Artemis Credo LPO 804
685 825 595 999 905 750 895 400 550 559 879 490 000 850 770 950 879 490 000 850 770 955 550	Boulder S00AE Boulder S00M Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Bryston THX8B Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E Sig Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 12 Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS Conrad-Johnson Premier 8XS Con
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685 825 595 595 599 750 899 1,150 599 1,150 1,100 0,000 1,150 950 599 879 490 0,000 850 770 8850 770 550 0,000 850 7705 560 0,000 800 800 8000 200	Boulder SOOAE Boulder SOOM Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Boulder 2050 Canary Audio CA-304 Canary Audio CA-301 Canary Audio CA-303 Cany CAD-5725E Cary CAD-3005E Cary CAD-3005E Cary CAD-805 Chord SPM 1000B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200B Chord SPM 1200C Conrad-Johnson MF-2500 Conrad-Johnson MF-2500 Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A Conrad-Johnson Premier 11A Conrad-Johnson Premier 8X Conrad-Johnson Premier 8X
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1,598	Gamma Space Ref
1,299	Gamma Aeon Ref
1,195	Golden Tube Audio SE-100
1,695	Graaf 5050
549	Graaf GM20
649	Graaf GM100
950	Graaf GM200
1,975	Jadis DA8
1,975	Jadis DA7
875	Jadis JA30 Jadis SE300B
1,445	Jadis JA80
1,535 1,665	Jadis JA00
849	Jadis JA100
1,099	Jadis JA500
600	Krell KAV250a
750	Krell KAV500/2
1,100	Krell KAV500i
1,100	Krell FPB200
599	Krell FPB250m
600	Krell FPB300
699	Krell FPB600
1,895	Krell FPB350m
1,895	Krell FPB650m
1,150	Lexicon 225
1,900	Lexicon 501
1,199 1,733	Linn Klout Lumley M125
	Lumley M250
1,880 1,450	Magnum Class A mono
750	Magnum A200SE
1,299	Mana Stealth
1,255	Mark Levinson 334
	Mark Levinson 335
3,495	Mark Levinson 336
12,995	Mark Levinson 33H
3,500	Matisse Ref Monoblocks
4,250	McIntosh MC150
2,499	McIntosh MC300
2,500	McIntosh MC500
3,524	McIntosh MC1000
2,056	Meracus Tentare Meracus Cantare
2,699 2,150	Muse Model 160 Ser. II
2,750	Muse Model 150
3,850	Muse Model 175 Ser. II
4,450	Muse Model 300 Ser. II
8,500	Musical Fidelity F16
11,360	Musical Fidelity F19
14,500	Papworth M100
2,495	Papworth M200
12,995	Roksan ROK-M1.5
2,950	Rowland Model 2
3,395	Rowland Model 6
4,950	Rowland Model 8T
	Rowland Model 9T
8,790	Shearne Phase 1 Pwr Ref
2,495	Sigmal TA20
2,495 3,525	Siemel TA20
2,495 3,525 3,450	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 <b>3,995</b>	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 <b>3,995</b> 4,495 2,800 3,100	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 <b>3,995</b> 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 <b>3,995</b> 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 3,995 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500 25,000	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 3,995 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500 25,000 43,500	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Triloy 958T
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 3,995 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500 25,000 43,500 2,385	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 9581
2,495 3,525 3,450 6,750 6,750 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500 25,000 43,500 2,385 2,695	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 9581
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 3,995 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500 25,000 43,500 2,385 2,695 2,995	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterdass Power Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 9581 Trilogy 9581 Tube Tech Spnergy DMA
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 3,995 4,495 2,800 4,995 5,500 25,000 43,500 2,385 2,695 2,995 5,495	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Songer Frontiers Power 3 Sugden MasterClass Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Sonesis Sig. Tube Tech Synesy DMA van Den Hul Power amp
2,495 3,525 3,450 6,750 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500 25,000 43,500 2,385 2,695 2,995 2,495	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterclass Power Sumo Model TenylM Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 9581 Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Genesis Sig. Tube Tech Synergy DMA van Den Hul Power amp XIC POW-1
2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 6,750 3,995 4,495 2,800 4,995 5,500 25,000 43,500 2,385 2,695 2,995 5,495	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Songer Frontiers Power 3 Sugden MasterClass Power 3 Sumo Model Ten/M Sunfire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 958 Tube Tech Sonesis Sig. Tube Tech Synesy DMA van Den Hul Power amp
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2,495 3,525 3,450 6,750 3,995 4,495 2,800 3,100 4,995 5,500 2,385 2,695 2,995 5,495 2,995 3,995 4,795	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterdass Power 3 Sundire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 9581 Trilogy 9581 Trilogy 9581 Tube Tech Synergy DMA van Den Hul Power amp XTC POW-1 YBA 2 stereo
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2,495 3,525 3,450 4,750 4,750 4,995 2,800 2,800 2,500 2,500 2,500 2,385 2,695 2,995 2,995 2,995 2,995 3,995 4,795 8,995 2,995 4,795 8,995 2,995 4,795 8,995 2,995 4,790 4,210 8,420 14,570 2,295 3,500 6,900 17,000 18,000 4,995	Siemel TA20 Sonic Frontiers Power 1 Sonic Frontiers Power 2 Sonic Frontiers Power 3 Sugden Masterdass Power 3 Sundire Load Invariant Sunfire Signature T+A A3000 TAG McLaren 125M Talk Electronics Tornado 5 Trilogy 9581 Trilogy 9581 Trilogy 9581 Tube Tech Synergy DMA van Den Hul Power amp XTC POW-1 YBA 2 stereo

#### CABLES Analogue Interconnects

③ – Stranded construction. Solid-core construction. Prices of interconnects are for a one-metre terminated pair.

Acoustic Precision Eikos Apertura Model B

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7,999	Apertura Model A
49,999	Argento Copper I/C
2,495	Argento Silver I/C
2,100 2,850	Art Yam Church 5000 Audio Note AN-A
4,250	Audio Note AN-C
7,500	Audio Note AN-S
2,990	Audio Note AN-V Audio Note AN-Vx
4,790 5,180	Audio Note AN-VX Audioquest Jade
7,980	
9,580	Audioquest Turquoise 2 Audioquest Topaz x2
10,298	Audioquest Ruby x3
13,980 19,990	Audioquest Quartz x3 Audioquest Opal x3
3,145	Audioquest Emerald x3
3,195	Audioquest Lapis x3
4,499 5,998	Cable Talk Improved 2/CD Cable Talk Advanced 2
8,994	Cable Talk Improved 2/Tape
9,500	Cable Talk Monitor 2.1
12,900	Cable Talk Studio 2 Cable Talk Professional 2
15,994 23,800	Cable Talk Professional 2 Cable Talk Broadcast 2
2,500	Cable Talk Reference 2
5,000	Cable Talk Signature 2 Gold
2,400	Cambridge Atlantic
3,750 7,500	Cambridge Arctic Cambridge Pacific
2,450	Cambridge Studio Reference
3,750	Cambridge Silver Spirit 40
4,500	Cambridge Silver Spirit 60
5,495 7,495	Cardas Audio 300B-Microtwin Cardas Audio Quadlink-Five
8,995	Cardas Audio Cardas Cross
19,395	Cardas Audio Hexlink-Five C
8,000	Cardas Audio Hexlink Golden-
3,499 3,999	Cardas Audio Golden Cross ChordCo Chrysalis
8,999	ChordCo Cobra 2
14,999	ChordCo Siren
2,245 8,995	ChordCo Chameleon 2 ChordCo Chorus
2,290	Connections UK Ultra
2,690	Connections UK Midas
3,490	Connections UK HD
3,990 2,500	DBF Acoustics Black Velvet DBF Acoustics Black Velvet SE
4,000	DBF Acoustics Azure SE
2,645	DNM-Reson TCC75
3,825 2,250	DPA Slink
4,999	DPA White Slink DPA Black Slink
10,999	Ecosse Ref CA1
12,499	Ecosse Ref CS1
27,999 2,399	Ecosse Ref MA2 Ecosse Ref MS2
2,350	Ecosse Ref US1
2,499	Expressive Tech IC-1
4,999 8,599	Gamma Wow Balance
2,995	Goertz M1 Interconnect GT Audio Intercon
4,200	Harmonix HS-102
2,280	Harmonix HS-101
2,600 2.850	Henley HSP10 Henley HSP50
2,850	Henley HSP100
2,100	Henley HSP200
3,395	Henley HSP250
3,395 4,700	Heybrook Black Flash Insert Audio Focus 1.2
6,400	Insert Audio IC100 Mk II
2,500	Insert Audio Image 5.1
2,250	Insert Audio Status 3.4 Ixos 104
2,200	Ixos 1003
.,	lxos Gamma 1002
Sec. 1	Ixos 103
	lxos 102 lxos 101
	Ixos 100.XO3
	Kimber PBJ/Ultraplate
	Kimber KC1
	Kimber Hero Kimber Silver Streak
	Kimber KCAG
	Kimber KCTG
	LAT International IC-50 LAT International IC-80 MkII
	LAT International IC-100 MkI
	LAT International IC-200 Mk II
Service and	Lieder Chanson
	Lieder Lek Lieder Het Lied
cho	Lieder Song
cus	Lieder Maas
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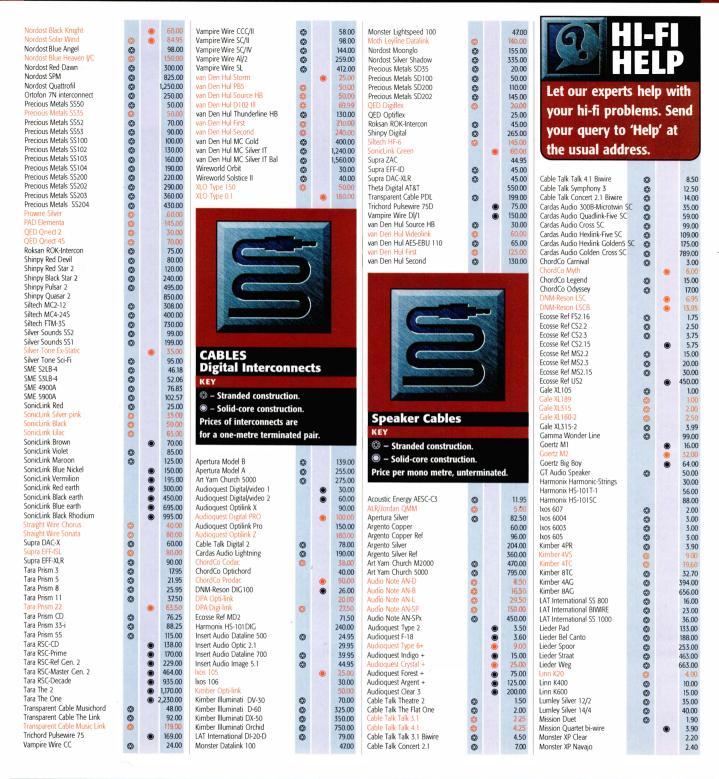
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#### HI-FI PRICE GUIDE





You can now buy the cables for your Hi-Fi or Home Entertainment System from our web site on the Internet. The most convenient and affordable way to buy cables and interconnects from leading manufacturers. Discounted prices on all products

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MC MC MC

MC

SPEAKER CABLES (CO	NTINUE	D)
Monster Superflat Mini		
Monster XP HP	٢	
Monster Original	٢	
Monster New Monster Naim NAC A5	©	
Nordost Octava		
Nordost 4-Flat		•
Nordost Solar Wind Bi-wire Nordost Blue Heaven Spkr	0	
Nordost Red Dawn	0	
Nordost SPM	٢	
Ortofon SPK100 Ortofon SPK200	0	
Ortofon SPK300		
Precious Metals SL32	٢	
Precious Metals SL102 Precious Metals SL34	() ()	
Precious Metals SL104	õ	
Precious Metals SL106	٢	
Precious Metals SL108 Puresonic OFC 7892	0	
Puresonic OFC 7844	õ	
Puresonic OFC 7845	٢	
Puresonic OFC 7891 Puresonic OFC 7816	() ()	
Puresonic OFC 7832	٢	
Puresonic OFC 7812	٢	
Puresonic OFC 7825 Puresonic PSOCC 7801	0	
Puresonic PSOCC 7801 Puresonic PSOCC 7802	٢	
Puresonic PSOCC 7803 OED Oudos Micro	٢	
QED Qudos micro 4 core	0	
QED Qudos 4 core	٢	
QED Qudos Bi-Wire QED Qudos Silver	٢	
QED Profile 4x4	©	
QED Profile Silver 12	٢	
Rega REGA Roksan ROK-Speaker	0	
Shinpy Red Devil	0	
Shinpy Red Star 2	٢	
Shinpy Black Star 2	0	
Shinpy Pulsar 2 Shinpy Quasar 2	٢	
Siltech LS2-45	٢	
Siltech FT-12 Mkl Siltech LS4-120	0	
Silver Sounds 12 Gauge	٢	
Silver Sounds 10 Gauge	0	
Silver Sounds 8 Gauge Silver Tone Silver-Sonic	0	
Silver Tone Silver-Sonic HC	٢	
Silver Tone Silver-Voice	0	
Silver Tone Silver-Voice Ultra SonicLink AST50		
SonicLink AST60	٢	
SonicLink AST75	0	
SonicLink AST200 SonicLink AST200x2	0	
SonicLink S300	٢	
SonicLink S130x2 SonicLink S300x2	0	
SonicLink S900	0	
SonicLink S600x2	٢	
SonicLink Black Rhodium 4 Straight Wire Quartet		
Supra Classic 2.5	0	
Supra Linc 2.5 Flex	٢	
Supra Classic 4.0 Supra Ply 2.0	0	
Supra Linc 4.0 Flex	0	
Supra Ply 3.4	٢	
Supra Quattro 4x4 Supra Classic 10	0	
Tara Prism Extra	٢	
Tara Klara Tara Price Omni	٢	
Tara Prism Omni Tara Prism 2+2	0	
Tech + Link SPC 79	٢	
Transparent Cable Musichord	٢	
Transparent Cable The Wave Transparent Cable Music Wave	() ()	
Vampire Wire SC-384	0	
Vampire Wire SC-554	٢	-
Vampire Wire ST-I Vampire Wire SC-1108	٢	۲
Vampire Wire ST-II		0
Vampire Wire ST-III		۲



Let our experts help with your hi-fi problems. Send your query to 'Help' at the usual address.

van Den Hul Skyline HB	٠	
van Den Hul Snowline	Ö	
van Den Hul Skytrack HB	Ó	
van Den Hul Gold Water	٢	
van Den Hul Clearwater		
van Den Hul Snowtrack	٢	
van Den Hul CS122 HB	٢	
van Den Hul Cleartrack	٢	
van Den Hul D352 HB	٢	
van Den Hul Teatrack HB	٢	
van Den Hul SCS12	٢	
van Den Hul Magnum HB	٢	
van Den Hul The Wind HB	٢	
van Den Hul Revolution HB	٢	
van Den Hul Revelation HB	٢	
van Den Hul The Third	٢	
XLO Pro 625	٢	
XLO Pro 600	٢	

2.75 3.70 4.40

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#### CARTRIDGES

MM – Moving-magnet type. MC - Moving-coil type.

UP 10 £100	
Audio Note IO1	

Audio Note IO1	мм
Audio Technica AT-91	MM
Audio Technica AT-95E	MM
Audio Technica AT-110E Audio Technica AT450E	MM
Audio Technica AT450E Audio Technica AT440ML	MM
Benz-Micro MC20EII	
Denon DL110	
Denon DL160	
Denon DL103 Goldring Elan	
Goldring Elektra	MM
Goldring 1006	MM
Goldring 1012GX Goldring 1022GX	MM
Goldring 1022GX Grado ZTE+1	MM
Grado ZCE+1	MM
Grado ZF3E+1	MM
Grado Prestige Black	MM
Grado Prestige Green	MM
Grado Prestige Blue Grado ZF1+	MM MM
Grado Prestige Red	MM
N'ham Tracer I	MM
Ortofon OM 3E	MM
Ortofon OM 5E Ortofon OM 10	MM
Ortofon 510	MM
Ortofon OM DJ	MM
Ortofon OM 20	MM
Ortofon 520 Ortofon MC1 Turbo	MM
Ortofon Concorde DJ	MM
Ortofon OM 30	MM
Ortofon 530 Pickering TE-15	MM
Pickering VE-15	MM MM
	MM
Pickering T-E Pickering V15-DJ	MM
Pickering TL-E	MM
Pickering TL-2E Pickering XV15-625E	MM
Pickering XV15-150-DJ	MM
Pickering TL-2-S Pickering XV15-757S	MM
Pickering XV15-7575 Pickering XV15-625DJ	MM
Pickering XV15-1800S	MM MM
Pickering TL3S	MM
Pickering XEV-3001E	MM
Pickering XLZ-3500 Pickering TL-4-S	MM MM
Rega Bias	MM
Rega RB78	MM
Rega Super Bias	MM
Rega Elys Shure M70BX	MM
Shure M92E	MM
Shure SC35C	MM
Shure M447X Shure M44GX	MM MM
Stanton 500AL II	MM
Stanton 500EL	MM

3.50 5.00 5.50 7.00	Stanton 680AL/X Stanton 680EL/X Sumiko Oyster Sumiko Black Pearl	MM MM MM
<b>7.00</b> 0.00	Sumiko Pearl Sumiko Blue Point	мм
<b>2.00</b> 3.00	OVER £100	
0.00	Audio Note IO2	мм
4.00 8.00	Audio Note Soara Audio Note IO1V	
0.00	Audio Note IOLtd Audio Technica AT-OC9	
0.00	Benz-Micro The Glider Benz-Micro Reference	
4.00	Benz-Micro Reference Ruby Benz-Micro Ruby Open Air	
5.00	Denon DL304 Dynavector 10X4II	
	Dynavector DV20XH	
4	Dynavector DV20XL Dynavector 17D2	
	Dynavector XX-1L Dynavector XX-1	
	Dynavector Te-Kaitora Goldring Eroica LX	
	Goldring Eroica Goldring 1042	мм
	Goldring Elite Goldring Excel VX	
	Grado Prestige Silver Grado Prestige Gold	
	Grado Signature Junior Grado Signature 8MZ	MM MM
	Grado Signature MCZ Grado Signature TLZ	MM MM
	Grado Signature XTZ Grado Reference	
	Koetsu Red T Koetsu Red K Sig	
	Koetsu Urushi Koetsu Signature	
	Koetsu Gold PR Linn K9	мм
99 15	Linn Klyde Linn Arkiv	
20 28	London Decca Maroon London Decca Gold	MM
70 90	London Decca Maroon Dp London Decca Gold Dp	MM
70 70	London Decca S Gold London Decca S Gold Dp	
90 100	London Decca Jubilee Lyra Lydian Beta	MM
19 29	Lyra Clavis Da Capo Lyra Parnassus DCt	
59 <b>79</b>	N'ham Tracer II N'ham Tracer III	MM MM
99 27	N'ham Tracer IV Ortofon MC15 Super II	мм
37 48	Ortofon 540 Ortofon MC3 Turbo	MM
49 59	Ortofon MC25E Ortofon MC25FL	
69 83	Ortofon MC10 Supreme Ortofon MC20 Supreme	
99 98	Ortofon MC30 Supreme Ortofon MC2000II	
16 20	Ortofon MC Rohmann Ortofon MC3000 II	
30 40	Ortofon MC Jubilee Ortofon MC7500	
50 70	Pickering TL-3003 Pickering XLZ-4500	
70 75	Pickering TL-4004 Pickering XSV-5000U	
80 90	Pickering XLZ-7500 Pickering TLZ-7500-S	
100 20	Reson Mica Reson Reca	MM
25 25	Reson Aciore Reson Etile	
28 35	Reson Lexe Roksan Corus Black	
45 50	Roksan Shiraz Shure V15XMR	мм
50 55	Stanton 890AL/X Sumiko BPS	MM
60 60	Transfiguration Esprit Transfiguration Spirit	
70 80	Transfiguration Temper Supreme van Den Hul MM-1	мм
95 100	van Den Hul MM-2 van Den Hul DDT-II	MM
100 39	van Den Hul MC-10 van Den Hul MC-One	
39 59	van Den Hul MC-ONE Super van Den Hul MC-Two	
<b>85</b> 21	van Den Hul The Frog Low o/p van Den Hul Grasshopper IIISLA	
22 29	van Den Hul Grasshopper IIIGLN van Den Hul Grasshopper IIIGLA	
35 35	van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICMN van Den Hul Grasshopper IIICHN	
35 44	van Den Hul Grasshopper IVGLA Wilson Benesch Matrix	

мс	59 74 30 50 70 100	Wilson Benesch Analog Wilson Benesch Carbon	
MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC M	139 795 4,500 330 600 1,500 1,500 1,600 200 189 299 299 450 998 998 1,698 110 110 120 220	CASSETTE DEC KEY Autoreverse – nor remove and turn arouno 3-H – 3 heads, i.e. sept and replay heads. UP TO £200	o need I the t
мс	119 149 150 250 375 650 975 995 1,359	Akai DXW1100 Akai DX1200 Ariston WX-510 Denon DRW-585 Goodmans Delta 801 H/K DCS20 JVC TD-X372BK	11 1 1
MC MC MC	1,899 1,999 2,999 5,498	JVC TD-R472BK Kenwood KX-W4080 Kenwood KX-3080 Kenwood KX-W6080	11
MC MC	125 500 1,000 299	Kenwood KX-5080S Marantz SD-455 Marantz SD-57 Onkyo K 185	+
	319 379 399 439 519	Pioneer CT-S250 Pioneer CT-W205R Pioneer CT-W505R Pioneer CT-S450S Pioneer CT-W606DR	111 1
MC MC	999 599 995 1,895 310 410	Sony TC-KE200 Sony TC-WE525 Sony TC-KB820S Sony TC-WE725 Teac W-416 Teac V-615	1 1
MC MC MC MC MC	660 140 150 200 250 300 450	Teac RH-300 Teac RH-300 Teac W-790R Teac RH-500 Technics RS-BX501 Technics RS-TR373 Technics RS-TR373 Technics RS-TR474 Technics RS-AZ6 Yamaha KX-393	11 1111
MC MC MC	550 800 1,000 1,200	Yamaha KX-W321 Yamaha KX-493	+
MC	1,250 2,000 145 150 175 200 200 200 185 250	OVER £200 Denon DRM-650S Denon DRM-740 Denon DRS-810 H/K TD420 J/C TD-V662BK J/C TD-V7682BK NAD 613 NAD 614	
MC MC MC	299 455 1,300 150	NAD 616 Onkyo TA 6210 Onkyo TARW 211 Onkyo TARW 311	1 11
мс	990 295 120	Onkyo TA 6310 Onkyo KR 609 Onkyo KW 606	11
MC MC MC MC	250 950 950 2,250 250 300	Onkyo TARW 411 Onkyo K 611 Pioneer CT-S550S Pioneer CT-W806DR Pioneer CT-S550S Precision Pioneer CT-S830S	1
MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC MC	600 750 900 1,050 1,200 1,200 2,000 2,800 2,800 2,800 2,800 2,900 3,000	Pioneer CT-95 Rotel RC960BX Sony TC-WE825S Sony TC-KA6ES T+A CC1200R Teac W-660R Teac W-6600R Teac V-6030S Teac V-8030S Technics RS-A27 Technics RS-R575 Yamaha KX-580SE	1 111 1
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#### CD PLAYERS

KEY ≡► – Multiplayer: can be loade with more than one disc. 1010 – Electrical (coaxial) digital Many players also include an optical (Toslink) output. UP TO £250

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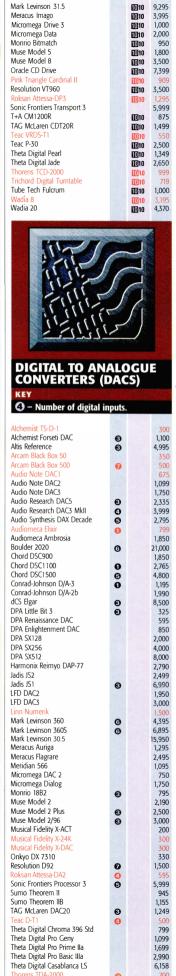
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Akai CD1100 Akai CDM1200 AMC CD9 Ariston CDX700 Ariston CDC610 Ariston CDX710 Cambridge CD4 Cambridge CD4SE Cambridge CD6 Denon DCD-435 Denon DCD-6 Denon DCD-735 H/K HD720 H/K FI 8350 JVC XL-V120BK IVC XI -V130BK JVC XL-V230BK IVC XI -F116BK JVC XL-F216BK Kenwood DP-1080 Kenwood DP-2080 Kenwood DP-R3090 Kenwood DP-R4090 Kenwood DP-3080 Kenwood DP-R6090 Marantz CD-38 Marantz CC-38 Marantz Marantz CD-57 Marantz CD-67II NAD 522 NAD 510 NAD 524 NAD 523 NAD 512 Philips CD711 Philips CDC751 Pioneer PD-106 Pioneer PD-206 Pioneer PD-F606 Pioneer PD-M603 Pioneer PD-F706 Rotel RCD-930AX Sansui CD220 Sh<mark>erw</mark>ood Sherwood CDC680 Sherwood CDC6050R Sony CDP-XE220 Sony CDP-M205 Sony CDP-M305 Sony CDP-XE520 Sony CDP-CE105 Sony CDP-CE315 Sony CDP-C325M Sony CDP-CX57 Synergy CDJ1210 Teac CDP-1120 Teac CD-P1820 Teac CD-P1440 Teac PD-D2400 Teac PD-H500i Technics SL-PG390A Technics SL-PG490A Technics SL-PG590A Technics SI -PD688 Technics SL-PD888 Technics SL-PS670D

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		Technics SL-MC410			25
		Technics SL-PS770D Yamaha CDX-393		10	25 13
		Yamaha CDC-565 Yamaha CDX-493	⇒		17
		Yamaha CDX-9 Yamaha CDC-665		10	20
		Yamaha CDX-593		<b>[[]</b> 10	23
1.100		£251 TO £500		-	
		Arcam Alpha 7 Arcam Alpha MCD	<b>=</b> >	10 10 10	33 45
		Aura CD 100 Cyrus dAD1.5		10 10 10	40
		Denon DCD-835 Denon DCM-260	⇒	10	28 30
		Denon DCD-1550AR H/K HD740		1010 1010	35 30
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		Marantz CD-63IIKI Musical Fidelity E60		1010 1010	40
10	200 230	Musical Fidelity A2 CD Musical Fidelity E624		1010 1010	50 50
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1010	100 150	NAD 517 Onkyo DX 7210	➡	1010	40
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	110 120	Pioneer PD-S705 Pioneer PD-F906		10	30 35
	140 180	Pioneer PD-S904 Pioneer PD-S505 Precision		1010 1010	40
	200 250	Rotel RCD-951 Rotel RCD-971		1010	30
	110	Sony CDP-XB920E		1010 1010	35 30
	130 140	Sony CDP-XA20ES Sony CDP-X3000ES		10 10 10	45 50
	160 170	Sony CDP-CX260 Synergy CDJ2010			50 30
	180 200	Yamaha CDX-993		10	40
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1010	200 200	Acurus ACD11 Alchemist Nexus		1010 1010	89 60
1010 1010	230 250	Arcam Alpha 8 Arcam Alpha 8SE		1010 1010	52 60
	170 200	Arcam Alpha 9 Audio Analogue Paganini		1010 1010	80 75
1010	250 250	Audio Note CD1 Audio Note CDT Zero/DAC Zero		1010 1010	59 76
10	250 120	Audiomeca Obsession AVI S2000MC 24 Ref		10 10 10	99 99
10	130 150	Creek CD43 Cyrus dAD3		10	59
	180	Cyrus dAD3Q		-	59 89
	130 150	DPA Renaissance int CD Helios Model 3		10 10 10	95 70
	190 200	Helios Model 2 Linn Mimik		10 10 10	95 87
	200 250	Magnum CD2020 Marantz CD-17		10 10 10	59 80
	180 120	Micromega Premium 18 Micromega Premium 10		10 10 10	65 65
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10	180 110	Monrio Privilege Musical Fidelity X-RAY		1010 1010	99 79
	110 130	Myryad T-20 Myryad MC100		10 10 10	60 70
	140 150	Orelle CD100eA Orelle CD-100eSA		10 10 10	64 99
10	150 200	Pioneer PDS-06 Primare D20		1010	55
	200	Quad 77 Bus		10	70
	200 250	Quad 77 Mains Roksan Caspian		10	90 89
	120 100	Rotel RCD991 Sony CDP-XA50ES		10 10 10	75
	130 200	Sugden Audition Talk Electronics Thunder 2		10	64 70
	200 200	Talk Electronics Thunder 3 Teac VRDS-8		10	1,00
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	100 120	Technics SL-P2000 Thule Audio Spirit CD100			1,00
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		250	Trichord Digital Jukebox 50		10	669
	10	250 130	Trichord Digital J'box 100 Trichord Revelation	=	1010 1010	719 819
₽		170 180	YBA Special		10	625
		200	OVER £1,000	1.00		1000
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	11.2		Alchemist Kraken CD Alchemist Forseti Int.			1,249 1,249
	1010	330	Alchemist Forseti Audio Research CD2		1010 1010	1,995 3,399
<b>=</b> >	1010	450 400	Audiomeca Keops Audiomeca Talisman		1010	1,500
	10 10 10	399	Audiomeca Talisman SE		10 10 10	2,150 2,300
⇒	10	280 300	Cary CD-301 Classe CDP3		10 10 10	2,495 1,395
	1010 1010	350 300	Conrad-Johnson DF-2 Conrad-Johnson DV-2b			1,695 2,495
₽	1010 1010	300 500	Copland CDA-266 Copland CDA277		10 10 10	1,199 1,649
		<b>300</b> 300	Copland CDA289		1010	1,898
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	10 10 10	300 400	Exposure CD Player Helios Model 1		10 10 10	1,050 1,250
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	1010 1010	400 300	Krell KAV250cd Krell KAV300cd		1010 1010	2,490 3,599
	1010	500	Krell KPS25s Marantz CD-17KIS		1010	19,995
	1010 1010	500 400	Marantz CD-7		10 10 10	1,100 3,500
	10	290 350	Mark Levinson 39 McIntosh MCD7009		10 10 10	4,995 3,699
-	10	<b>370</b> 400	Meracus Tanto Meracus Imago Player		1010 1010	1,395 4,495
	1010 1010	260 290	Meridian 506 Meridian 508		1010 1010	1,100 1,995
➡		380	Micromega Solo Myryad MCD500		1010	2,500
₽	10	400 450	NAD \$500		10 10 10	1,300 1,100
	10 10 10	499 300	Naim CD3.5 Naim CDX			1,050 2,200
₽	10	300 300	Naim NACDSII/XPS Oracle CD Player		10	5,625 9,499
	1010	350 400	Pink Triangle Numeral Pink Triangle Litaural		10 10 10	1,049 2,200
	1010	460	Primare D302		1010	1,500
	10 10 10	300 350	Proceed CDP Quad 99		10	3,395 1,300
	1010 1010	300 450	Resolution CD50 Roksan Attessa-DP3P		1010 1010	2,995 1,495
⇒	1010	500 500	Shearne Phase 7 Sherwood CD1		10 10 10	1,499 1,100
	10	300 400	Sonic Frontiers Anthem CD1 Sonic Frontiers SFCD-1		1010 1010	1,699 3,799
			T+A CD1210R T+A CD1220R			1,185
	_		TAG McLaren CD20R		1010	1,540
		899 600	Theta Digital Miles SE Wadia 860		10 10 10	2,390 7,450
	10 10 10	520 600	XTC CDP-1 YBA Integre		1010 1010	1,250 1,250
	1010 1010	800 750	YBA CD3 YBA CD2		10 10 10	2,250 3,350
	1010 1010	599 768	YBA CD1		10	4,500
	10 10 10	999 999		1950	2005	1
	10	599 598				
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	10 10 10	950 700		See.		
	10 10 10	950 875				
	10 10 10	595 800		/	1.4672.0	
		650 650				
		850 675				
	1010	995	CD TRANSPOR	TS		
	10 10 10	<b>799</b> 600	KEY			19
	10 10 10	700 649	10 – Electrical (coaxial)		al outp	out.
	10 10 10	999 550	Many players also inclue optical (Toslink) output.	ae an		
	10	700 700		1		
	1010	900 895	Alchemist Forseti Drive Altis CDT III		10 10 10	1,100 4,995
	10	750	'Arcam Delta 250	0	1010	800
	10	1,000 649	Audio Synthesis Transcend Decad Audiomeca Damnation	ie .	10 10 10	3,295 999
	10	700 1,000	Audiomeca Damnation SE Audiomeca Talisman		10 10 10	1,100 1,850
	1010 1010	600 700	Audiomeca Talisman SE Audiomeca Talisman DOB		1010 1010	1,999 2,250
	1010 1010	1,000 1,000	Conrad-Johnson DR-1 DPA Enlightenment Drv		1010 1010	1,795 775
	10 10	600 699	Jadis JD3 Jadis JDI			1,999 9,190
_		569 619	Linn Karik Mark Levinson 37			1,850 3,995
-	1010	015	mark components		1010	5,555



Mark Levinson 315

#### PRICE H I - F Ι **G U I** D 5

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ORTS

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Elemental Isotube X1

Elemental Isotube BS

Elemental Isotube TS

Elemental Isotube IS

Elemental Isotube X2

Elemental Isotube X3

Elemental Reference BS

Elemental Reference X1

Elemental Reference TS

Elemental Reference IS

Elemental Isotube X4 Elemental Reference X2

Elemental Reference X3

Elemental Isotube X4Rse Elemental Reference X4

Finite Elemente A03 pagode

Finite Elemente E03 pagode Finite Elemente HD03

Elemental Reference B1





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550 500

600 450

700 AKG I AKG

199 AKG AKG

1.400

1,530

3.790

4,750

7,395 9,995

12,790 1,499

#### **DIGITAL RECORDERS**

MD

MD

MD

MD

MD

MD

MD – MiniDisc DAT – Digital Audio Tape ම්ම – Portable

Denon DMD-1000 Kenwood DMF-9020 Kenwood DMF-9020 Kenwood DM-7090 Marantz CM635 Marantz DR700 Onkyo MD-121 Onkyo MD 122 Philips CDR800 Pioneer PDR-555RW Pioneer PDR-555RW Pioneer PDR-04 Pioneer PDR-05 Pioneer PDR-05 P
Sony MDS-JA20ES Sony MDS-JA50ES Teac MDH300 Teac MD-H500i Teac MD-8
Teac MD-5 Teac MD-10 Traxdata Traxaudio 900 Yamaha MDX-793
Yamaha MDX-9



#### HEADPHONES

'D' – Dynamic type, compatible with virtually all normal headphone outp 'E' – Electrostatic type; generally includes a separate power supply. 🐞 – Open-back construction. - Closed-back construction. UP TO E40

> D DDD

D

AKG Rox Aural Envelope DX200 Aural Envelope DX220 Beyer DT111 Beyer DT211

1 230 300 500 1,300 350 600 600 900 399 300 300	Beyer DT801           Beyer DT811           Beyer DT811           Beyer DT910           Beyer DT911           Denon AH-D210           Denon AH-D550           Grado SR40           Grado SR60
uts.	Grado SR80 Grado SR125 Grado SR125 Grado SR25 Grado R52 Grado R52 Grado R51 Hama SL276 Hama IR Cordless Jecklin Float Model 1 Jeckin Float Model 2 Jeckin Float Model 2 Jeckin Float ELS JVC HA-D727 JVC HA-D727 JVC HA-D727 JVC HA-D727 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D727 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D1000 JVC HA-D1000 Philips SBC 199000 Philips SBC 199000 Sennheiser HD500 Sennheiser HD495 Sennheiser HD495 Sennheiser HD545 Sennheiser HD550I

Beyer D12111V         D         1           Hama SL275         D         1           JVC HA-D525         D         1           JVC HA-D526         D         1           JVC HA-D526         D         1           Kenwood KPM-310         D         1           Kenwood KPM-410         D         1           KLH KHP-2001         D         1           KIH KHP-2000         D         1           Pioneer SE-A40         D         1           Pioneer SE-A20V         D         1           Pioneer SE-M250         D         1           Pioneer SE-M250         D         1           Sennheiser HD433         D         1           Sennheiser HD400         D         1           Sony MDR-V20G         D         1           Sony MDR-V20G         D         1           Sony MDR-V400         D         1           Sony MDR-V50         D         1           Sony MDR-V400         D         1           Sony MDR-V50         D         1           Sony MDR-V11         D         1           Sony MDR-V400         D         1					
OVER E41           AKG K301         D         P           AKG K2400F         D         P           AKG K2400F         D         P           AKG K2400F         D         P           AKG K200F         D         P           AKG K301         D         P           AKG K301         D         P           AKG K301         D         P           AKG K444IR         D         P           AKG K1000         D         P           Audio Technica ATH910PRO         D         P           Audio Technica ATH911         D         P           Beyer DT311         D         P           Beyer DT411         D         P           Beyer DT831         D         P           Beyer DT831         D         P           Beyer DT801         D         P           Beyer DT901         D         P           Denon AH-0210         D         P           Denon AH-0550         D         P           Denon AH-0550         D         P           Denon AH-0550         D         P           Crado SR40         D         P	Haa JW JW JW JW Kee KLL KLL Mit Pice See See See So So S	ma SL273 ma SL275 C HA-CD88 C HA-D525 C HA-D626 nwood KPM-310 nwood KPM-410 H KHP201TW H KHP-2000 mer SE-400 mer SE-400 mer SE-400 mer SE-400 mer SE-400 mer SE-400 mer SE-400 mheiser HD400 nnheiser HD400			
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AKG 1000       D       40         Audio Technica ATH910PAO       D       40         Audio Technica ATH910PAOFS       D       40         Audio Technica ATH910PAOFS       D       40         Audio Technica ATH911       D       40         Audio Technica ATH910PAOFS       D       40         Beyer DT311       D       40         Beyer DT411       D       40         Beyer DT311       D       40         Denon AH-D210       D       40         Denon AH-D550       D       40	AK AK AK AK	G K301 G K240DF G K222IR G K401 G K501	D D D D		
Beyer D1901         D         Total           Beyer D1901         D         Total           Denon AH-D210         D         Total           Denon AH-D50         D         Total           Grado SR40         Total         Total           Grado SR40         Total         Total           Grado SR40         Total         Total           Grado SR40         Total         Total           Grado SR25         D         Total           Grado SR25         D         Total           Grado SR25         D         Total           Grado SR25         D         Total           Grado RS1         D         Total           Hama RIC Cordless         D         Total           Jecklin Float Model 2         D         Total           JVC HA-D207         D         Do           JVC HA-D200         D         Total           JVC HA-D1000 <th>AK AK Au Au Au Au Be</th> <td>G K444IR G K2905 G K1000 dio Technica ATH910PRO dio Technica ATH940FS dio Technica ATH-M40 dio Technica ATH911 yer DT311</td> <td>D D D D D D D D D</td> <td>**</td> <td></td>	AK AK Au Au Au Au Be	G K444IR G K2905 G K1000 dio Technica ATH910PRO dio Technica ATH940FS dio Technica ATH-M40 dio Technica ATH911 yer DT311	D D D D D D D D D	**	
Denon AH-D210         D         D           Denon AH-D350         D         D           Denon AH-D550         D         D           Grado SR40         D         D           Grado SR40         D         D           Grado SR40         D         D           Grado SR40         D         D           Grado SR25         D         D           Grado SR225         D         D           Grado SR25         D         D           Grado SR2         D         D           Jecklin Float Model 1         D         D           Jeckin Float Model 2         D <th>Be Be Be Be Be</th> <td>yer DT431 yer DT511 yer DT801 yer DT831 yer DT811 yer DT100 yer DT100</td> <td>D D D D D D D</td> <td></td> <td></td>	Be Be Be Be Be	yer DT431 yer DT511 yer DT801 yer DT831 yer DT811 yer DT100 yer DT100	D D D D D D D		
	De De De De	non AH-D210 non AH-D350 non AH-D550 non AH-D650 non AH-D750 non AH-D750	D D D D D		
	Gr Gr Gr Gr Gr Gr	ado SR60 ado SR80 ado SR125 ado SR225 ado SR325 ado RS2 ado RS1	D D D D D D D		
	Ha Jeo Jeo Jeo JVo	ima IR Cordless :klin Float Model 1 :klin Float Model 2 :klin Float ELS C HA-D727 C HA-D727 C HA-W60	D D E D D		
	jv( jv) jv) Ko Ph	C HA-W200RF C HA-D1000 C HA-F25 ss R/100 Jilps SBC 3396 Jilps SBC HP9000	D D D D D D		
		DIREEL 2F-WI220			

Sennheiser HD565 Ovat'n	D
Sennheiser HD25-13	D
Sennheiser Lucas	
Sennheiser HD25	D
Sennheiser HD 580 P'cision	D
Sennheiser HD600	D
Sennheiser Lucas/HD580 Sennheiser IS850	D
Sennheiser HE60/HEV70	DE
Sennheiser Orpheus	E
Sony MDR-605LP	D
Sony MDR-ED268LP	D
Sony MDR-E888LP	D
Sony MDR-IF130K	D
Sony MDR-V600	D
Sony MDR-F1	D
Sony MDR-NC5	D
Sony MDR-IF420RK Sony MDR-D77	D
Sony MDR-IF520RK	D
Sony MDR-CD1700	D
Stanton DJ Pro 101/HB	D
Stanton DJ Pro 1000	D
Stanton DJ Pro 1001	D
Stax SR-0001	Е
Stax SR-Lambda Nova C	Е
Stax Lambda Nova Basic	E
Stax SR-Lambda Nova S	E
Technics RP-F800 Technics RP-HT600	D
Technics RP-DJ 1200	D
Vivanco SR650	D D
Vivanco FMH 3000	D
Vivanco SR750	D
Vivanco SR850	D
Vivanco FM7980	D
Vivanco SR909	D
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EQUIPMENT SU Hi-Fi Tables	IPP
EQUIPMENT SU Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves	
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 – Number of shelves	
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves	<b>5.</b> 1
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason VSM17	<b>5.</b>
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason VSM17 Alphason GSM17	5.
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason VSM17	<b>5.</b>
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM11P	5. 1 1 1
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM19 Alphason K17/17	5. 1 1 1 1 3
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason R17/17 Alphason VR17/17 Alphason VR17/17 Alphason GR17/17-AS	5. 1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM11P Alphason GM11P Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17-AS Audiophile Base 01	5. 1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason VSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM1P Alphason GM1P Alphason GH1P Alphason CR17/17 Alphason CR17/17 Alphason CR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Audiophile Base 01 Audiophile S4T120	5. 1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1 4
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GN1717 Alphason GR17177 Alphason GR17177 Alphason GR17177AS Audiophile Sase 01 Audiophile S41120 Audiophile S41120	5. 1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1 4 4
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason VSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM11P Alphason GM11P Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Blob Model 1006/8	5. 1 1 1 1 1 3 4 1 4 4 1
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Aphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GH17 Alphason GH17 Alphason CR17/17-AS Audiophile Base 01 Audiophile S4T120 Audiophile S4T120 BCD Model 1000/8 BCD Model 1000	1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1 4 4 1 3
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM11P Alphason R17/17 Alphason GR17/17A Alphason GR17/17AS Audiophile Sase 01 Audiophile S4T120 Audiophile S4T120 BCD Model 1006/8 BCD Model 1006 Custom Design Aspect 650	1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1 4 4 1 3 4
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Aphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GH17 Alphason GH17 Alphason CR17/17-AS Audiophile Base 01 Audiophile S4T120 Audiophile S4T120 BCD Model 1000/8 BCD Model 1000	1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1 4 4 1 3 4 4
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason VSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17 Alphason GR17/17-AS Audiophile S4T120 Audiophile S4T120 BCD Model 1006/8 BCD Model 1006/8 BCD Model 1006 Custom Design Aspect 650 Custom Design efite E4	1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1 4 4 1 3 4 4 3 4 4 3
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Aphason SM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alph	1 1 1 1 1 3 4 1 4 4 1 3 4 4 3 5
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Aphason SM17 Alphason VSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alp	1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 1 4 4 1 3 4 4 3 4 4 3
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Alphason SM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GR17/17-AS Audiophile Sase 01 Audiophile S4T120 Audiophile S4T120 BCD Model 1006/8 BCD Model 1006 Custom Design Aspect 550 Custom Design Clite AV Deadrock 701 Deadrock 802	1 1 1 1 3 1 3 4 4 4 4 3 5 6 1 2
Hi-Fi Tables KEY 4 - Number of shelves Aphason SM17 Alphason VSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GSM17 Alphason GM17 Alphason GM17 Alp	1 1 1 1 1 3 4 1 4 4 3 4 4 3 5 6 1

150	Frameworks H175
160	Frameworks FS1
160	Frameworks H500
160	Frameworks FT2
200	Frameworks H73
250	Frameworks H700
260	Frameworks H900
859	Impulse Iso-plate
998	JPW 3 Tier
9,652 50 50 55 60	JPW 5 Tier Kudos Audio Cornthian Linn K3000 Mana Sound Frame
60	Mana Mini Table
70	Mana Power supply table
100	Mana Reference flat top
100	Mana Sound Shelf
100	Mana Sound Stage
130	Mana Sound Table
150	Mana Ref Shelf
200	Mana Reference Table
65	Mana 2 Tier Stand
95	Mana 3 Tier Stand
150	Mana 4 Tier Stand
280	Mana 5 Tier Stand
370	Mana 6 Tier Stand
449	Mana 7 Tier Stand
450 50 60 130	Mana 8 Tier Stand Mission Stance Optimum G2 Optimum G2/Pedestal Optimum G4/Pedestal
45 50 50 50 60	Optimum OPT 3406 Optimum G5/Pedestal Optimum OPT 4906 Optimum OPT 6606
60 90 99 100	Optimum OPT 340 Optimum OPT 490 Optimum OPT 440 Optimum OPT 10206 Optimum AV 300
	Optimum OPT 700 Optimum OPT 610 Optimum OPT 660 Optimum OPT 1020 Optimum OPT 1190
	Projekt A3 Projekt A4 Projekt A5 Projekt B3
	Projekt A6 Projekt B3i Projekt B4 Projekt B Multi Projekt B3ii
S	Projekt C3 Projekt D3 Projekt C3i Projekt B5 Projekt C3iii
49	Projekt C3ii Projekt D3i Projekt C4 Projekt C3iv Projekt D3ii
. 85 85 110 120 150	Projekt C Multi Projekt C Multi Projekt D4 Quadraspire Q4S mini shelf Quadraspire Q4S shelf Quadraspire QKS Cabinet shelf
190	Quadraspire QKS Cabinet shelf
275	Quadraspire QAV shelf
79	Quadraspire Q4M mini table
280	Quadraspire Q4 table
560	Quadraspire Q4SP Table
795	Quadraspire QAV table
1,250	Quadraspire QAVSP Table
240	Quadraspire QK Cabinet
250	Reson DOMOPS
270	Reson DOMOWS
270	Sound Org Z022
350	Sound Org Z021
60	Sound Org Z030
90	Sound Org Z060
130	Sound Org Z038
230	Sound Org Z540
<b>250</b>	Sound Org Z545
169	Sound Org Z560
199	Sound Org Z530
209	Soundstyle X300
209	Soundstyle X305
329	Soundstyle X053
379	Soundstyle X050
489	Soundstyle X6300
499 499 549 549 549 599	Soundstyle X100 Soundstyle X6110 Soundstyle X058 Soundstyle X310 Soundstyle X105
799	Soundstyle X6053
1,199	Soundstyle X6100
1,199	Soundstyle X6310
1,349	Soundstyle X6058
1,599	Soundstyle X6105
399	Soundstyle Finewoods W105
479	Stands Unique Isolation Platform
649	Stands Unique Sound Support
1,995	Stands Unique Sound Tower

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#### UIDE PRICE G F Ι H Π

Stands Unique Compact Sound Supp 4 Stands Unique Sound Support 10 Stands Unique Sound Twr Cabinet Stands Unique Ref Wall Support Stands Unique Ultimate Tower Stands Unique Ref Floor Support Townshend Seismic Sink 1-CD Townshend Seismic Sink 1-3D Townshend S/Sink Stand 1-4 r Sink Stand Vibraplane Passive Vibraplane Active Wilson Benesch Standard Shelf Wilson Benesch Mono Block Wilson Benesch Kevlar Shelf Wilson Benesch Asside

Wilson Benesch Triptych



**EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS Speaker Stands** 

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60 – Height of stand in cm.

Alphason NCI
Alphason Akros I
Alphason RS1
Alphason NCII
Alphason HDS
Alphason Titan S
Apollo Olympus
Apollo AZ6
Atacama BD21
Atacama BD17
Atacama BD25
Atacama SE16
Atacama SE12
Atacama SX500
Atacama F2
Atacama F1
Atacama SX600
Atacama SL200
Atacama SE24
Atacama SE20
Atacama SX700
Atacama SL300
Atacama TP600 Atacama TP500
Atacama SE615
Atacama SE515
Atacama SE415
Atacama SL400
Atacama SE1000S
Atacama R724
AVF Tower P6144BP
BCD Model 1010
Black Box Speaker Stand
Credo STD 001
Custom Design Tri 100
Custom Design R/S300
Custom Design M3
Custom Design M2
Custom Design M1
Custom Design Tri 300
Custom Design SCS 24
Custom Design X24



Deadrock 902	47
Deadrock 901	39
Elemental Reference SB1	8
Elemental Isotube SZ	49
Elemental Isotube SZse	61
Elemental Isotube SCZ	49
Elemental Isotube SCZse	49
Elemental Reference SZ	49 52
Elemental Reference SCZ	
Harbeth HL-Stands	52 21
Heybrook Stand-ULT	3
Heybrook Stand-S6	5
Heybrook Stand-S4	
JPW MS2	48
JPW MS3	45
JPW MS3 JPW MS1	61
JPW HS1	46
JPW HS1 JPW HS2	61
	45
Kudos Audio Arrow	60
Kudos Audio S-50	60
Kudos Audio S-100	63
Mana Sound Base	
Opera WS1/E	60
Opera S1	60
Opera S2	60
Partington A-4	60
Pioneer CP-7	
Pioneer CP-8	
Projekt Signature	55
Revolver RS1	50
Royd Royd	55
Russ Andrews Torlyte	61
SD Acoustics SD Alexandra	50
Silverado Silverado 1 Stand	60
Sonus Faber Ironwood	
Sonus Faber Stonewood	
Sound Org Z037	
Sound Org Z027	
Sound Org Z026	
Sound Org Z518	45
Sound Org Z524	61
Soundstyle X6118	42
Stands Unique Speaker support	59
Stands Unique Tuned Spkr Support	59
Stands Unique Tuned Carbon Fibre	59
Stands Unique Vivas CF Spkr Supp	60
Target TR60	60
Target R1	53
0	55

999

1,895

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#### LOUDSPEAKERS KE

± – Floorstander; larger models requiring no separate stand. 🖩 – Stand mount; smaller models designed to be raised above the floor.

 $\pm$  – Wall mount; designed to be sited on or near the wall.

Box type, including infinite

baffle, reflex and transmission line types. 🗇 – Horn type; mostly large and

very efficient.

– Panel type, including electrostatic and planar magnetic types.

#### UP TO £130



, 1	UEU
60	Jamo Studio-110
60	Jamo Artina
399	Jamo D-115
499	Jamo 28
599	Jamo Cornet 145
699 799	JBL CM40 JBL MX300
999	JBL Control 1X
,499	JBL CM42
249	JPW Mini Monitor
55	JPW ML110
69	JPW Gold Monitor
69	JPW ML210
45 55	JPW ML310 JPW ML410
80	JPW ML510
120	IVC SX-SC1VBK
120	JVC SP-V50 JVC SP-X220TBK
50	JVC SP-X220TBK
100	JAC 26-Y220RK
270	KEF Coda 7
175 235	Kenwood LS-90UK Mission 700
295	Mordaunt-Short MS812
345	NAD 801
119	Paradigm Micro v2
50	Paradigm Atom v2 Pioneer CS-3030
80	Pioneer CS-3030
80	Polk AB410
70 99	Realistic Minimus 26 Realistic Minimus Pro-77
599	Revolver Beretta
369	R Allen Minette 2
350	Solid HCM2
475	Sony SS-86E
497	Tangent Monitor 3
55 55	Tangent Monitor 5
55	Tannoy Mercury M1 TDL Nucleus 1
65	TDL Nucleus 2
69	Teac LS-X8 Mk II
100	Technics SB-CS55
159	Technics SB-CS65 Technics SB-CS75
220	Technics SB-CS75
299 349	W'dale Valdus 100 W'dale Diamond 7.1
68	W'dale Valdus 200
280	W'dale Modus Micro
-	
	£131 TO £200
	Acoustic Energy Aegis One
	Acoustic Energy AE100i
	Allison Model 4A
	B&W DM302 B&W CWM5
	B&W DM601
	Bose 201 IV
	Boston CR6
	Boston 325
No.	Boston Micro 80 Sat
	Boston Runabout
	Boston 335 Boston 351
	Boston CR7
	Boston Runabout II
	Coloction 15

Allison Model 4A
B&W DM302
B&W CWM5
B&W DM601
Bose 201 IV
Boston CR6
Boston 325
Boston Micro 80 Sat
Boston Runabout
Boston 335
Boston 351
Boston CR7
Boston Runabout II
Celestion 15i
Cerwin-Vega CT-165
Eltax Liberty 3+
Genexxa GX650
Genexxa Pro
GLL Imagio IC218
GLL Imagio IC318
Heybrook Heylette B
Heybrook HB1
Interaudio XL2000
Jamo Cornet 165
Jamo 38
Jamo 525
Jamo 560
Jamo 660
Jamo Studio 180
Jamo D165
Jamo 68
Jamo 892
JBL CM52
JBL MX1000
JBL LX20
JBL MX1500
JPW ML610
JPW SS551
KEF Coda 8
KEF Model 60S
KEF Q15
Kenwood LS-200G
KLH Model 21
KLH Model 11
KLH Model 31
Magnat Vector 22
Mission 701
Mission 701 Mission 771
Mission 702
Mission 771e
Mission 702e
M-A Monitor 1
Mordaunt-Short MS814
Daradigm Mini Monitor

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Paradigm Mini Monitor

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UP TO £500

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Genexxa Lab-810	O
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499 795	Pro-Ject Classic/510 Pro-Ject 6/510	01 01	Ţ	360 400
,250 ,990	Pro-Ject 6.9 Rega Planar 78	01 01		500 214
120 600	Rega Planar 2 Rega Planar 3	01		214
,499	Roksan Radius	01		274 470
,999 ,999	Sherwood PM8550 Sony PS-LX150H	01 01	Ţ	160 90
695 895	Sony PS-LX300H Technics SL-J110D	01 01	Ŧ	150 120
330	Technics SL-BD20 Technics SL-BD22	O	-	160 180
700 300	Technics SL-1210MkII	01	-	400
400 530	Technics SL-1200Mkll Thorens TD-180 AT91	01 01		400 190
190 250	Thorens TD-280 IV/UK Thorens TD-166 VI/UK/RB	⊙! ⊙!	•	210 400
270 330	Thorens TD-318 III TP50	OI		500
615	OVER ESOO			
1,130 ,780	Audio Note AN-TT 2			995
180 230	Audio Note AN-TT 3 Audiomeca Romance	OI		1,995 1,895
260 140	Audiomeca J1 Avid Acutus	0		3,500 3,995
250	Basis 2000			1,995
<b>300</b> 700	Basis 2001 Basis Ovation II			2,995 5,400
700 298	Basis 2500 Basis 2800	OI		5,495 7,495
695	Basis Debut Gold Std III Basis Debut Gold Vacuum			8,200 10,300
160 200	Chantry QT Level 2	OI		705
100 120	DNM-Reson Rota 1 DNM-Reson Rota 2	01 01	-	3,900 5,600
140 180	Impulse Moskito Kuzma Stabi S	01		695 695
250 790	Kuzma Stabi Kuzma Stabi Reference			1,950 3,750
,099	Linn LP12 Basik			1,100
100 120	Linn LP12 Lingo Michell Gyro Spider Ed'n			1,750 775
170 130	Michell Gyrodek Michell Orbe			875 1,995
180 230	N'ham Spacedeck N'ham Graphic			750 1,200
499	N'ham HyperSpacedeck			1,500
499 100	N'ham Mentor N'ham Anna Log			2,600 5,500
130 130	Oracle Delphi Oracle Delphi 15th Anniv			3,370 3,800
180 250	Pink Triangle Tarantella Pro-Ject Perspective	OI		680 750
250	Rega Planar 9	01	1	1,598
	Reson RS1M Reson Rota 1	0 0	÷	695 3,900
	Rockport Capella II Rockport Sirius III	OI		7,000 50,000
	Roksan Xerxes 10 Roksan TMS			1,295 2,750
	SME Model 20/2 SME Model 20/2A	01		3,403 4,863
	SME Model 30/2			10,675
	SME Model 30/2A Stratosphere ST1	01		12,135 6,500
	Technics SL-1200LTD Thorens TD-146 VI TP50	01 01		700 550
	Thorens TD-2001 TP90 Thorens TD-520 SME	01		700 1,050
	Well Tempered Record Player	01		1,850
	Well Tempered Classic Well Tempered Super	01 01		2,980 3,900
	Well Tempered Reference Wilson Benesch Circle	O		5,300 795
349	Wilson Benesch WB Tumtable Wilson Benesch Full Circle	Ot		1,775 1,995
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Do you want to choose your hifi in a comfortable and relaxing environment . . ? Do you want friendly and helpful advice (and a cup of tea) . . ?

Do you want to buy your system based on what you hear (and not what somebody tells you) . . ?

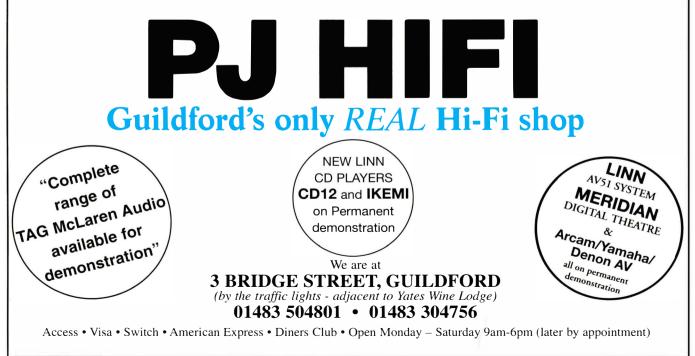
Do you live in GUILDFORD . . ?

... or Addlestone, Aldershot, Ashford (Middx), Ashstead, Bagshot, Basingstoke, Bracknell, Camberley, Chertsey, Crowthorne, Cranleigh, Dorking, Epsom, Esher, Farnborough, Farnham, Fleet, Frimley, Godalming, Hartley Wintney, Haslemere, Hook, Horsham, Kingston, Liphook, Leatherhead, Molesey (East & West), New Malden, Odiham, Petersfield, Reading, Reigate, Redhill, Richmond, Shepperton, Virginia Water, Walton-on-Thames, West Byfleet, Weybridge, Windsor, Woking, Wokingham, Yateley?

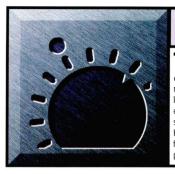
Nobody else in these areas stocks all the following major brands: Acoustic Energy, Arcam, B&W, Castle, Cyrus, Denon, Epos, Harman Kardon, Infinity, KEF (Reference), Linn Products (including records), Marantz, Meridian, Mission, NAD, Nakamichi, Pioneer, Primare, PROAC, QED (Systemline), Quad, Rega, Revox, Rotel, Tag McLaren, Target, T.D.L., Yamaha (including Home Cinema Systems) & Top Tape.

**Visit us first** and you won't need to go anywhere else, we have superb demonstration rooms where you can decide in comfort, and we will deliver and install free of charge (and part exchange is possible).

**Complete service** – We are the only outlet in the area to offer the complete service. As well as stocking selected items from the above manufacturers we are able to service and/or repair on the premises all the above brands (and others also).



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#### Amplifiers

The amplifier is at the heart of any hi-fi system, accepting the outputs from various music sources, increasing the amplitude of their signal and then driving the loudspeakers to produce sound. One-box 'integrated' amps rule the roost at low-to-middle price points, but if you pay more, the low-level and highlevel signal processes are separated into preamp and power amp boxes, and even separate 'outboard' power supplies come into play. Another Luzury is a separate amp for each stereo channel: such devices are known as monoblodss. Finally, output power and sound quality are not necessarily related. Some of the finest amplifiers outputs only 12 Watts, but will yield loudness aplenty when partnered with high-efficiency loudspeakers.

ΚΕΥ ΤΟ	SPECIFIC	ATIONS
LINE INPUTS: Number of input sockets for line-level (non-vinyl) sources such as CD players, tuners and cassette decks. MM PHONO INPUT: An input specially designed for moving magnet (high output) phono pickup cartridges MC PHONO INPUT: An input for moving coil (low output)	phono pickup cartridges. <b>REMOTE CONTROL:</b> An infra- red handset to adjust volume etc. <b>HEADPHONE SOCKET:</b> An integral output for headphones. <b>POWER OUTPUT (Watts):</b> Our measurement of an amp's RMS power output into 8 Ohms. <b>RECEIVER:</b> An amplifier with built-in radio receiver (tuner).	FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the mag. ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of <i>Hi-Fi Choice</i> in which an original review appeared. HI High End Review
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#### SPECIFICATIONS

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STATUS	Amp	Amplifiers						REMOTE CONTROL NOT							
ST	PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS		V	V	V	V	V	V	VV	V			
	Alchemist Maxim	319	Vivid and colourful-sounding amp, but just too bold and brassy		5					30	1737	154			
	Alchemist Kraken APD6A	579	Compact, with Darth Vader styling, yet sound quality is meek and mild, despite strong midband dynar	nics	5	•				55	2150	175			
	Alchemist Nemesis	700	Good if ultimately undistinguished amplifier whose strengths include warmth, authority and distinctive	aesthetics	6					80	2006	168			
4	AMC 3025a	140	Surprisingly potent and easy on the ear, if not especially analytical - classic bargain-basement materia	l, in fact	4	•	٠	٠	۲	30	2045	171			
4	AMC 3050a	170	Tremendous value for money, and a full, big, if rather uninformative sound		4	•	•	•	•	45	1970				
	AMC 3100a	200	A head banger's delight, but sound quality can be muggy and brash on occasions		6			•	•	100		186			
	AMC CVT3030a	400	Beer-budget valve amp, with valve-like virtues (euphony with dynamics) and vices (system dependency		6	•		-	•	30	2001	168			
4	Arcam Alpha One	230	Rather like an Alpha 7 but without the remote control and an what appears to be better sound qua		6				•	35	2007	186			
4	Arcam Alpha 9 Arcam Alpha 10	500 800	Not quite a match for the Alpha 9/9P combo, the solo integrated is nevertheless colourful and explicit Although not the best sounding in its class, the Alpha 10's modular nature demands it be taken seriou		7			•	•	70	2007				
-	Aria S2	1000	Glamorously packaged valve amp produces a real eyes closed, feet up kind of sound	ISIY	<u>5</u> 4	-		-		12		181 190			
4	Audio Analogue Puccini	450	Superbly finished, the entry-level Audio Analogue performs way out of its class		4 5					40	2147	130			
	Audio Analogue Puccini SE	595	Upgraded, more powerful Puccini is disappointingly sluggish and curiously lacking in musical vitality		5				-	40	2177	181			
	Audiogram MB1	493	The only flaws are the amateurish build, a number of technical problems and inconsistent sound qual	itv	4		-	•	•	40	2235				
	Audio Note Oto SE	1,200	Transparent, dynamic, clear and subtle, but offers limited power output	,	4	-			-	24		126			
4	AVI S2000MI	999	Fine, detailed amplifier with excellent timing and strong control of a wide range of loudspeaker loads		5		-	•		100	2155	175			
	Bryston B60R	1,249	Great build, but the lazy bass and opaque treble bracket an articulate midband. Comes with 20 year gua	rantee	5			•	•	60	2156	175			
	Cambridge Audio A500RC	200	Load tolerance may be a problem for some, but this is an otherwise impressive, if tonally muted an	np	6			•	1	50		186			
4	Copland CSA8	945	Sophisticated yet transparent, this is one of those amplifiers that sounds good even when the gloss ha	is worn off	5			-		60	2010	168			
4	Copland CSA 28	1,249	Elegant Scandinavian cool, abundantly detailed if somewhat system dependent		5	•		٠	の音楽	60	2.1	189			
	CR Developments CR324	569	Solid and capable on paper, this is a bit of a blunt instrument when let loose on the music		5			1	18	150		181			
	Cymbol CA1	499	Lacklustre amplifier tends to underperform with complex material. Best with straightforward compact lou	dspeakers	6			1	125	40	2236				
	Creek 4330	279	Compact, even pretty, but sounds dark and uninviting, with coarse treble and 'woompy' bass		5				1	40	2052				
	Cyrus Illi	598	Beautifully presented, but mid-dominated balance was not liked. Upgradeable using PSX PSU unit		_	•		•	1	50	1854	162			
4	Cyrus SL	398	Articulate amplifier with build quality to die for, superb, outgoing midband and lean, though well-exter	nded bass	6				1	50		168			
44	Denon PMA-250SE	140	This amp can sound rough when extended, but within its limits it is open, detailed and likeable		5		-		•	30	2046				
4	Denon PMA-350SE Denon PMA-425R	180 230	Reinvented in the minimalist tradition, this SE model is a control freak, but can sound wonderful Well-equipped and generally enjoyable but slightly ragged performer		5 3	-	-	-	-	50 45	1856 1973	162 167			
	Denon PMA-725R:	350	Warm, bold, up-front presentation, but musically unexciting		5	-	•		-	97	1973				
4	Denon PMA-1500R	500	Recommended for its outrageous power, especially with problem speakers.		5	-	-			70	1002	137			
4	Densen Beat B-100 Mkll	650	High 'air guitar' factor, and can punch above its weight, but check it will complement your system		5	-	-			60	1855	175			
	Densen DM-10	1,375	Big, bold and expressive amplifier, but sometimes rough around the edges, and not as powerful as	it appears				TE		75		189			
	DPA Renaissance	595	DPA's first integrated amp is typically innovative, but a little too 'crisp'n'dry' for our tastes		5	•			•	40	1582	140			
	EMF Audio Sequel	450	Relaxed and restrained design from Mike Creek		5	•	1		•	50	11-	109			
	Exposure XX Super	700	Rather transistorised, unexciting sound. Good coherence and rhythm. Best played loud		6					55	1743	154			
	Exposure RCXXV	1,000	Unaccountably rather underwhelming top of the line integrated sounds a little soft and detached		6			•	1.15	60		189			
	Electrocompaniet EC1-2	995	A 50 watt amplifier which sounds more powerful, and makes 'real sounding' music.		4		1			50	2158	175			
4	Harman/Kardon HK610	180	Lively and friendly sound, but could prove too exciting for the faint hearted		6	•			•	30	1465	149			
4	Harman/Kardon HK620	250	Capable and musical amplifier which is one of the nicest at this price. Optional add-in MM/MC board	available	6			•	•	40	1858	162			
	Holfi Audis Signature	750	A 'no-feedback' circuit giving outstanding resolution, but significant load dependency		4	•	_		-	65		181			
	JoLida 202 JVC AX-V4	695	Well-built and technically accomplished, affordable valve integrated with subtle refined, if not quite gripping	sound	4				-	40	2011	168			
	JVC AX-R5	200 200	Respectable performance for a Pro-Logic AV amplifier. Lacks resolution and sparkle, though Versatile, and lots of even-handed, articulate detail; but let down by superficiality		5 5		-	-	-	63	1805	157			
	Kenwood KA-5090R	300	Large, well equipped and high tech integrated, but TRAITR output still gives a harsh, unsubtle perform		5	-	-	-	-	45 65	1466 2053	149 171			
	Kenwood KAF-3010R	180	Plenty of twiddly bits yet weak on inputs, and basically good, but somewhat uneven sound quality	ance	4		-		-	70	2055	186			
E	Lavardin Model IT	3,200		acteristics	4	-		-	-	40		184			
	LFD Integrated Zero	549	Lively and brisk, but at the same time cold and unsympathetic		6				-	50	1584				
	Linn Majik (phono)	800	The cornerstone of Linn's modular hi-fi system is innovative, but sounds vague and confused		5	•	•		•	33	1013	129			
	Magnum IA120	265	Mirror finish amplifier with bold, colourful delivery, but needs careful system matching to avoid loss of	clarity	6				•	65	2054	171			
4	Magnum IA170	330	Gives a realistic sense of instruments playing within a very believable acoustic; preserves colour and d	ynamics	6		12		•	96	1260	142			
4	Magnum IA200	599	Sweet, valve-flavoured solid state amplifier which flatters where it doesn't cast light		7					160	1860	162			
4	Magnum Class A	690	Lashings of rich and compelling music, but the Class A circuits trade lushness for accuracy		4	•	•			60		116			
	Magnum Class A SE	795	A MOSFET amplifier drawing inspiration from the world of valves, this is an erratically refined, detailed		5	•			-	80	2159	175			
	Marantz PM-48	150	Fine entry level amplifier has excellent midband resolution and top, with a slightly coarse textured b		5	•		•	•	50		186			
4	Marantz PM-57	200	Well equipped but ultimately anodyne amplifier which lacks for nothing but star quality		5	•		•	•	50	2049	171			
4	Marantz PM-66SE Marantz PM66 KI-Signature	230	A bit lush, and power output is limited, but it gives airy, large-scale music. An excellent budget buy		5	•	-	-	•	50	1969	167			
4	Marantz PM66 KI-Signature Marantz PM-17	400 900	It knows how to rock and roll with holographic detail and stereo, but prefers small/medium scale acoustic Probably worth it for the WBT terminals and other build features alone, but this model doesn't sing as	it should	5 6	•		•	•	50 60	2003	168 181			
	Marantz PM-17 KI-Signature		Full feature audiophile amp where the end results don't quite justify the fantastic ingredients		6	-	-			60		181			
4	Micromega Tempo 2	900	Idiosyncratic but flexible amplifier with an attractively forward and expressive sound quality		7	-	-		•	70		181			
	Monrio ASTY	400	Engaging, but ill-disciplined, even OTT amplifier with unpredictable system compatibility		5				-	55	2237	178			
4	Musical Fidelity E1	199	Richly flavoured tone and realistically-scaled imagery distinguish this entry-level Richer Sounds special		6					30	2050	171			
	Musical Fidelity E11	299	Well built minimalist amp with a 5 year guarantee, but can sound congested when extended		6		-		-	60	2232	178			

299 Well built minimalist amp with a 5 year guarantee, but can sound congested when extended

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Musical Fidelity E11

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CONTINUED)

## Amplifiers



MM PHONO INPUTS MC PHONO INPUTS FACTSBACK NO. REMOTE CONTROL POWER OUTPUT NO NO INPUTS CONTROL SOCKET IN ISSUE NUMBER LINE INPUTS

	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS				V			ANDA	
	Musical Fidelity X-A1	479	Idiosyncratic visuals just another plus for an amp that is powerful, well built, and serves the music superbly	6					50		181
- L	Musical Fidelity A2	500	Lucid, transparent midband and a full upper bass are provided by this highly proficient A1 replacement	5	•			-	25	1862	162
-	Musical Fidelity A220	700	Powerful, authoritative and well turned-out amplifier that is easy to match with comparably priced speakers	5				-	50	2012	168
	Musical Fidelity X-A100R	999	Sings like a thoroughbred, but better with Mozart than Motorhead	6	-	-	•		75	LUIL	189
	Myryad MI120	600	Well styled, well built: a good, even tempered amplifier, though it can sound rather brittle	6	_			•	60	2153	175
1.1	NAD 310	100	Fleet and sure of foot, it seems likely to set all appendages tapping with its blend of enthusiasm and artfulness	5				-	20	1468	149
	NAD C320	200	Excellent budget amp from the makers of the seminal 3020 offers better clarity and neutrality and good build		_		•	•	40	1100	186
	NAD 314	260	Lively if coloured presentation that is musically engaging and easy on the ear	6	•			•	53	1807	157
	with the second s	1.900	Substantial integrated with loads of power and no shortage of finesse, slightly bass strong	5	-		•	-	100	1007	189
	Naim Nait 3	575	Distinctive and highly musical sounding integrated amp. Perhaps too distinctive for some tastes	5		1110	-	-	30	1748	154
	Naim Nait 3R	780	Remote control variant of the basic Nait has a similarly dynamic credible sound but ultimately lacks power.	5		-	•		30	1710	189
Ī	Pioneer A-300R	200	Its bright and breezy sound is a natural tonic to those of us worn down by the ongoing stress of life	5	•			•	50	1469	149
	Pioneer A-407R	230	Clean, consistent, finely detailed sound, good finish and (mainly) good build	5			•	•	45	1405	186
	Pioneer A-400X	300	On second audition, this amp was tonally unchanged but less compelling than on its first outing	6					50	1545	138
	Pioneer A-300R Precision	400	Sophisticated variant of the A-300R. Not an obvious winner, but will slowly plys you with its subtle charms	5		-			35	1863	162
	Pioneer A-07	999	Curious blend of high-end attributes and inconsistent, though undeniably detailed sound	5				-	80	2160	175
	Præcisa Acustica Sonoro	1,800	It is not often that transistor amplifiers are made to sound so palpably valve-like	5	•		-		100	2100	189
	Primare A-20 Mk II	799	Everything except packaging has changed in mkll version: but ballsier model has lost none of its refinement	5					70		181
-	Primare A30.1	1.499	Superb build and aesthetics, and undemonstrably musical down to its smallest screw	6		-			100		189
-	Pro-ject Model 7	300		5	•		-			1264	
	Quad 77 Integrated	700	A minimalist amplifier brimming with good intent, but too quirky for its own good. Either MM or MC phono	3	•		-		40	1264	142
•	Rega Elex	398	Compact and sophisticated amp. Has limited inputs when used with 'fo eign' components. (Optional system remote) Minimalist amplifier, derived from Elicit, is a little uninspiring, though at least it is well behaved	-	-	1	_		84	2013	168
	0			4	•	-	-		50	1865	162
-	Restek Fantasy II Roksan Caspian	1499 695	Muscular, but ultimately rather strident amplifier which needs careful system matching	6			•		100	2014	189
			Well-built, open and articulate amplifier, which is also consistent from system to system, and well built	6			-		70	2014	168
-	Rose Scion	615	Unique two-box integrated gives real subtlety and low level resolution, but the sound lacks scale and weight	5	•	•			65	2009	168
	Rotel RA-931	150	Rather dry and unforgiving sound from this internally well specified and attractively priced amplifier	4	•			•	35	2048	171
	Rotel RA-971	200	Budget buy par excellence, especially for large rooms and insensitive speakers	6				•	70		186
	Sony TA-F448BE	250	Minimalist interface is matched to carefully considered circuit with satisfactory effect - but keep the volume in check	5	•			•	55	2055	171
	Sony TA-F3000ES	500	Champagne 'shoebox amp' may lack power reserves, but is quick and articulate. In every sense a knockout	5	•	•	•	•	35	2239	178
	T+A PA-1220R	1445	Unique presentation and feature set, but sometimes rather relentless sound quality	7			•	•	100	1	189
	TAG McLaren 60i	800	Clean, slightly antiseptic sound from this beautifully turned out entry level Audiolab 8000LX replacement	6				•	60		189
	TAG McLaren 60iRv	999	Looks, feels and sounds better than the Audiolab it supersedes. Smooth, open, refined but lacks body and drive				•	•	60		184
	Talk Electronics Storm 1	500	Good soundstaging and strong detail are provided by this unassuming and not especially powerful model	6					50	1868	162
	Talk Electronics Storm 2	650	Crisp, clean, well defined sound, arguably lacking warmth, but a good midrange purchase overall	6			•		50	2154	175
	Teac A-BX7R	700	Characterful balance mars a meticulously designed amplifier. Includes a balanced input, optional MM/MC stage	5			•		50	1869	162
	Technics SU-A660 Mk 3	200	Plenty of wellie for the price, but the sound can be a tad coarse and lacking in fine detail	5	٠			•	37		186
	Technics SU-A700 Mk 3	250	Fully equipped, high-tech amplifier ultimately fails the authenticity test, and can sound messy and inarticulate	5	٠			•	45	1870	162
	Technics SU-A800D Mk 2	300	Two-box amplifier looks great, has plenty of gadgets, and makes good, if slightly over-exuberant music	5	٠		•	•	55	2234	178
	Technics SU-A900D Mk 2	400	Looks like a pre/power amplifier, but in effect it's an integrated, with a rather soft-centred sound to match	5	٠		•	•	70	2149	175
	Token Audio K50	350	Stainless steel finish, others available. Sound is warm and attractive, though a little undynamic	5					50	13	186
	Woodside ISA230 Disc	1,249	Smooth and inoffensive valve amplifier, though it lacks the sparkle and euphony required for ultimate success	3	٠		1		30		116
	Yamaha AX-492	220	Powerful, well equipped amplifier at an attractive price, offers powerful and engaging music-making	5	•		•	•	85	2231	178
	Yamaha AX-592	280	Fine, middle ranking amplifier, with a detailed midband but performance declines at frequency extremes	5	•	•	•	•	100	2056	171
	PREAMPLIFIERS										-
		3.000	Three-box affair with a clean, spacious sound and plenty of slam. A touch steely, but undeniably potent	5			•	•	50	1	187
	Alchemist Kraken APD7A Mkll	, 549	Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	6					1		187
	Arcam Alpha 9C	400	Well specified and flexible preamp with sound only just lacking in greatness	6			•	•			187
	Audio Note M Zero	299	Neat shoe box size preamp. Able to impart music with real life and soul when partnered with P Zero power amps	5 5		0.7					191
	Copland CTA-301MkII	1.399	Sweet sounding, but never gets bogged down in audio treacle	4	•	1000		-		1630	151
	Creek P43R	350	Excellent sound, remote control operation and upgrade options from this fine value preamp	6	-	1000	•	•	-		187
	Crimson CS610	450	Good, clear sound, including a decent phono stage, but flexibility is limited	3			-		1	-	187
	Cyrus aCA7	798	A decent enough unit at the price but not as good as the Cyrus aPA7 power amp it was tested with	5	-	-	•	•	-	-	190
		798 875	Not entirely satisfactory preamp which has dynamic strengths, but underachieves when the volume is raised	5	-	200	-	-	25		190
- 1			INVESTIGATION AND A DEPUTING AND A DAMAGED AND A		-						101
	Crimson 610C Densen Beat B-200	1.000	A versatile preamp with a high 'air-guitar' factor and Densen's characteristic styling	6							191



#### **OPERA DUE** "So luxurious that it sets new standards for speakers in the sub-£500 bracket" – Hi Fi News

Opera Duetto is an unusual loudspeaker. We use one inch thick solid hardwood for the cabinet, to give high mass, great rigidity and complete freedom from resonance. As well as being acoustically inert, real wood is a beautiful, natural material, and Duetto is a tribute to our cabinet makers' art, refined and supremely elegant.

Beneath the elegant exterior, advanced acoustic research and top quality components combine to give a sound rich in detail, space and warmth. What do the reviewers say? Hi Fi World gave top-star rating with the words: "A genuinely transparent and musical sound". Hi Fi News called the Duetto: "So luxurous that it set new standards for speakers in the sub-£500 bracket". And What Hi-Fi? called it simply: "A class act". If you are looking for quality and refinement from affordable loudspeakers, Duetto will enthral you. And at just £395 for the pair, so will the price.

For more details and a list of stockists please contact:



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#### DIRECTORY OF TESTED PRODUCTS

CONTINUED -

## Amplifiers



	(E) COMMENTS JED)								
PREAMPLIFIERS (CONTIN	760 Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system. (Tested with Lectern power amp)	5		- 10	1			1302	14
Exposure XVII	Superbly rhythmical; maybe a bit overpowering in the midband. Tested in Sessions with XVIII Super	5	•	•					142
Jadis JP-30MC	5,978 French tubes, beautiful build, nostalgic styling and delightful midrange. (Tested with JA 30 power amp)	5	•					1	60
LFD Mistral Linestage	449 Strong ergonomics, generally decent sound, but a little lacking in detail	6						1930	165
Meridian 501	695 Tight, positive sound, but dispassionate; intense at high levels. (Tested with 555 power amp)	5	•			•	1993	1303	145
Meridian 562V	995 Transparent and capable preamp, also features six digital inputs	9	•		•	•		1.1.2	140
Meridian 502	1,295 Extremely sophisticated analogue controller with tremendous flexibility and a fast and tidy presentation	7		1900	•		1.1.1.1	1.0	162
Michell Orca	1,650 Line-level design with a gorgeous remote and focused, spacious sound. (tested with Alecto power amps)	6			•		1916		187
Moth 30 Passive	149 Modular system gives cracking results. Passive preamp and power amp warrant Best Buy	4		-	1				109
Moth 30 Active Line Stage	349 Excellent-sounding ultra-simple miniature preamp	4		1000				1931	16
Muse Model Three	1,990 Natural sounding tranny preamp with useful audiophile features. Works beautifully with 160 power amp	5		-	•			1551	16
Musical Fidelity X-PRE	200 Cleverly configured preamp with many upgrade options, and open, lively and engaging sound	4	-	-	-		-	2152	17
Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista	Fully remote, nuvistor tube equipped, with fine coherence and musicality	5	•		•			2152	18
NAD 114	270 Beer-budget preamp, sounds focused, detailed and consistent	6	-	•	-		-	1932	16
Naim NAC92R	630 Upgradeable preamp uses proprietary socketry. (Tested with NAP90 power amp )	5	-	-	-	-	-	1932	16
NVA P50	350 Passive preamp that's more likely than most to cause treble loss	4			-			1950	18
Quad 77 Pre		4	-	-			-	1941	16
	850 Sophisticated design with 2-way remote control console; open colourful sound and very flexible	1	-			-			
Rega Hal	998 Passive line stages dedicated to Exon power amps	6		•	•			1942	16
Rose RV-23	450 You can pay more to get a more transparent sound, but it's hard to criticise at the price	3	•			_			7
Rotel RC-971	Low price is offset by rather coarse sound quality with certain types of music. (Tested with RB-971 power amp)	5				•			17
Sumo Athena IIB	767 Big, natural and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instruments	6	_					1305	14
TAG McLaren PA20R	1,500 Refinement of Audiolab original with clean, detailed sound but limited thrill power. (t/w 125M monoblocks.)	6		- Part of	•	•			184
Talk Hurricane 2L	649 Design of integrity which gets to the heart, if not the soul, of the music	6						1937	16
Technics SU-C3000	2,997 Price includes SE-A3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving		•			100	1		18
Thule Spirit PR100	400 High-tech preamp slightly marred by tendency to veil the sound	5			•				18
Woodside SC26 Phono	2,233 Synergistic with STA35, with a cool, controlled sound, good focus and transparency. (Tested with STA35)	5	•	•					10
POWER AMPLIFIERS									
Alch. Kraken APD8A Mk II	549 Unusual looks and unusual sound too, rather rough and lacking detail	1		4			55		18
Arcam Alpha 9P	400 Clear, colourful and well-disciplined, the Arcam is a strong all-rounder that can compete with conviction	1		-		(	50	1929	16
Arcam Alpha 10P	600 Well made and flexible: upgradeable to 3 channels. Good sound lacking the last degree of detail	1				1	00	1. 1.	18
Art Audio Quintet	1,393 Switchable triode, ultralinear output stage. In triode mode, these are 15 of the sweetest Watts around	1					5		10
Audio Note P Zero	599 Neat shoe box size valve monoblocks, priced per pair. Impart music with life and soul (Tested with P Zero preamp)	1					8	1	19
Border Patrol 300B SE	3,995 Single ended valve power amp with passion, grace and fire, and plenty of grunt to boot	1	-	1			.5		18
Copland CTA-505	2,099 Grown-up amplifier with a refined, yet never over-civilised air	1		7			57	1630	15
Creek A52SE	599 Well designed and built amplifier with plenty of power, detail and refinement	6		-			00	1050	18
Crimson CS630	800 Space-saving slimline monoblocks with both grunt and finesse	1	-	-	-	2.72	00		18
Crimson 620C	875 Not entirely satisfactory power amp which has dynamic strengths, but underachieves when the volume is raised	0.12.0		-	-		50		18
Cyrus Power							50		18
		-		-		and the second se	and the second second second	1	
Cyrus aPA7	1,896 Low feedback design that's a positive departure from the transistorised norm, (tested with Cyrus aCA7 pre)	1		-			50		190
Densen B-300	800 Expensive but highly musical. Colourful and and warm sound with strong timing and listener involvement	1		_			. 00		18
EAR 509 Mk II	3,699 Combining sonic strengths of transistors and valves, this amp warrants attention. (Tested with 802 Preamp)	1					00		6
ECA Lectern	880 Tested with Vista. Wind up the volume and blow a breath of fresh music into your system	1		01			0	1302	145
LFD Mistral Power	449 Infectious upper band vitality, but LF dynamics lacking – likewise 'grip' and transparency	1		1922		(	50	1930	16
Meridian 555	750 By providing an open window on the music, this amp is wide open to RF and low level IM distortions	1				(	50	1303	14
Michell Alecto stereo	1,150 Open, well-focused imagery with natural, refined textures	1	1	1.00		1	0	1940	165
Michell Alecto Monoblocks	1,950 Hefty beasts offering real power and striking imaging. Not the last word in timing (tested with Orca preamp)	1				1	00		18
Moth 60 Watt Stereo	599 Miniature power amp lacks control and finesse - not comfortable with difficult speaker loads	1				(	60	1931	16
Moth 30 Series Monoblocks	879 Tested with Active Preamp. Demonstrated solid balance and proved adept at delivering vital musical qualities	1			200	1	00		15
Musical Fidelity X-A50	500 Cleverly configured and attractively packaged, open, lively and engaging sound. Reviewed with X-PRE	1				1	0		17
Myryad MA120	450 Based on MI120 integrated - see latter for comments, but sounds significantly better when bi-amped with MI120	0 1		-			50	1935	16
NAD 214	370 A little lightweight, but detailed, consistent sound quality, and excellent value for money	1				a second second	0	1932	16
Naim NAP90	450 Power amp from a Nait integrated with some improvements	1		The second	108		60	1936	16
NVA A60	560 Rather coarse and uninviting sound	1			1		i0 i0	1550	18
Technics SE-A3000	2,997 Price includes SU-C3000. Supremely clean and even sounding combo, though it could be more musically involving					and the second second	00		18
Thule Spirit PA100	2,997 Frice includes 50-C5000, supremely clean and even sounding combo, indugring could be more musically involving 600 More successful than matching preamp: sound is gutsy and lively, and generally clean	1		10000			and the second second		
Quad 77 Power			-				00	10.41	18
		1		-	-	and the second se	15	1941	16
Rega Exon	1,196 Monoblock, priced each, dedicated for Hal preamp. Bold, outgoing, in-command kind of sound	1		-			25	1942	16
Roksan Caspian Power	595 Excels musically and in conventional hi-fi terms. A power amp for people with long-term satisfaction in mind	1	-			Contraction of the local distance	0		18
Rotel RB-971	200 Somewhat better than the accompanying preamp – clean, mean and bridgeable. (Tested with RC-971)	1					0		178
Rotel RB-980BX	450 Tames enthusiastically recorded material with a laid-back and occasionally smeared sound	1	1		E.		20	2.8	15
Sirius D200	2995 Single MOSFET pair per side gives tremendous resolution and timing (balanced only)	1		1000			00		183
Sumo Polaris III	950 Tested with Athena IIB. Big and tidy-sounding with very natural reproduction of acoustic and electric instruments						54	1305	14
TAG McLaren 125M	2400 Refined Audiolab replacement monoblocks with clean sound but limited thrill power. (t/w PA20R preamp)	1				1.	45		184
Talk Tornado 2	600 Good, but slightly retiring sound which lacks the authority to stand out in a crowd	1				E	5	1937	16
Thorens TTA2000	599 Low power shoe-box format, but gutsy and surprisingly subtle and articulate	1	1. 2			3	0	1938	165
PHONO STAGES									
Creek OBH-9	160 A neat little unit with an essentially neutral and listenable character	0		•		1			189
Cyrus aEQ7/PSX-R	826 Very hi-tech product which tends too much towards smoothness except at climaxes, which can be rough	0	•	•					189
Densen DP-Drive/DP-02	350 Quite unusual design in many ways: sound is mostly good but never quite shakes off a 'synthetic' quality	0					1000		189
Electrocompaniet ECP-1	495 An excellent phono amp that combines well-rounded balance with detail and low noise	0		•		-			189
Michell Iso/Lithos	With the Lithos power supply upgrade, the Iso is a very capable phono stage with just a hint of bass fullness	0	-				-		189
Moth 30 Series Phono	249 Fine sound all round, in any kind of music, from this bargain phono stage	0			-		-		189
Musical Fidelity X-LP	130         A little bass lightness does not seriously mar the performance of this fine value unit	0					-		189
NAD PP-1	40 A basic phono stage that does its job rather coarsely: a bit bass-shy too	0	-	-	-	-	-		
QED Discsaver DS-1			-	-			-		189
Roksan Artaxerxes X/DS1.5									189
	1,150 Delicate and well balanced, slightly congested at climaxes. Power supply expensive, but runs two Roksan components	0	•	•					189
TAG McLaren PPA20	1,549 One of the best-equipped phono stages available. Resolution is excellent, but timing is marginally behind the best								187

#### D 0 C Т 0 R 0 1 D 5 0 D P R 0 D IJ C Т S

Cables		CIFICATIONS
Cables are an integral part of a hifi system, required to connect source components to amplifiers, and the latter to speakers. • Analogue Interconnects connect source components and amplifiers, and run between pre and power amps. They are priced for one-metre terminated pairs. • Digital interconnects connect CD transport to DACs or digital recorders. They come in optical and electrical varieties, the former being made of plastic or glass. The prices shown are for a terminated linear metre. • Speaker cables are used between the amplifier and speaker. Our prices are	SYMMETRICAL: A twisted pair of conductors.     OAXIAL: A central 'hot' conductor and a shield that carries the negative signal.     STRANDED: Multiple strands with no intervening insulation.     SOLD CORE: Single or multiple, individually insulated strands.     COPPER: Material used for conductor.     SILVER: Material used for conductor.	<ul> <li>DIG CABLE TYPE: O - optical digital;</li> <li>electrical digital for CD Payers, DACS and digital recorders.</li> <li>FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed roview reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback ad on the perultimate page of the mag.</li> <li>ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of <i>Hi-Fi Choice</i> in which an original review appeared.</li> <li>High End Review</li> </ul>
e speake colles are used between the antipline and speake. Our price are per unterminated metre. Termination (plugs and soldering) costs vary.	🙆 BEST BUY 🕢 RECOM	

STATUS	Cabl	e	S	SYMMETRICAL	STRANDED	LID CORE	PPER SILL	NG CABLE T	ISSUE NUMB BACK NO.	ER
ST	PRODUCT ANALOGUE INTERCONNE	(E)	COMMENTS				V	<b>V V</b>	<b>v</b> v	
	Acoustic Precision Eikos	89	Not entirely neutral: probably best suited to upbeat music. Very stiff construction							
	Audio Note AN-A	18	Not entirely neural, probably best suited to upbeat music, very stiff construction Not especially impressive: warm but well-rounded balance that restricts 'air' but is quite d					•		188
	Audio Note AN-C	35	Not especially impressive, want but weir-founded balance that restricts air but is quite of Neutral but lacking in subtle texture and unable to distinguish fine detail	ear	-	•		-	1007	108
4	Audio Note AN-S	99	Up-beat and enthusiastic sound with satisfyingly deep and grumbly bass		-		-	-	1687	131
~	Audio Note AN-V	179	15 individually insulated silver strands make up this very clean and dynamically unchallen	and and la	-	-	-		1687	131
	Audioquest Turquoise	40	A 'fit and forget' cable that sounds distinctly lazy	ged cable	-			•	1687	131
	Audioquest Topaz X2	60	, ,		-	•			-	160
4	CableTalk Advanced 2	35	Well made but let down by a pervading sense of muddle and congestion in the sound Slight roughness in loud music barely detracts from a well-balanced performance with go	ad impairing	•		•	•	2100	188
4	Cable Talk Studio 2	65	A first-class performer from tonal, dynamic and rhythmic standpoints	og img8ing	-	•		•	2166	176
4	Cambridge Pacific	30	Lacks subtlety and bass impact but is otherwise guite serviceable for the price		•	•		•		160
4	Cambridge Audio Studio Ref	40	Dynamic cable with strong soundstaging and only a slight lack of detail		-	•		•	2167	176
~	Cambridge Silver Spirit 60					•	1	•		160
	Chord Cobra 2	100	Good bass but a lack of detail and differentiation of instruments		•	•		•		188
	Chord Chameleon 2	50	Good, strong sound with full-bodied music, less happy with smaller forces			•		•	2167	176
4	Connections Midas HD	90	Deep bass is fine but despite that the sound can be a bit hard and lacking body and resord	nance	•	•		•	-	188
		39	Canary yellow cable with excellent plugs and an open sound. Slight treble glare		•	•		•		160
4	DNM TCC75	34	Price for 0.75m High resolution cable, but best in short runs due to higher than average			_	•	•	1690	131
	DPA Slink	41	Slightly bright and zingy with flat soundstaging and hollow bass, though vocals and strings	0	• •	1	-		1690	131
	DPA White Slink	75	Bass recedes as the music gets complex; midrange and treble better with quite good deta	00			•	•	2168	176
	DPA Black Slink	245	Initially dark and meaty but after running in, it's lucid and transparent. Quad geometry, Go		•		•	•	1691	131
	Goertz M1 Interconnect	145	Soft sound lacking in bite, with excessive and plummy bass (NB sample used in review w	as only 0.5m)	•		•	•	2168	176
	Insert Audio IC100 MkII	47	Mostly good sound is let down by pervasive dryness			•	1	•	2169	176
4	lxos 104	20	Open and detailed presentation, full bass and silky if overly smooth treble			•	1	•	1692	131
	Ixos Gamma 1002	39	Lumpy bass, grainy treble, and poor integration. Nice colour, though		•	٠	3	•	2169	176
	Ixos 103	45	Even-handed and generous sound, bass has a well-rounded, bouncy quality		•	•	1	•	1692	131
	lxos 102	60	A bit bright and undynamic, this cable is nevertheless a good all-rounder, whose faults are			•	1	•		160
	Ixos 101	100	A cable with personality: its veiled and shut in quality bring an earthiness to vocals and rh	ythm guitar alike	•	•		• •	1693	131
4	Kimber PBJ	68	Assured sound, solid and natural bass and clear treble - excellent performance all round			•	Sec. 1	•		188
	Kimber Hero	110	Slight roughness detracts from some music; seems well suited to rock and jazz. Lively and	detailed	•	٠		•	2170	176
4	Moth Ley Line Black	100	Offers a full sound, neutral yet very solid and confident in delivery. Expansive imaging reta	ins music's energy	•	•		• •		108
	Moth Ley Line Grey	200	Detailed, but there's a sense of distance between music and listener: vocals are coarse rat	her than liquid	•	•	1	• •		108
	Nordost Black Knight	60	Flat black cable that is distinctive but slightly coloured - but not in a wholly negative mann	ner	•	•		•		160
	Nordost Solar Wind	85	Good tone and dynamics, with just occasionally a touch of bass-lightness in busy music		•		•	•		188
	Nordost Blue Heaven	145	Very good bass and only slightly grainy treble add up to a well integrated, natural-soundin	g cable	•		•	•		176
	Precious Metals SS35	50	Extended bass, but dry character suits electronic music better than acoustic		•	•	1	•		188
4	Prowire Silver	60	A good cable in every way, with just the occasional hint of coloration and coarseness			٠		•	2171	176
	PAD Elementa	145	A fat, heavy and frankly rather lazy-sounding cable; best with music for small forces		•	•	1	•	2171	176
4	QED Qnect 2	30	Very well balanced, refined and detailed, this is everything a good cable should be, and es	cellent value	1.20			•	2172	176



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#### ECTORY **0** F TESTE D R P **O D U C T** R S

CONTINUED

## Cables



DIG CABLE TYPE FACTSBACK NO. SYMMETRICAL SOLID CORE ISSUE NUMBER STRANDED COAXIAL COPPER SILVER STATUS COMMENTS (E) 4 OED Onect 4S 70 Some coloration and roughness in the midrange and treble, but bass is gratifyingly solid 188 Reference (SI 75 188 A moderate performer, with a little coloration and a tendency to lose bass at climaxes . -. Silvertone Ex-Static Pleasantly unfatiguing and competitively priced cable that lacks detail and insight 35 . 160 SonicLink Silver Pink Dynamically sensitive and muddle-free. We're unsure about the flesh-coloured finish though 6 35 160 SonicLink Black R 49 Nickel-plated copper with a slight dryness in the bass and a hint of treble roll-off don't compromise integration 176 0 -0 2172 SonicLink Lilac 65 Some dryness can affect transient sounds, though tone is generally good, especially in the bass . . 188 4 Straight Wire Chorus 40 A very confident cable with good bass, though perhaps a shade of treble loss . 2173 176 Straight Wire Sonata 80 Tonal balance favours lower frequencies but despite this it's a very listenable cable 188 Supra EFF-ISL 80 Excellent sound in all areas - nothing to criticise 188 Tara Labs Prism 22 64 Mild tendency to plumminess offsets some hardness in complex music with mixed results . 188 van den Hul The Storm 25 Price for 0.8m. Rich and warm but bass is rolled off: however there's plenty of drive and top end is clean . 1701 131 6 van den Hul Source HB 50 Price for 0.8m. Hybrid carbon-fibre/copper cable that is a paragon of naturalness 160 4 van den Hul PB5 50 A highly neutral cable with fine dynamic and rhythmic performance too - excellent 188 A cable with everything; good bass, treble, imaging and naturalness C van den Hul D102 Mklll 70 176 van den Hul The First 210 Using 12,000 carbon fibres, a gentle and subtle sounding cable that conveys oodles of information 1702 131 4 van den Hul The Second 240 Wonderfully open and relaxing but also intimately detailed, slightly softens percussive dynamics 1702 XLO Type 150 50 A restrained but useful cable for taming lively CD players, dynamics lack freedom, treble lacks clarity -1703 131 4 XLO Type 0.1 180 Unusual but highly expressive and detailed with a hint of graininess on powerful vocals . 1703 . DIGITAL INTERCONNECTS Audioquest Digital Pro A silver cable with all the drive of Video Z but lacking its clear-cut transparency . . E 108 100 A connection with a stranded inner core and a sound that lacks integration F 108 36 . Chord Codar Chord Prodac 50 Price for 0.6m length. Lively detailed treble, drives music along confidently with no hint of fizz F 1706 131 **DPA** Opti-link 20 Sound is lacklustre 0 108 DPA Digi-link Can seem slightly impassive but there's no avoiding its exceptionally detailed sound Λ 108 28 4 **Ixos 105** 25 Extended but soft-edged treble that's mercifully free of fatiguing colorations; plenty of weight, smooth E 1707 131 4 Kimber Kable Opti-link 50 Appears to be a bog-standard PMNA fibre, yet sounds a little brighter and livelier than most 0 108 Moth Leyline Datalink 140 A thin, coaxial version of Leyline Black with a rather hard and unforgiving character. Too expensive E 108 4 OFD D A top performance, low-loss 75 Ohm coax with a very open, almost liquid quality Siltech HF-6 F 131 145 1709 Sounds detailed, very clean and extended, but bass is less well resolved – a treat for high-end systems SonicLink Green 60 Spacious, positive and engaging if a bit over-crisp at times - very compelling, however E 1709 131 6 van den Hul The First Exceptionally natural albeit slightly cautious compared to some. Plenty of subtle information and integration 131 LOUDSPEAKER CABLES ALR Jordan QMM 5 Generally neutral, if sometimes bass-shy, but not very communicative . 183 Audio Note AN-D 4 50 Supplied in linear, non-polarised lengths that are twisted into stereo pairs. Sounds rather grippy and forward 100 Audio Note AN-B 16.50 Well suited to valve systems, elastic bass, methodical but unintrusive and musical 1711 133 4 Audio Note AN-L 29.50 Fruity bass and expressive vocal rendition was appreciated by the panel, which was happy to accept its foibles . 1712 133 4 150 . 100 Audio Note AN-SP A calm and civilised presentation, very quiet in the way it reveals subtle low level detail. Great poise and clarity Audioquest F-14 Ideal for laying under carpets. F-14 encourages a slightly warm and vibrant sound 109 Audioquest Type 4 Four 18-gauge OFHC copper conductors wound in a Litz-type fashion increases capacitance but restrains 'bite' . 109 5 Audioquest Type 6 9 A very inflexible cable in which the sonic ends don't quite justify the means 183 Audioquest Crystal 25 Neutral balance is spoiled by some graininess and smearing . -168 Bandridge 1 C7409 Detailed and up-beat cable. A bit too steely for classical strings 157 4 . 1800 4 Cable Talk Talk 3.1 2.25 Quite well-balanced but tends to lose bass lines in complex music . . 168 Cable Talk Talk 4.1 4.25 Smooth and cultured sound that lacks fine detail and is a bit too restrained 1800 157 . DNM ISC350 6 95 Majors on midband and lower treble lucidity at the expense of bass and extreme treble extension . . . 168 **DNM LSCB500** High impedance can influence the treble response, but this was a winner on sound per pound. Bi-wire 1716 R **DPA Black Sixteen** Unflappable resolution of musical details. No dampening of dynamics, simply oodles of taut information 100 . . 1717 133 . 4 Gale XL189 Slightly bright and not too subtle, but a perfectly acceptable cable for any starter system e 168 Gale XL315 A little lacking in detail but plenty of life and excellent value 800 R Gale XL160-2 2.50 Rhythmic and bouncy-sounding bi-wire cable. Can be slightly manipulative . 1800 157 Goertz M2 32 Remarkably detailed, smooth, neutral and with excellent bass; check amplifier compatibility • • 168 Heybrook Heywire 35 This well-meaning facsimile of earlier ribbon cables ends up sounding lumpy and uneven . 109 . Hitachi LC-OFC Very crisp, very clear and very confident. In the right system would be very expensive to better 109 Ċ Kimber 4TC 19.6 A well-balanced cable with good performance in all areas Ċ C 168 4 Kimber 4VS 9 A good mix of virtues including particularly fine bass 183 Linn K20 4 Seems to work best with lively, unsubtle music - can be dry and edgy . 183 Naim NACA 5 A 'dinosaur of a cable', this stiff wire rod doesn't belong outside Naim systems, where it works a treat 5.5 C . 109 Nordost Octava Fair bass but confused treble and some coloration . . 168 Ortofon SPK100 3 Grey-sounding - strips instruments of their natural richness and resonance. A bit bass-shy, too . 133 Ortofon SPK200 4.99 Good strong bass and fair detail, only slightly marred by a little dryness . 183 Tremendously open and atmospheric, with robust, full-blooded bass - if slightly bright at times Ortofon SPK300 8 133 Precious Metals SL102 10 Unusual construction gives rather strained sound, only really cheering up with simple musical textures . . 183 . Puresonic 7845 1.95 Big, weighty sound - but too messy and bloated for its own good . C 183 Puresonic 7891 2.85 Chunky cable design: shame about the sound quality . 1800 157 . QED Qudos 2.25 Despite high-tech design and excellent Air-Loc plugs, its music-making failed to gel . . 1800 157 **OED** Profile 4x4 9 Good midrange and treble balance, but bass is rather slack and detail not outstanding 168 **QED** Qudos Silver Basic figure-8 cable adds value with silver plating, to generally smooth and detailed effect 183 Silver Sounds 12 gauge Basic 'homemade' construction gives fairly neutral sound. Price not outstandingly competitive 15 • • 168 SonicLink S300 18 Happiest with simple music; tends to smudge detail in complex pieces . . 168 4 SonicLink AST50 It may look like bell-wire, but AST50 sounds detailed, ordered and balanced . 1800 157 4 SonicLink AST150 3.95 Slightly plummy bass and a useful way of holding musical strands together • . 1800 157

	DIR	3	C	Т	0	R	Y	0	F		Т	9	S	Т	Đ	D	P	R	0	D	U	C	Т	S	
(	CONTINUED																	5 0	5.0.1	5.1	C A T	10	NS		
<b>IATUS</b>	Cabl	e	S													SYN	COA METRICAL		-		PPER	DIG CAL	FACTSB. BLE TYP	ISSUE NUME ACK NO.	IER
S	PRODUCT	(£)	CON	IMEN	TS									and the second					$\nabla$	V		V	V	V	
4	Straight Wire Quartet	8	A goo	d all-ro	ounder	with fu	ull tone,	clear deta	il and	natural a	ambier	nce						•		٠		•			183
4	Supra Ply 3.4	6.95	Clean	sound	which	stays t	ogether	well at hi	gh leve	els, with	full ba	ss - p	erhaps	s a tou	ch of t	eble rest	riction	•		٠		•			183
	Tara Labs Klara	2.95	A goo	d bud	get cat	le with	an eve	n spread o	of virtu	es - and	very n	ninor	vices -	across	s the b	oard		٠		•		•			183
	van den Gold Water	7	Bass t	becom	es shy	when t	here's a	lot happe	ening, a	and deta	ail coul	d be (	clearer					•		•		•			183
	van den Hul The Clearwater	7	Despi	te its e	evocativ	ve titl <b>e</b> ,	the Clea	arwater tu	rns out	t to be a	disapp	pointi	ngly m	nurky-se	oundin	g cable				•		•	•	34	109
	van den Hul The Magnum	38	Toute	d as vo	dH's m	ost pre	stigious	twin-lead	cable,	Magnun	n soun	ids so	ft and	old fas	shioned	ł				•		•	•		109
4	van den Hul The Wind	40	'The V	Nind' k	kicks u	o a stor	m with	its lush m	idrange	e and bo	one-cru	un <b>c</b> hir	ng bass	5!						٠		•	•		109
	van den Hul Revolution	76	Silver	plated	OFC	combin	ed with	carbon fit	ore pro	mpts a s	sombre	e char	acter v	with an	easy a	and relax	ed treble			•		•	•	1726	133
	XLO Pro Type 625	4	Lively	but na	atural a	nd rela	xed-sou	nding – a	hint c	of conges	stion a	t freq	uency	extrem	nes			131		•		•	•	1726	133
	XLO Pro 600	16.60	Basica	ally neu	utral to	nality b	out can t	pecome ag	ggressi	ve and t	wo-din	nensio	onal					•		•		•			168



## Cartridges

Captidges fall into two groups: high output MM (moving magnet) models, Capable of working directly into most phono inputs; and generally more expensive low- and very-low-output MC (moving coil) models. MC cartridges usually have better mechanical integrity, tighter tolerances and give better performance. Many amplifiers are no longer equipped with the necessary phono input for a cartridge, and a separate phono stage is necessary. Phono-inputequipped valve amps need a transformer to cope with MC cartridges. Even basic high-output MM cartridge designs will benefit from a customised amplifier input load. Consult your dealer for further details on this topic.

#### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS

 MM: Moving-magnet cartridge with a normal output, suitable for all amplifier phono inputs.
 MC: Moving-coil cartridge with a low output, only suitable for high-sensitivity MC amplifier phono inputs.

 REPLACEABLE STYLUS: fMost MM cartridges have a stylus (needle) that can be removed and replaced when worm out. OUTPUT (mV): Cartridge output in milliolts. MASS (g): The mass of your chosen cartridge

**BEST BUY** 

affects the choice of partnering tonearm. Consult dealers or manufacturers to establish which arms and pickups work well together. • FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factsback

Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback ad on the penultimate page of the mag. **ISSUE NUMBER:** The issue of *Hi-Fi Choice* in

which an original review appeared.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

# Cartridges



**A RECOMMENDED** 

S	PRODUCT	(E)	COMMENTS				V			
4	Audio Technica AT-95E	20	Clear and dynamic, though richly balanced				2.8			48
4	Clearaudio Signature	1,495	A great all-round performer with fine dynamic vitality and a seductive midband intimacy		•		0.55	11.5	2142	175
4	Denon DL110	70	A fine all-rounder, this high output MC model is likely to perform well		•		1.0	6		48
	Denon DL160	90	Although listeners just preferred the 110, its brother here survived lab tests and is still 'thoroughly competent'		•		0.1	6		43
	Denon DL103	100	Good performance in bass and good 'life'. Is seriously let down by its spherical stylus which kills subtle detail	1	•		0.1	6		103
	Denon DL304	200	Uncoloured, detailed, tracks superbly. Top notch altogether, and a bargain at the price		•			C.NY		103
	Dynavector Karat 17D2 mk2	450	Clean and controlled sound with taut, tuneful bass. Detailed and musically cogent		•		0.15	5.3		158
4	Dynavector Te-Kaitora	1,698	A real smoothie, but pricey. Worth checking out for its delicate laid-back transparency and low needle-talk		•		0.25	C.C. C.C.	2142	175
	Dynavector XX-1L	998	Very clear, very detailed; a response lift around 20kHz seems to do no harm	2.5	•			12		84
	Dynavector XX-1	998	Good, but not immensely competitive at the price, and not helped by comparison with the low output version		•	120		12		84
4	Goldring Elan	19	A lightweight and frisky-sounding MM apparently based on Nagaoka MM4 body	•		•	5.0	7		67
4	Goldring 1012GX	79	Slightly harsh but plenty of life and detail. Some high frequency coloration apparent	•		•	6.5	7		85
4	Goldring 1022GX	99	As with 1012, a touch harsh; detail and transient purity improved	•		•	6.5	7		85
	Goldring Eroica LX	110	Not the most subtle cartridge in the world: can sound edgy at times, but lively and informative		•		0.5	8		84
	Goldring 1042	120	Not terribly subtle, and not such good value alongside 1012 and 1022. Quite lively, though	•		•	6.5	6		91
	Goldring Elite	220	The basics are right, and it will cheerfully tackle any source material, but its sound is not the cleanest	2.30	•		0.5	8		103
	Goldring Excel VX	525	Good bass drive but dull and imprecise higher up. An old-fashioned sound that falls short of the true high end	1.10	•	-	0.45	8	2143	175
	Grado Prestige Gold	149	Rich sounding with an unusually refined top-end for a moving magnet-type cartridge	•		•	4	6	12.46	158
	Grado Reference	995	Loads of tracking headroom but treble is limited. A prospect for mid-oriented valve amp users	•			1.7	6.5	2143	175
	Linn K9	125	Linn improved this model by beefing up the Basik's bodywork and adding a super stylus	•		•	4.5	5		Col
	London Decca Maroon	259	Now manufactured under the London brand name, this Decca cartridge is as iconoclastic as ever	•			5.0	6		67
	London Decca S Gold	399	Immediate and detailed, but coloured and nonlinear, with a questionable effect on records	•			5.0	6		84
4	Lyra Lydian	649	Superbly capable all-round musical performer that improves markedly when its body cover is removed		•		0.3	7		158
	Lyra Clavis Da Capo	995	A stable tracker, and one of the finest cartridges we've heard	100	•		0.1	7	1 bio	143
	Lyra Parnassus D.C.t	1,895	A real little jewel of a cartridge, with many good qualities, but handicapped by a rather too obvious treble peak		•		0.22	10.5	2144	175
	Ortofon 510/P	38	For the price, a good blend of virtues – weight, clarity and neutrality	•		٠	3.0	5		85
	Ortofon 520/P	65	Sensitive to load capacitance, but the 520/P has a lively, effervescent sound	•		•	3.0	5		67
4	Ortofon MC3 Turbo	130	The 3 Turbo is bright, cheerful and bouncy, but unsubtle - take it as it comes!		٠		3.3	4		103
4	Ortofon MC15 Super II	130	A good all-rounder, with outstanding resolution, if slightly bright and close up		•		0.35	7		103
	Ortofon MC25E	180	An excellent upgrade for a mid-price turntable	1	•		0.5	11		139
	Ortofon MC25FL	250	A bit too stark and honest, but faithful to what's on the LP		٠	1	0.5	11		139
	Ortofon MC30 Supreme	525	Highly detailed and even-sounding cartridge that has a special affinity with female vocal recordings		٠		0.5	10.7		158
	Ortofon Rohmann	1,000	A class act in nearly every respect, with fine groove security and a very smooth and even-handed sound		•		0.25	8.5	2144	175
4	Ortofon MC3000II	1,100	A real ear-opener. Nothing to criticise anywhere - one of the very best		•		0.12	10		84
	Ortofon MC5000	1,500	Limited tracking ability, bright and forward sound, but good stereo		•		0.12	10		91
	Rega Bias	39	Difficult to mount in some arms due to its shallow body, but the Bias offers a gentle, refined sound	•		•	5	4		67
4	Rega Elys	85	Clearly superior to the Bias, the Elys is more detailed, accurate and convincing	•		•	5.0	5		67
4	Roksan Corus Black	130	Recognisably related to the Corus Blue, but smoother and more civilised	•		•	6.5	5		91
4	van den Hul MM-1	250	If woody midrange could be tamed, imaging and security would pull it through	•		•	5.5	6		103
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#### RECTORY **0** F DU D Т 0 S Т 0 D Ρ C T S R 0

# **Cartridges**



S	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	V	V	V			V
	van den Hul DDT-II	600	Outstanding stereo imaging and neutral balance are appealing, but rhythmically the DDT-II is a bit lazy		•	0.35	7.6		158
4	van den Hul MC-10	750	A neutral, balanced performer, gives fine depth and focus and a firm, extended bass		٠	0.4	6	1	60
	van den Hul MC-One	900	This extends all the positive qualities of the 10, but adds greater authority and scale - worth all the extra money		•	0.4	6		60
	van den Hul MC-Two	1,200	MC-Two rewards with a highly detailed yet fluid and musically convincing portrayal		٠	0.4	6		72
	van den Hul Frog	1,500	Seems to control/suppress surface noise better than its rivals. This delicate and subtle performer has great charm	-	٠	0.65	7	2145	175
	van den Hul G' hopper IIIGLA	2,800	Undoubtedly one of the finest cartridges available. It has tremendous bandwidth, energy and finesse	1.5	٠	0.4	6		122
4	Wilson benesch Matrix	786	Extraordinarily well balanced cartridge: neutral and detailed yet lively and rhythmically assertive	197	•	0.58	6		158
4	Wilson benesch Carbon	1,573	Carbon fibre body contributes to a delightfully clean and open midrange, and a quick, lively and coherent sound		٠	0.45	7	2145	175

## **Cassette Decks**



The compact cassette is still the world's most versatile and ubiquitous music storage medium. Cassette decks hook up to the 'tape loop' inputs and outputs offered by most modern amplifiers. It's worth taking care to choose the best tapes for a specific machine. For example, expensive metal tapes will be a wasted investment for a cheap deck. Many better-specified decks have manual or automatic bias adjustment to get the best from specific samples of tape. Twin decks offer the possibility of copying from tape to tape, playing two cassettes sequentially or recording onto two tapes at once. Autoreverse is a useful feature, but uni-directional mechanisms promise better sound. Dolby S is the ultimate noise reduction system, and three-head decks permit record monitoring off-tape.

derivative of Dolby SR       Automatically plays both sides of the cassette.       review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the mag	• DOLBY B/C: The first and	decks for dubbing and	• FACTSBACK REFERENCE:
derivative of Dolby SR     Automatically plays both sides of professional noise-reduction.     review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on the cassette.       • DOLBY HX-PRO: Extends headroom for cassette recording off-tape while you're recording.     • AUTO CALIBRATION: The deck will automatically set up bias and EQ for any tape.     info, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the mag ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.	and the second		
professional noise-reduction.     the cassette.     info, see the Factsback advert on       • DOLBY HX-PRO: Extends     • AUTO CALIBRATION: The deck will automatically set up bias and EQ for any tape.     info, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the mag       • JHEAD: Permits monitoring off-tape while you're recording.     • ADJUSTABLE BIAS: Permits     info, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the mag	• DOLBY S: A desirable	AUTOREVERSE:	permits direct access to our faxed
ODLBY HX-PRO: Extends headroom for cassette recording <b>3-HEAD:</b> Permits monitoring off-tape while you're recording. <b>ADJUSTABLE BIAS:</b> Permits <b>aDJUSTABLE BIAS:</b> Permits	derivative of Dolby SR	Automatically plays both sides of	review reprint service. For full
headroom for cassette recording,     deck will automatically set up     ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of       • 3-HEAD: Permits monitoring     bias and EQ for any tape.     Hi-Fi Choice in which an original       off-tape while you're recording,     • ADJUSTABLE BIAS: Permits     review appeared.	professional noise-reduction.	the cassette.	info, see the Factsback advert on
S-HEAD: Permits monitoring bias and EQ for any tape. Hi-Ff Choice in which an original off-tape while you're recording. ADJUSTABLE BIAS: Permits review appeared.	• DOLBY HX-PRO: Extends	• AUTO CALIBRATION: The	the penultimate page of the mag.
off-tape while you're recording.	headroom for cassette recording.	deck will automatically set up	ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of
	• 3-HEAD: Permits monitoring	bias and EQ for any tape.	Hi-Fi Choice in which an original
• TWIN DECK: Contains two manual optimisation of tape. H High End Review	off-tape while you're recording.	ADJUSTABLE BIAS: Permits	review appeared.
	• TWIN DECK: Contains two	manual optimisation of tape.	H High End Review

SPECIFICATIONS

# **Cassette Decks**

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S	<b>U2.</b> S	Sf	ette Decks 🔤	DOLBY C DOLBY S	HX P	TWIN	AUTO REVERS	UBRAS	ACTSBACK	ENUM	
STATUS					····	,	-ur -ns	E MOO	V BIAS	NO. "BE	R
ST	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS			V	VV	V	<b>V V</b>		
	Aiwa AD-F450	120	Basic but well-designed deck. Astonishing value; only the poor metering gives the game av	way 🔴		•				1513	136
	Aiwa AD-WX727	170	High-class twin for those who want bells, whistles – and music	•		•	•		•	1377	146
	Denon DRM-550	160	There are some technical limitations, but this remains a fine-sounding deck, and excellent	value 🛛 🔴		•					158
	Denon DRW-580	200	Twin deck: OK for casual use, but will quickly pall with more quality critical applications	•		•	•	•		,	171
	Denon DRS-640	200	Draw-loading deck, with simple facilities and smooth, well-adjusted sound	•		•	•	181		1591	140
4	Denon DRM-650S	230	An improvement on predecessors, it offers a wide-ranging, sound. Dolby S is not the best	feature •	٠	٠			• •	1920	164
	Denon DRM-740	270	Breathed-on DRM-710, with good external treatment, offers good, if somewhat detached so	onics		٠	•		. •	1514	136
	Denon DRS-810	310	Draw-loading deck, carefully designed yet lacking in subtlety on audition	•		٠	•				127
	Harman/Kardon TD420	250	Minor inconsistencies detract from a well-conceived, minimum features design	•		•	•			1592	140
	Harman/Kardon TD450	350	Draw loader with poor tape navigation features; good midband but shallow bass	•	1	•	•		(	1920	164
	JVC TD-R472	200	Excellent auto-reverse deck which doesn't suffer the usual disadvantages and is very sharp	ly priced 🛛 🔴		•		•	•		158
	JVC TD-V662BK	2 <b>7</b> 0	Assured, clean and agile-sounding recorder, if not quite the most refined in its class	•		•		Saw!	• •	1380	146
	JVC TD-W718	300	Twin deck. Good for creative live recording, but no timer standby. Respectable performance	•		٠	•	•	•	2039	171
	Kenwood KX-W6080	200	Modestly decent-sounding twin deck, with some transport instability and ragged bass	•		•	•	•	•	2040	171
	Marantz SD455	170	Works well as a single deck, especially on replay, but dubbing at high/low speed comprom	ises sound		•	•	•			184
	NAD 613	230	Rough and ready, but enjoyable sound, though marred by mechanical motor noise	•	1	•			•	,	158
	NAD 616	300	Twin deck with basic features. No Dolby setting memory, transport is too unstable for audioph	nile use		•	•	•		2041	171
	Onkyo K-611	460	Cute drawer-loading mini-size component with 3-heads and dual capstan transport	•		•			• •	1384	146
	Pioneer CT-S550S	250	Great features, good with cheap low bias tapes, but slightly synthetic sound quality	•	٠	٠	•		•	1920	164
	Pioneer CT-W806DR	300	Had it not been for the iffy transport quality, this sophisticated twin would have been Reco	mmended		•	•	•	•	2042	171
	Pioneer CT-S830S	500	High-class mechanism, if lacking in battleship externals, and superb sound	•	٠	٠	199		• •	1385	146
	Sony TC-KE600S	300	Mild setting-up problems notwithstanding, this UK-tweaked design has a smooth, open sou	und 🔹	٠	٠	•		• •		158
	Teac V01050	180	One of the cheapest 3-head machines around, but it shows in very 'thick' sound	•		•	•				184
	Technics RS-AZ6	200	For those who can't afford the RS-AZ7; clarity over the widest bandwidth thanks to AZ thin		1	•	•		•	1920	164
	Technics RS-AZ7	270	Thin-film head gives a solid, almost CD-like bass and midrange. A clear advance in state-of	-the-art 🛛 🔴		•			• •		158
4	Yamaha KX-490	200	Electrifyingly transparent and capable deck whose only flaw is a trace of audible wow and	flutter 🛛 🔵		•			• •		158
4	Yamaha KX-580SE	250	Subtle, engaging and transparent deck, with a lightweight tonality, but stability and strong of		•	•			• •	2043	171



**HI-FI CHOICE** LETTERS TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT ALL MATTERS HI-FI AND WIN A **GIFT FOR YOUR EFFORTS! SEE PAGE 19** 

#### C T 0 ST 0 D 0 R Т 0 P 0 D U C Т S D R Y 0 Ð R

EDITOR'S CHOICE



BEST BUY

## **CD/DVD** Players

II CD players offer a basic selection of facilities, and some can keep A UCD players offer a basic selection or normalized on a selection of the orders. All but the excessively inexpensive feature remote control. Most CD players can be upgraded by adding an outboard DAC (see below). To do this the player needs a digital output of either electrical or optical type. The former is preferable for the ultimate sound. A CD player can be split into two basic components: the disc drive or transport, and a device which converts the disc's digital bitstream into an analogue audio signal. This is called a digital to analogue convertor, or DAC. Although most players are contained within a single box, expensive players are usually two-box affairs. The first new DVD players have not excelled with CD software.

#### KEY ТО SPECIFICATIONS

• ELECTRICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT: For electrical connection to an outboard DAC. • AES/EBU ELEC DIG OUTPUT: Balanced digital output to be used with similarly

equipped DACs. • OPTICAL DIGITAL OUTPUT: For optical connection to an outboard DAC. • ST OPT DIG OUTPUT: High-speed optical output to be used with similarly equipped DACs.

• BAL ANALOGUE OUTPUT: Balanced analogue output for amplifiers equipped with balanced inputs.

• HEADPHONE SOCKET: For 'can' users. • VARIABLE OUTPUT: Remotely adjustable

output level (usually non-audiophile). MULTI-DISC: Equipped with a carousel or H High End Review

multi-tray system for continuous play of multiple discs.

• DAC TYPE: BS - Philips Bitstream; MB multibit; Hyb - hybrid of multibit and bitstream technologies; 1bit - single bit types eg MASH, bitstream, PWM, etc; CC constant calibration.

• FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full information, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the magazine. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice

in which an original review appeared. Factsback information page.

## **CD/DVD** Players STATUS

**RECOMMENDED** 

<b>CD</b> /]	<b>DVD Players</b>	S TCAL DIG C DIG OU	PECI BAL ANA OPT DIG OUTPUT	FIC EADPHOI OCUE O	RIABLE NE SOCK	MULT-D OUTPUT		ISSUE NO	UMBE	9
PRODUCT	(E) COMMENTS		V V	V	V		<b>v v</b>	V		V
curus ACD11	899 First-rate if costly player, which combines a delightful transparency with an uncontrived naturalness				21			1'bit	1962	166
coustic Precision Eikos	1,850 Seriously customised Pioneer with extraordinary resolution and world beating imaging and bass	•			1			1bit		16
Ichemist Kraken	1,249 Distinctive looking player likely to suit a Alchemist system, but will result in variable results elsewhere	a .	•	-		-		24/96		190
Ichemist Nexus APD32A	597 Refined treble, constrained yet capable bass and attractive all-round presentation		-	-				Hyb		16
MC CD8A	150 Has balanced output, but is otherwise rather grey and unremarkable		•	-	•	•	•		2071	17
MC CD9/DAC8	200 Beer-budget two-box system (player + DAC) is smooth, attractive and easy on the ear	•			-	-		CC	2261	17
inthem CD1	1,595 Unusual combination of high-end player, complete with HDCD, and changer. Good, but noisy				we -	-	•			17
rcam Alpha 7	330 Mildly rehashed favourite comes up smelling of roses	-	-					BS	1872	17
rcam Alpha MCD	450 Excellent bass and natural midband, but just a touch of treble dryness, from this very listenable changer				200	-			2220	- 200
rcam Alpha 8	520 Refined, intricately detailed but a little cautious. Should be broadly compatible with a variety of amps	-					-	BS	1873	16
rcam Alpha 8SE	600 Excellent (and very reasonably priced) HDCD-compatible player is a strong all-rounder			-	-			1 bit	10/3	17
rcam Alpha 9	800 Refined, articulate player which employs new DAC technology to great effect		-							
		-			2.0			Ring		18
udio Analogue Paganini	750 Basically good, but sometimes heavy handed player.	•	_		Constant of the			24bit		19
udio Research CD1	3,290 Suspends disbelief with a real yet obviously coloured sound. A rare proposition among CD players	•	• •	•	122	_		-	1875	-
udio Note CD1	600 Easy on the ear, and for a valve player, easy on the pocket, but a bit Radio 2 flavoured	•						Hyb		18
VI \$2000MC2	899 A chip off the old block. This model's in-yer-face balance obstructs an otherwise finely detailed sound								2179	17
WI S2000MC Reference	1,399 Lean, dry, high resolution player, built to outlast most of us. A fine performer in a sympathetic system						100	MB		16
Cambridge Audio CD4	150 Basic appearance and sluggish track access/track search belies its up and at 'em sound quality	•				•		Hyb		
ambridge Audio CD4SE	200 Among the best encountered at the price, considerably more refined and convincing than the CD4	•						BS	1877	16
ambridge Audio CD6	250 A sharp, articulate player, a real thoroughbred in fact, perhaps too sharp and lively for some systems	•			•			BS		15
Copland CDA-266	1,199 Simple yet elegant design is unexpectedly sophisticated under the skin, and effective in execution	•						MB	2183	17
opland CDA-288	2,199 A gentle giant of a player that errs in favour of pastel shades rather than bold daubs of colour	•	•					MB	1880	16
Cymbol CDP12	1,299 Clean, detailed and airy HDCD-equipped player with minimalist trappings	•					•	Hyb	2184	17
Lyrus dAD1.5	395 Improved dAD1 variant has improved digital ilter for a more natural, easy on the ear quality	۲						Hyb		19
yrus dAD3	598 A relaxed style of delivery that convinces with guile and subtlety rather than orchestral ordnance							BS	1887	16
yrus dAD3Q	898 Lucid, transparent and uncontrived sound quality, superb build, and readily upgradeable		•		1			MB	1887	16
Denon DCD-435	130 Good low cost player, and a step up from the DCD-425, its predecessor		•		1.1.5	•		DS		19
enon DCD-635	180 Modest presentation gives little clue to the thoroughbred electronics ticking away inside		•		3755	•		MB	2075	17
Denon DCD-625	200 DCD-615 replacement is generously equipped but lacks sophisticated sound of its forebear	•			1	•			1269	14
Denon DCD-835	280 Refined version of Denon's multibit technology is a bit of a star	•	•				•	MB		18
Denon DCD-1550AR	350 Disappointing bland and ploddy sound from an immaculately constructed, high tech player			1000		•			2266	122
Denon DCD-1015	350 Excellent, mid-range player – fast, fluid and lean						-		1599	-
Denon DCD-3000	1,000 Sings with the temperament of a huge orchestra under the baton of a timid conductor			-	<u>G</u>	-			1881	16
xposure CD player	1,049 Slightly weak sounding, but otherwise well optimised, if costly player	-						MB	1001	18
arman/kardon HD710	200 A player of integrity, but can sound a bit hard and rough when extended, and is amplifier fussy	-		-				1bit		15
	300 Powerful but subtle and involving player: welcome back Harman/Kardon!	-				-		DS		19
arman/kardon HD740	01.1		-			-	-		2220	
arman/kardon FL8300	300 Generally capable changer with relaxed sound and firm bass. Just a hint of roughness on occasion		-			•	•		2220	
Telios Model 2	950 This player may not be to everyone's taste, but it is an individual, with some interesting things to say	Contraction in the				-			2180	-
lelios Model 3	650 Disappointing entry level model from Helios lacks verve and transparency.	•						DS	2072	18
VC XL-V184BK	120 Excellent budget player, well presented, a little opaque, but its heart is in the right place				-	-			2072	
VC XL-V284BK	140 Featuring a new set of bitstream innards, this flexible player has a refined sound	•	•		1				1270	
VC XL-Z574	250 Strong resolving power, good midband and dynamics, but slightly raw and thin		•	-		•		1bit		15
VC XL-Z674BK	300 Even-handed, but glosses over the most intimate moments	•	•	_	2	•		-	1637	
Kenwood DP-3080	170 Bold, dynamic and outgoing sound, though somewhat aggressive. Poor build quality and finish		•			•		1bit		15
Kenwood DPF-3010	180 Grey, somewhat mechanical sounding player	-	•		-			Hyb		19
Kenwood DP-4090	250 Focuses a clear, wide aperture lens on the music – and has CD Text too!	•	•			•	•		2076	-
Kenwood DP-5090	300 Disappointing senior brother to the excellent DP-4090, but surface interface is good	•	•			•	•		2267	-
Kenwood DP-7090	400 A lively and compelling performer with an even-handed and coherent disposition	•	•		1				1885	-
	875 Useful multi-room features matched to strong bass, but poor imagery and transparency	•							1762	
inn Mimik	200 Somewhat inconsistent, middle ranking player which hints at better things	•	1			•	•	1bit	2077	17
and a first state of the second state of the s	250 The digital equivalent of a safe pair of hands. Smooooth	٠	•		100	•	•	BS	2268	1
inn Mimik	250 The distal equivalent of a sale pair of hands, shirobooth	•	•		1	•	•	BS		18
.inn Mimik Marantz CD-48	300 Lacks dynamic consistency to justify the stunning performance with simple material	-		_	Contraction of the local division of					10
inn Mimik Marantz CD-48 Marantz CD-67 Mk II	300 Lacks dynamic consistency to justify the stunning performance with simple material	•	•			•		Hyb		10
.inn Mimik Marantz CD-48 Marantz CD-67 Mk II Marantz CD-67OSE MkII Marantz CD-63 MkII KI Si	300         Lacks dynamic consistency to justify the stunning performance with simple material           400         It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault	1.00	•			•				
.inn Mimik Marantz CD-48 Marantz CD-67 Mk II Marantz CD-67 OSE MkII Marantz CD-63 MkII KI Si Marantz CD-17	300         Lacks dynamic consistency to justify the stunning performance with simple material           3         400         It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault           800         Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent	•	•			•	•	BS	1763	15
.inn Mimik Marantz CD-48 Marantz CD-67 Mk II Marantz CD-67 OSE MkII Marantz CD-63 MkII KI Si Marantz CD-17 Marantz CD-17KI Sig	300         Lacks dynamic consistency to justify the stunning performance with simple material           3         400         It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault           800         Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent           1,100         Minor QC problems aside, this is a superbly turned-out machine, but ultimately a little bland	•				•	•	BS BS	1763	15
.inn Mimik Marantz CD-48 Marantz CD-67 Mk II Marantz CD-67 OSE MkII Marantz CD-63 MkII KI Si Marantz CD-17	300         Lacks dynamic consistency to justify the stunning performance with simple material           3         400         It's the quintessential sound of Marantz – warm, open, and smooth almost to a fault           800         Fabulous packaging and an excellent all round performer: smooth, detailed and consistent	•				•	•	BS BS DS	1763	15 17 16

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SIAIUS		)[	<b>D</b> Players	AES/EBU ELEC DIG GTAL OUTPUT	S P E C I F I C ST OPT DIG OUT DIG OUTPUT	ATIONS ARIABLE MULTI-DIS NE SOCKET		NUMBER	P
	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS			VVV		V	
	Monrio Privilege	995	Costly and well-engineered, but ultimately rather heavy-handed and dull, if refined player	•			MB		166
	Musical Fidelity E60 Musical Fidelity E624	300	This entry-level player lacks proper stereo localisation and clarity	•	•		BS	1959	166
	Musical Fidelity A2	500 500	Similar to X-RAY, but both better sounding and cheaper Warm (too warm), attractive and open player, a great improvement on (related) E60				MB BS	-	188
	Musical Fidelity X-RAY	799	Brilliantly packaged and clean but slightly antiseptic sounding player	-		1	MB		184
	Myryad T-10	400	Rather ordinary player fails to shine with good music recordings	-			DS		184
	Myryad MC100	700	A little extra get-up-and-go wouldn't go amiss, but its sheer maturity and composure ensure lis	stenability		1990 1997	BS	1889	163
	Myryad MCD500		Well-built, attractive player, showing much promise, but can be a little heavy-going. on audition	•			and a second second second second	2185	176
	NAD 522	170	Crude, mechanical sounding player fails to tickle the music buds				the second se		_
	NAD 524	250	Clean, clear and essentially musical player in the NAD mould	٠			MB		19
	NAD 5500	1,100	24-bit player with considerable transparency and bass grunt	•	•	•	MB		189
	Naim Audio CD3.5		Forward and explicit sound needs careful system matching				Hyb		18
	Naim Audio CD2	2,000	Provides bags of detail with a solid stereo focus but not all the romanticism we know to be				and the second se	1890	163
	Naim NACDSII/XPS			and the second se			MB		188
1	Onkyo DX-7210	260	Well-bred CD player features an unusual digital filter, is smooth and cultured without appearing	ing boring	•	•	BS	1273	147
	Onkyo DX-7510	400	Strongly flavoured, assertive sound	•	•	•		1640	151
1	Orelle CD-100EA		Excellent imagery, timing and transparency, and readily upgraded or reconfigured	•	• •		and the second s	1964	166
	Parasound C/DP-1000 Philips CD-721	499	Comes on like a high end player, but ultimately sounds a tad weak and soft-centred Surprisingly well-sorted, articulate if slightly glossy and attractively presented sound. Captive s	innal load			Hybri 1bit	u	184
	Philips CD721 Philips CD751	130 150	Surprisingly weir-sorted, articulate it slightly glossy and attractively presented sound. Captive s Inconsistent and occasionally opaque and scrawny sounding cheapie				1bit		17
	Pioneer PD-S507	200	Low cost Legato Link implementation sounds gentle but slightly muddled	-			DS		17.
	Pioneer PD-S707	300	Idiosyncratic Legato Link Implementation sounds genue but signing muddled	•			MB		184
-	Pioneer PD-F906	350	Interesting appearance and concept, but this changer's sound is lacklustre and ergonomics f			•		2223	178
	Pioneer PD-S904	400	Too much legato – literally – in sound, but a very smooth performer					1641	15
	Pioneer PDS-06	550	Technologically sophisticated. Pioneer's first multi-bit player for years is polished and capable	e •	•	•		2176	170
	Pioneer PD-S505 Precision	460	Assured, fluid-sounding player, with great spatial coherence				1bit		160
	Primare D20	799	Well presented player doesn't quite cut the mustard, though it performs promisingly	•			BS		18
	Quad 77	.900	A true thoroughbred combining a penetrating insight into detail with poise rarely found at th	he price			Hyb	1893	163
	Revox Exception E426			•		•	BS		182
	Roksan DP3P	1,495	Dramatic and compelling. Classical listeners should be ready to 'air conduct' when auditionin	ing 🕒			BS	1896	163
	Roksan Caspian	895	Solid, articulate, and fundamentally well-engineered player, but with some subtle low-level li	imitations			Hyb		169
	Rotel RCD-951		Disappointing chopped down RCD-971 – buy the original	•			MB		19
	Rotel RCD-971		Odd disc handling logic, but bold, detailed and refined sound make this a must	•			MB		184
	Rotel RCD-970BX	375	A combination of solid build, useful facilities and an attention-grabbing sound make this a w				BS	1897	163
	Sherwood CD-4030R	180	Easy on the ear, smooth-sounding player, with limits set by the slightly soft, compressed qua		•	• •	BS		159
	Sherwood CD1	1,100	A very neutral, even handed sounding player with a rather flat, lifeless sound. Beautiful cons	struction •	•		BS	1899	163
1	Sony CDP-XE310	140	Excellent value and bright as a button, but can sound OTT in some systems		•		1bit		179
	Sony CDP-XE510	180	Souped up CDP-XE500 which tells a rather bland and unengaging story		•	• •	1 bit		172
-	Sony CDP-XB720E	200	Good basic performance and a number of filter settings make this an interesting player for		•		Low		184
1	Sony CDP-XB920	300	Stunning player that serves real musical ends. The switchable filters are merely icing on the		•		Low		191
	Sony CDP-XA20ES	450	High tech, with a long list of gadgets, oddly configured player that ultimately sounds less than co		•	•		2177	176
	Sony CDP-X3000ES	500	Shoebox format player, looks to die for, switchable digital filters to tweak the already exceller	1000	•		BS		169
	T+A CD1210R	-	Intriguing player with rather pushy basic sound, but has switchable digital filters.	•	•		DS		188
	Talk Electronics Thunder 2	699	Fine player, slightly lacking in dynamics, but readily, if expensively upgradeable in various v	ways.			1-bi		191
	TAG McLaren CD20R Teac CDP-3450SE		Dry and unatmospheric, but plenty of presence – recommended with caution	edhu conice			BS	1960	188
	Teac CD-5	200 350	For once a budget player where gadgets take second place to respectable, budget amp-frien		the second s		and the second se	1643	166
	Teac VRDS-7		Bright, breezy and up-beat – but short in the trouser department	-	•	-			- 66
	Teac VRDS-8		Although bold and outgoing, this player can sound both intrusive yet lacking in fine detail Superb build quality is matched to good, but not exceptional sound quality				MB BS	1769	15
	Teac VRDS-9		Well-presented. This Teac is crisp, yet shallow, and inconsistent in sound quality and partnering	a skille			the second second second	2170	
	Teac VRDS-10SE		Superbly built and presented, but rather leaden bass, with an over-prominent mid/top				BS	2178	17
	Teac VRDS-25		A solid player in all respects, combining powerful sound with state-of-the-art technology	-				1903	16
	Technics SL-PG480A	130	Full driving sound, but somewhat uneven in balance with a unsubtle, slightly harsh top end				1bit		15
	Technics SL-PS670D		Fine, middle ranking player which sounds solid, sometimes even a little stolid		•		and a second second	2264	179
	Technics SL-PS770D		High tech and well built technology battleship which smooths the rough edges off the music	c	•		and the second se	2080	172
	Technics SL-MC410		If you fancy a CD player that holds 111 discs, this one's cheap, pretty capable, and easy to us					2224	178
	Thule Spirit CD100		Definitely a try before you buy machine, but the bass and mid are excellent	•			DS		188
	Trichord Genesis		Breathed-on Pioneer is warm and mellifluous, but ultimately lacks drive and authority	•		• •	Hyb		169
1	Trichord Revelation	799	Well-ordered and clean sound that may be a little too refined for some, images well	•		•		1966	16
	XTC CDP-1		Bright and sometimes abrasive, but detailed player	•				2186	17
		3,000	Envelope busting dynamics, power and imaging in a rather unexciting box (digital volume of	control)		• •	MB		18
- 4	Wadia 860		Flagship CD player has unique digital volume control, superb neutrality and awesome bass		• • •	• •	MB		189
	Yamaha CDX-493	180	Open and lively, but this player is also messy and lacking resolving power.		•	• •	Hyb		191
	Yamaha CD-X993	400	A bit of a lush, though the sound is singularly free of grain, and equipment levels are strong	g •	•	• •	BS	- Yes	184
	TRANSPORTS								
	Audio Note CDT Zero		Neat shoe box size transport sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with DAG	C Zero.)					191
	Linn Karik		Based on early Linn transport, the Karik is dry but very positive, detailed and engrossing	•	•				144
	PS Audio Lambda		With Ultralink Two, sound positively sparkles with colour and resonant detail	۲	•			1106	133
-	Roksan Attessa ATT-DP3		Not the most detailed or refined but capable of sounding exciting with the right material	•	•		1bit	1867	162
-	Teac VRDS-T1		Superb quality engineering is mated to tidy and composed sound (tested with D-T1)	•	•			1325	144
	Theta Data Basic II		Uses a Philips CDM9 Pro mechanism and works a treat with more lively DACs			sum - man			130
	Thorens TCD2000		Lively presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble. (Tested with TDA 200	00 DAC)	•			1867	162
	Trichord Digital Turntable		Very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving; a first-rank performer	•				1867	162
	Wadia 8	2,122	Budget version of Teac's VRDS mechanism in a fancy case; too expensive for the performance of	un oner 🔍 🛡				1495	130

4	CONTINUED			S	PECIFI	CAT	ONS			
	CD/I		<b>VD Players</b>	CAL DIA DIG OU	BAL ANALOGUE GOT DIG OUT TOT	VARIABLE ONE SOCK	MULTI-DISC OUTPUT	ACTSBACK NO.	UMBEN	P
	PRODUCT DACS	(£)	COMMENTS	V	* * *		• •	• •	•	
	Alchemist TS-D-1	300	24/96-equipped DAC sounds tidy but a little shut-in with both 16-bit CDs and 24-bit, 96kHz DVDs		1020	1000	1	BS		18
	Audio Note DAC Zero	369	Neat valve-equipped DAC sounds smooth and fluid in the right system. (Tested with CDT Zero transport.)			1000		Hyb		19
	Audio Note DAC 2010	675	Oddball DAC with manual de-emphasis switch. Needs a high preamp input impedance or bass will suffer					MB	-	12
	Linn Numerik		A new 20-bit DAC and revised Karik transport have cleaned up; but sounds a bit dry and humourless	-		-	-		1323	-
ł	Musical Fidelity X-24K	300	24/96 ready with a warm, natural sound and good soundstaging (tested with Pioneer DV-717)	-		-		MB	1525	14
		2,590				-			1106	13
	PS Audio Olitacink 2 HDCD		Consolidates reputation of PS Audio for high performance digital electronics						1069	-
i	Roksan Attessa ATT-DA2/DS5		Not the most detailed or refined but capable of good excitement with the right material			-		and the second second		-
1	Teac D-T1	500	Teamed with VRDS-T1 for test, this superb quality unit is tidy and composed	1		-			1325	-
	Teac D-700	600	With P-700, the D-700 may lack the resolution, but is bubbly and entertaining	h-11-10		-		MB	1323	12
	Thorens TDA2000	700	Lively and up-front presentation not helped by rather loose bass and splashy treble	1		-			1867	16
ł	Trichord Pulsar Series One	1,395		1996					1867	1000
	DVD PLAYERS	1,292	very detailed, precise, controlled yet involving, a instrank performer. Switchable phase, ditrief etc	1 mil			Anna ala	Пур	1007	10
	Denon DVD-5000	1600	The first DVD-V player that ain't bad as a CD player. A fine musical device			A REAL		BS		18
	Denon DVD-3000	700	Enjoyable rather than analytical, includes 24/96 and AC-3/MPEG-2 Audio	-		-		BS		18
	Hitachi DV-P2E	400	DVD player, based on last generation Pioneer, is good but uninspiring	-		-	-	24/96	-	19
ł	JVC XV-S2000	400	DVD player with excellent picture but flat sound in most modes	-				24/90 PEM		19
	Kenwood DVF-9010	1000	DVD player with excitent picture but hat sound in most modes DVD player with brilliant picture and clean, lively sound	-	-	-	-	24/96		13
	Micromega Premium DVD	1,500		-			-	24/90 BS		18
	Panasonic DVD-A150	400	Simple, mid-market DVD player is vice-free but limited for the audiophile.	-	-		-	24/96	-	19
	Panasonic DVD-A350	700	24/96 converter and AC-3 & MPEG-2 Audio included, well balanced, if slightly blurred and shut in	•		-		BS		18
	Pioneer DV-515	400	Unusually well equipped (CD-R compatible etc) DVD with more than fair sound and picture quality	•			-	MB	-	19
	Pioneer DV-717	550	Superb DVD player with good picture quality and which really knows how to play 24/96 discs					MB		19
	Pioneer DVL-909	900	DVD and LD player: self-recommending to AV nuts; musically detailed but occasionally seems disjointed	-	-	1 2 2 1		BS		18
	Samsung DVD-907	500	DVD player with below average picture, and lacklustre sound quality	-		12		24/96		19
	Sony DVP-S715	600	24/96 converter for DAD compatibility, sharp, forward, but slightly unsubtle sound	-				BS		18
	Theta DaViD		A top-notch CD transport, that also plays DVD-Video discs well. Pricey for a DVD transport, but worth it					24/96		19
	Thomson DTH2000	380	This DVD player's main attributes are reasonable pricing and fair to good all round performance			T.C.S.		24/96		19
	Toshiba SD3107B	550	Dynamic sound and good stereo which lacks lowest stratum of detail			1983		BS	-	18
	Yamaha DVD-S700	600	DVD player, similar to Panasonic DVD-A350 but cheaper – an excellent buy		-		-	24/96		19



## **Digital Recorders**

Domestic digital recording has been possible since the launch of digital audio tape (DAT) in the '80s. Since then DAT has remained expensive and largely esoteric, favoured only by well-heeled or professional users. Digital Compact Cassette and MiniDisc (MD) were launched in the early '90s but only MD has stayed the course. A little later came domestic CD-Recorders using CD-R discs, while the latest twist is the arrival of re-recordable CDs know as CD-RW discs. The recording quality hierarchy is as follows: DAT, CD-R/CD-RW, MD. MD is probably the most convenient to use, and offers sophisticated editing facilities, while CD-R is ideal for making digital 'dones' of prerecorded CDs. DAT is the medium of oice for high-quality location recording.

ΚΕΥ ΤΟ	SPECIFIC	ATIONS
FORMAT: Type of recorder – see left for descriptions.     DAC TYPE: Digital to analogue converter: BS -Philips Bitstream; MB - multibit; Hyb- hybrid of multibit and bitstream; Ibit- single bit types such as MASH, bitstream, PWM etc ADC TYPE: The analogue to	sound into digits during live recording. Types of ADC are as per DACs (qv). • <b>ORTCABLE</b> : Battery operable, but not necessarily personal-stereo-sized. • <b>ORTCAL IN/OUTPUTS:</b> Digital socketry for optical cable. • <b>ELEC IN/OUTPUTS:</b> Digital	• FACTSBACK REFERENCE The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full inflo, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the mag. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared.
digital convertor (ADC) converts	socketry for electrical cable.	EDITOR'S CHOICE

SPECIFICATIO

# **Digital Recorders**

		-		PEC							
STATUS	Digi	ta	l Recorders	ADC.	PORT. PORT. TYPE	TICAL	ELEC IN WOUT	FACTS	ISSUE ACK NO	NUMBER	
ST	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	V	V		V	V			
	MINIDISCS Denon DMD-1000	300	A good machine, but it still doesn't manage to shake off the MiniDisc plague of losing the listener's interest	MB	BS	N	•	•			184
	Denon DMD-1000	500	Sound sometimes lacks integration but tonal balance is good and it handles loud music with panache	MD	BS	BS		•			177
4	Kenwood DMF-9020	500	One of the best MD decks yet for sound quality, and the first to make titling a practical proposition	MD	BS	BS		•	•		191
4	Kenwood DM-9090	550	Slight sibilance and image vagueness do not detract from excellent balance and solid bass	MD	BS	BS	1	•	•		177
	Marantz CM635	500	CD player and MD recorder in one box: a practical idea, but sound and features don't really match the asking pri	ce MD	BS	BS		•	•		191
	Onkyo MD-121	450	Midi-sized deck that sounds slightly coloured at times, though immediate and lively	MD	BS	BS		•	2.5	2195	177
4	Pioneer MJ-D707	250	A handy set of features for the price, though sound is not outstanding	MD	BS	BS		•	•		191
4	Sharp MD-R1 Mkll	200	It's cheap: sound is not outrageously bettered by rather pricier competition. A bit thin on features though	MD	BS	BS		•	•	-	191
	Sharp MDR3H	300	Nifty machine combining a 3-disc CD changer with a MD recorder. Sound on both is rather below par, though	BS	BS	Ν	28	•	•	2.6	184
4	Sharp MD-R2	300	Budget recorder that loses little or nothing in comparisons with much more expensive models - highly capable	MD	BS	BS		•		2196	177
4	Sony MDS-JB920	300	One of the better MD decks, its sound is neutral and dynamic. European Audio Recorder of the Year '98-'99	BS	BS	Ν	•	•			184
4	Sony MDS-JA20ES	500	Sound quality about as good as it gets with MD to date, and a very comprehensive features set too	MD	BS	BS		•	•	2.5	191
	Yamaha MDX-793	300	Nice machine to use and has some useful features, but sound quality a little wanting	MD	BS	BS		•	•	-	191
	CD RECORDERS										
	Marantz DR700	600	The dearest of three near-identical models, with apparently only a smarter front panel to show for it	CD-R	BS	BS		•	•		191
4	Philips CDR-880	499	Capable of making perfect copies of CD digital, and very acceptable copies of anything analogue too	BS	BS	N		•	۲		184
4	Pioneer PDR-555RW	480	Competitor to Philips' CDR880; it can't make perfect copies but has the edge in replay and analogue record sound	BS	BS	Ν	•	•			184
	Pioneer PDR-04	700	Scaled down version of the PDR-05 with auto level setting but all the socketry and features you need to make CDs	CD-R	BS	BS		•	•		171
	Pioneer PDR-05	1,000	The first domestic CD-R deck – excellent sound quality	CD-R	BS	BS		•	•	1652	152
4	Traxdata Traxaudio 900	499	Identical to Philips and Marantz models: it makes bit-perfect copies of CDs and has perfectly acceptable replay	CD-R	BS	BS		•	•		191

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#### C T O R D 0 Y Ω F Т 5 S ΤΕD PRODUCTS



## Headphones

There are several different ways of making a headphone. The most expensive models employ electrostatically-driven diaphragms within an open-backed earcup. Most mid-price designs feature dynamic, moving-coildriven diaphragms in open, semi-open or dosed-back designs. An openbacked headphone can sound remarkably transparent, but also permits the ingress of external noise. Closed-back designs keep out unwanted sound, but may be less comfortable to wear and more coloured. The latest development is the cordless headphone using either infrared light or, more recently, radio waves. Quality is improving, but has yet to match the best corded designs.

KEY TO TYPE Operating principle: D - dynamic; E - electrostric SUPRA-AURAL: Where a flat pad presses on the outer ear. O GRCUMAURAL: Where the earcup endoses the ear. O OPEN BACIC: Offers an open sound but lets in noise. O OPEN BACIC: Soless out	SPECIFIC O IMPEDANCE (Ω): Load offered to the headphone amplifier. Many headphones offer a significantly higher value than loudspeakers, for example, but this does not mean they will be incompatible with the majority of amplifiers. S 3.5MM LOCK ADAPTOR:	A T I O N S • FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factback advert on the penultimate page of the magazine. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of HEF Choire in which an
external noise. • MASS (g): Mass in grams	Compatible with mini-jacked components, eg personal stereos.	original review appeared.
🙆 BEST BUY 🇸		EDITOR'S CHOICE

SPECIFICATIONS

## Headphones SU

STATUS	Hea	d	phones	CIRCU. AURAL	OPE MAURAL	CLOSED BACK	MAS	IMPED SS (E)	imm IAd ANCE (L.	FACTSB, K ADAP	SSUE NO	VUMBER	2
STA	PRODUCT	15	COMMENTS	-			-						-
	AKG K1000	700	One of the best dynamics on the market, hooks directly into speaker outputs	D					270	120			99
-	AKG K 240 DF	100	Inoffensive 'phones that are very laid back, if lacking in grunt	D		•	•		240	600	•		186
	Audio Technica ATH910PRO	80	The closed back 910s are an improvement on the 909s, with a nice rhythmic quality rarely found	D	•	-	-	•	280	40	-		55
	Audio Technica ATH-M40	120	Incredible detail and honesty from these classically designed studio 'phone	D		•			250	60			186
	Beyer DT311	50	Uncharacteristically tight, unrefined sound quality from this otherwise well engineered 'phone	D	•		•		124	40	•	1098	133
	Beyer DT411	63	A reasonable but not very thrilling headphone that doesn't really offer enough at the price	D	•		•		120	250	-	1050	111
	Beyer DT431	81	Nice looking 'phones that may not be the best players on the field, but will always give 100 per cent	D		•			210	40	•		186
	Beyer DT511	106	Superb midband clarity and speed slightly at odds with soft bass. High tingle factor, even so	D		•	•		200	250		2063	172
	Beyer DT531	135	A good buy for serious, heavy-duty music making	D	1	•	•		245	250		2000	144
	Beyer DT831	140	These provide silky, smooth textures in abundance and we're not just talking about the velvet ear pade			•	1/2		295	250	•		186
	Beyer DT100	160	Rugged, modular professional design, but bass is woolly and treble lacks detail	D		•		•	350	600			157
	Beyer DT911	170	Probably too revealing for many headphone amps: these are very subtle and fine, if expensive cans	D		•	•		275	250			111
	Denon AH-D550	80	A competent 'phone with integrity, but little panache or charisma. Hard headband causes brain strain	D		•		•	200	35	•	1801	157
	Denon AH-D750	130	Loud and gutsy, meaty bass, good with rock and dance. Can sound thick and clumsy	D	1-1-1	•	1	•	250	30	•	2063	172
	Grado SR-40	45	Cheap and nasty appearance largely redeemed by cheerful, up-beat sound. Very comfortable	D	•		•	-	120	32	•	2064	172
	Grado SR-80	100	Open and dynamic with pedantically open mid-band. Crude physical design, rough frequency extreme	5 D	•		•		60	8	•	1801	157
	Grado SR125	150	What these 'phones lack in style they make up for ten-fold in musical quality	D	•		•		200	32			186
- 1	Grado SR-225	200	Warm, darkly-coloured tonally and ultimately lacking in clarity, but true to the spirit of the music	D	•		•	-	200	32		1883	163
	Jecklin Float Model 1	79	While very unusual in appearance, the Floats give remarkable sound quality and openness	D		•	•		400	200			55
- 2 -	Jecklin Float Model 2	99	Helmet shaped, but open sounding and comfortable in the long term, despite lack of adjustment	D		٠	•		400	200			63
	IVC HA-W60	49	Remarkable lack of interference and hiss ameliorates adequate sound of this cordless design	D	•			•	165	I/R	•		172
	IVC HA-D910	65	Broadly acceptable if unexciting design with low level losses and some colorations	D	٠		1	•	220	32	•		121
	IVC HA-W200RF	75	Distinct lack of hiss from these FM cordless 'phones ensures that detail and depth are easily heard	D		٠		•	280	20,000	٠		186
	Koss R/100	100	Rather cheap looking 'phones that supply good detail but are severely lacking in midrange excitement	D		•	1	•	215	60	•		186
	Precide Ergo Model 2	140	Still has much of the spaciousness of the Float from which it is derived, but coarse mid/top	D			•		380	100		1892	163
	Philips SBC 3396	70	Remarkably airy for closed-back designs. Fine tonal balance, punchy delivery. Amazing for money	D		•		•	255	32	•	2064	172
	Philips SBC HP900	90	Sharper, snappier midrange than 3396: initially impressive but blows it on balance and listenability	D	1	•	1	•	200	32	•	2065	172
	Sennheiser IS 380	55	As close as you'll get to real hi-fi with infra-red phones at this price. Inevitable hiss spoils the illusion	D	•			•	192	I/R	•		172
	Sennheiser HD 455	55	Inoffensive, if nondescript sound; modular, but can become dislodged from head	D	•		•		185	60	•	1801	157
	Sennheiser HD 500	70	A disappointing pair that offer good stereo-imaging, but little else	D		•	•		210	32	•		186
	Sennheiser HD 475	80	Elegant, uncluttered sound and very comfortable but lean bass saps satisfaction	D	•		•	1	120	60	٠	2065	172
	Sennheiser RS 400	80	FM cordless 'phones that are very wearable, but slightly woolly sounding with interference problems	D	•			•	160	N/A	•		186
	Sennheiser HD 545	125	Fine all-rounder that takes all styles of music in its stride. Ear-clamping headband	D		•	٠		255	150	٠	2066	172
	Sennheiser HD 565 Ovation	150	Wide bandwidth design which is refined, expressive and extremely comfortable	D		•	•		255	150	•	1801	157
	Sennheiser HE 60/HEV70/UK	998	Very nearly a superb electrostatic, with a pure midband, but top end is sibilant and edgy	E		•	•		260	N/A		1898	163
	Sony MDR-605LP	50	Funky looking headphones that have a very bold, but tiring sound, with coloured bass	D		•	•		145	40	•		186
	Sony MDR-CD770	100	Neutrality and comfort make the Sony easy to live with. Correct-sounding too, yet musically unrewarding	D		•		٠	-	.+	•	1801	157
	Sony MDR-CD1700	200	Astonishingly detailed, uncoloured and free of the usual artefacts from a sealed back headphone	D		•		•	325	32	•	1901	163
	Sony MDR-F1	100	Natural, easy-going sound teamed with great looks and comfort. Shame about the lightweight bass	D		•	•		300	12	•	2066	172
	Technics RP-DJ1200	130	Functional design with head-pulping bass and muggy tonal balance. Good job they're sweat-proof	D	٠			•	230	32	•	2067	172
	Stax Lambda Nova Basic	449	Refined, articulate, yet with real presence – and a notable bargain by electrostatic standards	E			•		347	N/A		1902	163
	/ivanco Cyberwave FMH3000	40	The only cordless 'phone to offer genuine walkabout freedom, but. sounds like a cheap FM tuner	D	•			•	210	FM	•		172
	/ivanco IR5800	50	Consistently musical infra-red design. Doesn't reach for sonic heights so hiss can be forgiven	D	•		1/2		226	I/R	•	8-1	172
	/ivanco SR650	50	Unusually comfortable 'phone with excellent detail resolution but aggressive	D	٠		•		175	-	٠	1801	157
	/ivanco SR750	60	Cossetting physical design, attractive sound, though suffers overhang and lacks ultimate dynamics	D	•		•		188	-	•	1801	157
	/ivanco FM7980	80	A fair amount of whine and crackle detracts from 'phones which are otherwise very listenable	D	•		3	•	280	9,000	•		186
	/ivanco FM8180	99	Well thought-out features and a better than average sound are, at times, marred by intrusive hiss	D	1	•		•	240	9,000	•		186



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#### C 0 Т 0 S D U C S D R R 0 3 Π 0 Т Ð P R 0 D Т



## **Hi-Fi Loudspeakers**

As the last link in the hi-fi chain, loudspeakers are at the mercy of incoming signals. Nevertheless, distortions introduced by loudspeakers (and rooms) tend to be the most obvious. The average loudspeaker comprises an endosure containing two drive units. Inside the box, a simple electrical circuit (the crossover or dividing network) splits the incoming, full-frequency-range signal into the right portions for specific drive units to handle: highs to the 'tweeter', lows to the 'woofer'. For any given box size, designers must balance the 'sensitivity' of the loudspeaker (how loud it goes for a given electrical input) against bass extension (how low it goes). Subwoofers augment bass and are either passive (unamplified) or, preferably, active (self-amplified).

	ΚΕΥ ΤΟ	SPECIFIC	ATIONS
1000	SIZE wXhXd (cm): Width by height by depth in centimetres.	the speaker presents to an amplifier. As impedance	12cm from the rear wall. • FACTSBACK REFERENCE:
	<ul> <li>FLOORSTANDER: Requires no stand support.</li> <li>SENSTITUTY (dB/W): How much sound results for a given electrical input – the higher the figure, the louder the speaker.</li> <li>IMPEDANCE (x2): Impedance, measured in Ohms, indicates how much resistance</li> </ul>	erregistic round states and state	The Factback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factback advert on the penultimate page of this issue. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Ff Choice in which an original review appeared.    High End Review
	🙆 BEST BUY 🗸	RECOMMENDED	EDITOR'S CHOICE

### SPECIFICATION FLOORSTANDER SENSTRUTTY (MPEDANCE FROM REESPACE DOSE FOCTOSBACK NUMBER INSTRUCTY (db/W) (D) (NZ) (NZ)

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	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS			V	V	V	V			100
1000	Acoustic Energy Aegis One	150	At a new low price, this has a very natural and transparent midband, erring a little on the dull side	19,36.5,24	_	87	6	40	•	-		18
-	Acoustic Energy AE200	250	Metal-cone miniature has a tendency to shout but is still lots of fun, and well built too	18.5,30,25		87	6	40		•	2199	1
	Acoustic Energy AE109	350	Lots of mass-loaded twin-driver speaker for the money, especially for loud, driving bass	18,90,25	•	88	4		•		1904	1
	Acoustic Energy AE120	500	Attractive presentation and good sonic headroom, but a heavy, uneven overall balance	18,98,28	•	89	4	25	•	2.20	1904	
	Acoustic Energy AE520	1,000	Could be more neutral, but high-class build is reflected in a high-class sound. Very elegant too	21,98,30	•	91	3	25	•			1
ļ	ATC SCM20	1,599	Massively built, invariably informative but the rather forward presentation can be uncomfortable	24,44,31		83	8	28		•		
	Audio Gem Emerald	540	Pretty compact floorstander with lively if lightweight sound	18,94,21	٠	87	6	40	•		1905	1
	Audio Note AN-J/B	799	Light damping and local unevenness add some coloration, but don't spoil the speaker	38.58.25		93	8			•		
Ī	Audio Note AN-E/B	1.299	Coherent, dynamic and transparent, with extended bass and high sensitivity – but ugly!	36,84,28	•	94	8				1000	1
Ì	Audio Physic Tempo	1,999	Tall and unusually-styled floorstander has stunning stereo but suspect bass tuning	22,107,47	•	88	8	28	•		1344	
	Audiovector C2	799	Elegant two-and-a-half-way has a big, full bandwidth sound, but midband seemed a little under-developed	The second second second					-	-	1344	-
-	Audiovector M2	1,399		19,106,27	•	90	4	20	•			1
-			High-class, smooth and slightly laid-back performer has driving bass. It's upgradeable, too!	20,102,30	•	89	4	130100	•			1
-	AVI NuNeutron	500	A smooth and subtle though pricey sub-miniature, albeit with the inevitable limitations of the breed	14,27,23		86	4			•		1
	AVI Positron	899	This 'mini-floorstander' is capable of great precision and delicacy, but in a rather small scale way	17.5,74,24.5	•	85	6	40	•		2130	1
-	B&W CDM2SE	400	Beautifully styled and finished, respectable midband. Lacks definition towards frequency extremes	22,32,25		87	6	40		•		1
	B&W DM302	150	Highly competent and neutral all rounder; clever Prism enclosure	19,32,22		88	4	45		•	1778	1
	B&W DM601	199	Great main driver for the price, entertaining dynamics	20.5,35.5,23		88	6	30	•	199	1779	1
	B&W DM602	300	Prefers tall stands and space, but offers impressive midband dynamics and musical tension	24,49,31		90	8			•	1654	1
1	B&W DM305	350	Ridged paper cone gives lively sound, clever box, but a little uneven	22,87,31	•	89	4		•	-		1
ł	B&W DM603	500	Squat floorstander with decent dynamics and well-judged, restrained balance; bass could go deeper	and the second sec							1908	-
-		-		23.5,88,29	•	89	7	45	•	-	2030	1
-	B&W CDM1SE	600	A great looking stand-mount with one of the best midbands around, and a subtle blend of other qualities	22,37,29		88	5	40	•		2209	1
18	B&W CDM7	1,000	A combination of serious welly and physical elegance; but a basic lack of midband smoothness	22,97,29	•	90	4	22	•		2131	1
	B&W Nautilus 805	1,400	A great looking and extremely capable design with excellent timing and real communications skills	24,41.5,34.5		88	8	22	•			1
	B&W Nautilus 802	6,000	Outstanding example of the high tech speaker builder's art, needs real power but gives real sound	39,111,55	٠	91	8	34	•			1
	B&W Nautilus 801	8,500	The 801 is a magnificent loudspeaker in nearly every respect, but it is one that likes to play loud	52,111,69	٠	91	8	34	٠			1
-	Cabasse Farella 400	950	Exciting but very upfront-and-in-yer-face sound. High sensitivity, fine build and good dynamic drive	26,92,32	•	92	5	28		•		1
1	Castle Isis	250	A great miniature at a competitive price. Sound is lightweight but very coherent, with a fine overall balance	the state of the s		87	8		-	•	2019	1
-	Castle Kendal	500	A beautifully finished compact floorstander with a decidedly forward but communicative sound.	17,76,20	•	86	6	45	-		2204	1
- 64	Castle Severn 2	539		Construction of the owner of the	•		-		-	-		1
ł	and the second se		Carbon fibre cone gives lovely, subtle midband but treble is a bit dull and bass a bit thumpy	21,84,25	-	87	8	30	•		2120	
-	Castle Avon	730	Lovely box and lovely voices from carbon-fibre composite cone	22,91,28	•	85	8	22	•		1909	1
1	Castle Harlech	880	Handsome big-sounding floorstander, great value and dynamic midrange	20,96,33	•	88	8	28	•	3	1820	1
	Castle Howard S2	1,200	Ably fills the gap between Chester and Winchester; has a rich, laid-back balance	26,104,41	•	90	8	40			1078	1.
	Celestion 12i	119	Not without virtue, but the relentless enthusiasm and mid-band colorations can become wearing	19,31,21		88	6	45		•	2254	1
	Celestion 23i	300	Cosmetically flawed, but the bottom end has fine get-up-and-go, and works well with dance tracks	24,86,27	٠	89	6	30	•		2200	1
	Celestion A1	899	Rich, warm and laid-back, but a true quality sound; lovely build	24,41,35		88	6	25	•	1	1910	1
-	Celestion A2	1500	Full scale, big sound from ultra-elegant floorstander. Smooth and slightly laid back presentation	24,93,39	•	89	6	22		•		1
1	Cerwin-Vega VS10	350	Not very refined but extremely ballsy; these rock boxes have no shortage of gung-ho	33,70,29	•	95	6	37	•	-	1758	1
-					•	0.00		-				
-	Chario Syntar 100	249	Pretty with a pleasantly easygoing balance, but not the most communicative or exciting sound around	18,32,27	-	87	6	45	•		2020	1
-Pool	Chario Hiper 1000	300	Classy looking stand mount has a sweet, easygoing sound with fine midband voicing	18,35,28		87	4		•	1		1
-	Chario Constellation Lynx	550	Beautiful near-miniature is let down by a midband too laid back for its own good.	20,36,26		87	3	40	•			1
	Chario Academie	1650	Pricey Italian stand mount, has high class sound and appearance. Solid walnut enclosures	25,40,31		84	8	40	•			1
	Chario Academy Millennium 2	2,100	Price includes stands. A showy speaker that lives up to its own hype	22,53,35		90	4	55	•			1
	Dali 606	400	A big bruiser at a tempting price. Sounds refined and polite, but also packs some punch	22,97,32	•	91	4	25	•		2121	1
Ĩ	Dali Royal Menuet Mkll	400	Classy sub-miniature with a beautiful box and fine ingredients, but a little lacking in subtlety and excitement	16,26,18		87		50		•		1
-	Dynaudio Audience 5	400	Follows the Dynaudio tradition for fine midband transparency, but the overall timbre is a bit thin	20,31,26		85		40		•	2205	
-	Dynaudio Audience 40	*	Classy engineering content creates a winning combination of neutrality, dynamic range and involvement	17,28,25		87		40	•	-	2205	1
-		400		and the second second second second	-		_			- interest	2122	
	Dynaudio Audience 50	577	This stand-mount doesn't look big, but sound quality can match many models at twice the price	20,33,25	-	86		30	•	-	2122	1
1	Dynaudio Contour 1.8 Mkll	1,842	Wonderful voice-band delicacy and loads of deep bass from a very elegant and compact box	21,95,29	•	85	4		•	-	1986	1
1	Eltax Liberty 3+	150	Bright, bassy, laid back and attractively evenhanded, but dynamically challenged. Big box for your dosh	and the second se		86		25	•		_	1
	Elac CL 310i Jet	800	It's pricey, and you can buy better performance for the money. Small speaker, good sound	12.3,20.8,28.2	2	86	4		٠	1		1
	Eltax Linear Response	249	A curiously dumpy shape, but smooth, laid-back performer is easy on the ears, with fine tonal accuracy	25,35,32		85	4	40	٠		2201	1
J	Epos ES12	499	High quality luxury stand-mount has great midband and stereo imaging	20,38,25		85	8		•		1823	1
Ī	Epos ES14	675	Substantial stand-mount delivers delightful midrange focus and delicacy with good bass control	23,49,29		87	8		•			
	Epos ES25	1,655	Handsome floorstander with a rather uneven and bass heavy balance	24,90,35	•	88	6		•		1346	1
ł				and the second s	-				•		13-10	
	Faraday Siren	445	High mass concrete cabinet is let down by imbalance of ageing driver combination	25,27,46		90	4			-	2000	
-	Gale 2i	140	Unspectacular sound and appearance fail to help this solid little miniature stand out from the crowd	22,40,27	-	88		40	-	•	2021	
	C	100	Terrific treble and upper-mid but coloured and cuppy lower-mid and bass. A mixture of genius and grot.	14,27,14		86	8	90		•	2255	1
Town of the second second	Genexxa Pro	160		a second de la casa de la cas								
	GLL Imagio IC130	500	Lots of speaker for the money, but sound is decidedly dull and shut in	22,112,29	٠	88	4	20	٠		1824	1
			Lots of speaker for the money, but sound is decidedly dull and shut in Great openness, speed and timing. Sounds fresh and vital, though sometimes lacks scale and weight	a second de la casa de la cas	•	88 87	6	50	•	•	1824 2256	
	GLL Imagio IC130	500		22,112,29	•	***		50	•	•		1

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CONTINUED

Hi-Fi Loudspeakers



STAT	PROBUCT	10						~		-		0
5	PRODUCT Heybrook Heylo	(£) 439	COMMENTS Good vocal reproduction, but sounds thin and bass seems an afterthought	23,73,19		88	8	30	•		1658	152
	Heybrook Ultima	649	Has the bass wallop to justify its dual hi-fi/home cinema roles, but doesn't excite	22,97,29	•	89	6	45	•		2126	174
	Heybrook Octet	1800	Good-looking but pricey floorstander with novel drivers and a fine ceramic-enclosure midband	24,97,31	•	90	6	25	1.5	•		180
	Infinity Delta 60	700	Striking and massive floorstander, lots of speaker for the price, but seems a victim of its own complexity	16-29,115,41	•	90	4	25	٠			183
	Infinity Reference 1i	150	Although not to our tastes, this is a competent speaker, and decent material value	20,34,20		89	6	50	٠		1403	148
	Jamo BX100A	350	Offering a cracking output for their size, these rock boxes can be a bit bright but have decent bass	31.5,54,28		91	8	40	٠		1758	155
	Jamo Classic 8	400	A lot of speaker for the money; good when playing quietly, but boom'n'tizz character sounded crude	22,90,29	•	90	4	28	•		1659	152
	Jamo Cornet 195	350	Loads of bass, should have plenty of yoof-appeal – it looks the business, and is priced attractively	20.5,91,31	•	90	3	11111	•			183
	Jamo 477A	500	Very prettily styled, but build and sound quality are disappointing at the price	19,77,28	•	88	4	40	•		1549	138
	Jamo 507A	700	Imaginative styling keeps the front view super slim yet still it packs a punch. Glass top is a nice touch	22,94,37	•	88	3	40	•		2126	174
	JBL LX2	250	Invigorating, if a touch crude, this good-hearted speaker reproduces music with considerable enthusiasm_	22,40,27		87	8	40	•		2022	170
	JBL L20 JBL SVA1500	700 700	Pricey, heavy and a bit laid back, but this is a fine rock'n'roller which is dynamic and communicative	26,42,28	-	86 86	8 8	30 40	•		1550 2127	138 174
	JBL L40	1,000	A distinctive Pro-style bi-radial hom tweeter, with a fun sound, enlivened by a juicy bass thump Classic, large, stand-mount three-way is full of vim and vigour, with a superb sense of balance	17.5,51,31 30,65,31		88	4	23	•		1976	167
	JBL 4312 II	1,000	Crude but startlingly e fective dynamics. The original party animal knows just how to rock 'n' roll.	36,60,30		94	4			•	1570	190
	JBL SVA 2100	1,250	Monstrously large and brutish s yling, goes very loud as well as deep. Fine focus but some boxiness	37,114,52	•	91		20	•			180
	JBL L90	1,500	A classic monitor which communicates with gusto and enthusiasm, though it can sound a bit crude	24,94,35		91	6	23			1348	143
	JBL LX70	550	Bassmeister supreme, shame the rest doesn't match up. Fine sensitivity but an itchy scratchy treble	26.5,94,30	•	91	4		•			183
	JM Lab Spectral 909.1	1,375	Multi-driver array in a large and very substantial enclosure. Good scale but lacks delicacy and sweetness	27,107,35	•	90	4		•			180
	JM Lab Tantal 515	495	Lively and open if bright. Sound is entertaining and informative, but presentation is nondescript	20,94,26	•	92	5	32	•			183
	JM Lab Mezzo Utopia	7,250	Looks good and sounds even better. A genuinely big speaker with fantastic coherence	35,115,47	•	92	4	30	٠			186
	Jordan Watts JH400	565	Piano-finish hexagon has controversial sound, with uneven balance but delightful mid	28,38,21		86	8	50		٠		106
	JPW Mini Monitor	60	Ultra-cheap miniature works well in a limited way	18,27,17.5		86	8	50		٠	1781	156
	JPW Gold Monitor	80	More informative than Mini Monitor – but fiercer too	18,27,17.5		86	8	50		۲	1782	150
	JPW ML510	130	Lots of good-quality speaker for the price, but not an ideal match for cheap budget components	20,34,22		88	5		٠	18. S		169
	JPW ML710	230	Good material value but disappointingly uneven bass - check out the 510s instead	20,88,30	٠	88	5	40	٠		2202	177
	JPW ML910	330	Loads of speaker for the money, plenty of headroom and loudness capability, but sounds dull	23,104,30	٠	91	4	43	٠			183
	JPW ML1010	400	A seriously substantial speaker for the price, and an obvious choice for those who like their music loud	22.5,115,40	•	91	6	25	•		2031	170
	JPW Ruby 1	400	Very pretty but pricey luxury metal-cone miniature has good, if slightly edgy balance	19,32,21	_	87	6	55	•		1572	139
	JPW Ruby 4	1,000	Twin metal-cone main drivers improve the dynamic performance and bass extension, with little sacrifice	22,94,26	•	88	8	25	•		2132	174
	KEF Coda 7	129	Lovely open voice reproduction, but bass could be tauter; build tougher	18,30,23		88	6	50		•	1783	156
	KEF Coda 8	189	Outstandingly well-balanced, bass is deep but a little vague	20,32.5,29		86	6	28			1784	156
	KEF Q15	200	Beautifully balanced and voiced stand-mount, but a potentially tricky amplifier load at high frequencies		-	90	-	30		•	1705	187
	KEF Coda 9	299	Uneven budget 3-way floorstander with poor bass definition	20,86,28	•	89	6	30	•	•	1785	156
	KEF RDM One	499	Cute and tiny, nice midband but lack of bass warmth and weight	23,30,24	-	88 92	6 2.5	70 25	•	•	1913	164 190
	KEF Q65 KEF RDM Three	799 1,500	Dumpy-looking three-way has loads of bass and a laid-back midband; goes loud but lacks poise and impact Definitely a speaker aimed at long-term satisfaction rather than immediate impressiveness. Nice	23,95,31 24,100,27	•	92 90	4		•			190
	KEF Reference Model 2	1,500	Classy, large floorstander that has massive headroom and clean mid-to-treble, but limited deep bass	23,103,34	•	89	4		•		1987	167
	Kelly KT2	700	Chunky floorstander that has massive nearboth and clean mid-to-debie, but infined deep bass Chunky floorstander has tacky finish but whopping sensitivity and a very involving, (if characterful) sound		-	94	4	1			1307	183
	Kelly KT3	1,200	Super-high-sensitivity, hefty floorstander sacrifices smoothness for dynamic realism	25,95,36		95		28		0.20	2133	174
	Keswick Audio Aria II	379	Confident and dynamic sound, if a little crude and shut in	21,42,24		89	8	20			1405	148
	Keswick Audio Torino	999	Good value, lively contender with distinctive styling. Goes loud and deep but could be smoother	18-26, 93,28	•	90	4		•	1997	1977	167
	Linn Kan	295	Great bass discrimination from size, ensuring a very informative, if slightly shut in experience	19,31,19		86	4	45		•		187
	Linn Keilidh Passive	750	Stunning timing and coherence, and awesome bass drive	20,83,28	•	87	4	22	-	•	1552	138
	Linn Kaber Passive	2,000	Dry, bright balance emphasises dynamics and transients, but can sound unforgiving	20,90,28	•	87	4	25		٠		118
	Living Voice Auditorium	1,500	Pretty, compact floorstander has wonderful coherence, high sensitivity and fine dynamic integrity	21.5,98,29	•	91	4	25				180
	Magnat Vector 77	450	Tall, dark and a lot of speaker for the money. Beautiful balance, but lacking in subtlety and transparency	22,115,29	٠	89	5	30	٠			183
	Magnat Vintage 720	1,200	Slightly crude in some respects but lots of heart, fine scale, decent dynamic coherence and integrity	29,113,32	٠	88	4	20	٠			180
	Mission 700	130	A lot of speaker for the money. Good bass weight and extension and goes loud with ease	18,34,26		87	8	40		٠	2257	179
	Mission 731 PRO	140	Cautious balance makes a fine match with budget equipment. A classy baby for smaller rooms	17.5,31.5,20		89	8	55		٠		169
	Mission 771	170	Beautiful stand-mount miniature has a delightfully well balanced and voiced sound, and real wood finish	17,31,22		86	7	45		•		187
	Mission 750LE	250	Fabulous cosmetics and a great midband carry the day, though size will out and bass is inevitably limited	17,28,27		86	7	100000		٠	2203	177
	Mission 733i	330	New tweeter gives a more open sound; a good all-rounder that doesn't sound as big as it looks	20.5,88,30	-	88	8	45			2027	170
	Mission 774	500	Gorgeous floorstander is an entertaining communicator, despite some balance oddities (bright treble)	18,95,31	•	90	4	40	•			183
	Mission 752 Freedom	578	A beautifully judged compromise in the art of combining presentation with a decent sound	20,90,25	•	89	8		•		2123	174
	Mission 753 Freedom	798	Great styling. New, more restrained tweeter reveals fine midband dynamics	21,90,31	•	89	4	40	•		1914	164
	Mission 754 Freedom 5 Monitor Audio Monitor 3	1,298	Tall but exceptionally elegant floorstander gives fine midband projection; goes loud but limited deep bass	22,111,31	•	88	4		•	-	1981	167
	Monitor Audio Monitor 3 Monitor Audio Monitor 4	400	An exceptionally discreet floorstander; sonically uneven, but capable of fine results An oddball balance but an entertaining sound, and a good looking real-wood-box at a realistic price	16,91,21	•	88	5		-	•	2032	170
	Monitor Audio Monitor 4 Monitor Audio MA700 PMC	500 600	An oddball balance but an entertaining sound, and a good looking real-wood-box at a realistic price Good-looking luxury compact with all-metal diaphragms: lovely midrange, but occasionally edgy	<b>20,87,24</b> 22,35,26	•	84	6	23	•	-	2210	177
	Monitor Audio 702PMC	700	A good all-round stand-mount with intimate midband focus			89 87	8	45 30	•		1661 2128	152
	Monitor Audio MA703 PMC	800	Lovely but pricey floorstander has up-front, coherent, 'shiny' sound	20,40,25 20,89,27	•	87	8	30 50			1826	1/4
	Monitor Audio Studio 12	1,000	A real looker, but sound and content are a bit on the small side for the price	17,92,20	•	90	8	28	•		1349	143
	Monitor Audio 705PMC	1,400	Beautifully finished compact floorstander with fine midband coherence, but limited bass and top end	20,94,28	•	89	4	25		•	1545	14.
	Mordaunt-Short MS812	100	Quirky styling and a very laid back presence, but great musical integrity and solid value for money	20,5, 42, 25		88	5	44	•			187
	Musical Technology Kestrel SE	300	Brighter and drier-sounding than the standard Kestrel (and not the better for it)	20,84,19	•	84	5	50	•		1915	164
	Musical Technology Harrier	400	Very pretty package, good measured performance and even sound. Sensitivity is low, and dynamics limp	25,80,23	•	86	8	25	•		1663	152
	Musical Technology PM15	450	A subtle, understated but very involving example of the 'classic' luxury-finish compact standmount.	20,41,27		88	5	38	5			183
	Musical Technology Condor	1,000	Lots of clever ideas in a floorstander, which places transparency and smoothness ahead of dynamic drama		•	85	4		•	144	2134	174
	Musical Technology Falcon	680	Big speaker has a big but also surprisingly smooth and civilised sound. Fine material value too	33,117,30	•	89	4	22	•			190
		660	Great dynamic range and info retrieval, but thin, lacks warmth	24,89,27	•	89	6	30	•	125	1916	164
	Naim Intro	660			-		_				-	180
	Naim Credo	1,060	Involving sound, but rather forward and cold. Good clarity, but some coloration and a lack of richness	24,89,30	•	88	8	28	•			100
	Naim Credo Naim SBL Passive	1,060 1,970	Lively and punchy – smoother but more upfront than before	24,89,30 27,89,27	•	88 88	8 6	28 25		•	1352	143
	Naim Credo	1,060		and the second se		_		25 50		•	1352	

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;	ПІ-Г		Loudspeakers	SENSITIVITY PRSTANDER	(db)	BASS FR	FRE OM	CLOS EE SPAC HZ)	FION	ISSUL TSBACK	NUMBER	~
	PRODUCT	100			- 10	0		4)		Y		r
	Neat Petite II/Gravitas	(E) 2,000	COMMENTS Beautifully presented miniature/subwoofer combo with ribbon tweeter gives smooth, laid-back sound	23,105,40	•	1. 1. C. C. C. C.	6	25	•	Million All	1988	16
	Opera Prima	495	Good-looking hardwood enclosure, plus fine mid and treble, but less satisfactory bass	19,34,31		90	4		٠			19
	Origin Live Conqueror	1,650	Chunky floorstanding three-way has lovely cabinetwork and lively sound, but limited deep bass	24,94,27	•		8		•		1989	16
	PMC TB1S PMC TB1	430 482	Pro-audio version of TBI A classy , laid-back performer that likes going loud and loves the bass guitar	20,41,30 20,40,31		87 87	6 8		•		2207 1830	17 16
	PMC LB1	935	Delightful smoothness and transparency, though bass and treble are both limited	18,53,25		89	4	terri a re-	•	1	000	1
	PMC AB1	1,496	Lovely panel-like transparency, slightly shut-in balance, needs a big room	26,79,43		89	6	22	٠			1
	Polk LS50	800	No enthusiast tweaks here, but powerful and beautiful balance	27,83,29	•		8				1155	13
	Polk RT16 Polk LS70	799 1,200	Bass rich, lively and powerful, but suspect top end; big and not very pretty High sensitivity, but balance has too much midbass boom; mid-top is laid back	22,105,39 31,94,37	•	91 90	4			-	1831 1084	16
		2,700	For aspirant high-enders looking for seriously good boxes, this speaker should be first port of call	22,107,25	•	86	8		•		1457	14
	QLN Signature	1,000	Attractive pyramidal stand-mount with heavy, laid-back balance but remarkably unboxy sound	27,37,36	٠	83	4	25	٠			16
	Quad ESL-63	3,450	Classic electrostatic lacks punch, but has strengths some can't live without	66,93,27	•		8	-	•			6
	Rega Kyte Rega EL8	198 298	Has splendid timing and coherence, sounds very explicit and informative Kyte drivers in compact floorstander give more bass but less coherence	19,31,19 17,72,20	•	87 86	8	11000		•		11
	Rega ELA Mk II	498	Pretty and smooth, the latest incarnation has a superb midband and excellent communicative skills	30,80,20	•	87	8		•		1578	12
	Rega XEL	1,040	Looks and sounds great: balance bright but even, with delightful coherence and timing	20,82,30	٠	-	6				1083	13
	Rehdeko RK 115a	1,700	Single-driver system has limited bandwidth and obvious coloration, but wondrous dynamic coherence	34,42,27		95	8			٠	1982	16
	Revolver Colt R volver 250	139 250	A good all-rounder, if a little bland, and excellent value for money A nice price for a floorstander, but over-bright sound balance has potentially fatiguing consequences	30,19,22 21,85.5,25	•	88 87	6 8		•		1407 2023	14
	RMS Revelation Series 1	1,299	A nice price for a floorstander, but over-bright sound balance has potentially fatiguing consequences Innovative metal-box compact with integral port/stand – clean with good timing but very laid-back balance	21,85.5,25 20,99,24	•		8	-			2023 1983	17
	Rogers dB101	100	This shapely sub-miniature is fast and agile but lightweight and forward: great voices; lacks bass	20,26,20		88	6	-		•	2024	17
	Roksan ROKone	595	Large stand-mount is musically very communicative if a little coloured	21,45,33		89	6	30			1834	16
	Roksan Ojan 3 Black	795	Squat, stylish and black, great bass extension and somewhat uneven balance	28,76,46	٠	88	8		٠	12.33	1082	13
	Roksan OJ3X Black Royd Minstrel	995	Innovative low-line, 2-way floorstander with decoupled tweeter; great bass and fine dynamic range	28,79,46	•	10000	8	1000000	•		1979	16
	Royd Doublet	275 485	Not much wellie or loudness but fine coherence and timing; a bit bright Great value compact floorstander: lively and very informative, if a little uneven	18,69,12 18,93,19	•	86 90	8				1167 1835	13
	Royd The Sorcerer	595	Extremely musical and communicative speaker that's fun to listen to. Aesthetics could be better, though	20,31,18		86	8	Contraction of	•		1033	13
	Royd Abbot	695	Dynamic and fine transient qualities are hampered by a rather coloured mid-forward balance	20,81,30	٠	the state of the state of the state	8		٠			11
	Ruark Epilogue	269	Beautifully finished miniature with a lively balance and plenty of charm; best suited to smaller rooms	17,29,23		87	8	Collector		1		18
	Ruark Sceptre Ruark Talisman II	599 749	'Traditional' cabinetwork with classy veneer and shiny gilt fixings, hampered by rather wayward sound balance Less ideologically committed than some, strength lies in fine all-round coherence	21,38,31	•	87	8		•	-	2129	17
	Ruark Crusader	1,599	Elegant luxury three-way with wonderfully even-handed, if rather laid-back balance	23,84,32 24,94,31		88 85	8		•	-	1990	11
	Ruark Equinox	1,849	The primary strength of this speaker is its ability to vanish behind the music	25,88,34	•	88	6		•		1227	14
	Ruark Excalibur	7,000	A big handsome speaker with a big, laid-back, but open sound, rocking bass and loads of headroom	30,125,53	•	90	4	30	٠			18
1	Sequence 400	329	Clever hang-on-wall panel is well voiced, though bass isn't too great	25,100,7	_	86	8			•	1917	16
	Shahinian Arc Silverado Raider	1,875 695	Occasionally wonderful, small, floorstanding omni directional design: bright but coherent and revealing Beautifully built audiophile compact: neutral if bright, tough work for amps	35,69,25		88 83	6 3		•	•	1918	11
	Snell K.5	795	Classy AV-ready stand mount is very solidly engineered. Sound is neutral but lacks excitement	22,46,30		87	6		•		1910	19
	Spendor 2030	599	Discreet slimline floorstander with delicately coherent, laid-back sound	18,89,27	•	87	8	_	٠		1836	16
	System Audio 1130	499	Super-slim, super smooth, involving experience, but not ideal if you like your bass deep and loud	3,100,21	٠	89	4		٠			18
	System Audio 1150	749	Pricey but persuasive, sonic subtleties sneak up to confound a dodgy first impression. Super-slim styling		•	90	4		•			19
	Tangent Monitor 5 Tangent Monitor 9	80 150	An uneven performer best suited to small rooms and generous volume levels Budget floorstander that motors when the music demands, with a solid bass but occasionally raw treble	17.5,27,18 19.5,75.5,22.		83 90	8			•	1926	16 16
	Tannoy Mercury M1	120	Sounds much bigger and expensive than it is. Solid, tuneful bass, wide open soundstage, excellent imaging			87	8			•	2259	17
	Tannoy Mercury M2	140	A fine all-rounder with big box and deep bass for the price; could be sweeter and tighter	20.5,38,28		87	8					16
	Tannoy R1	200	Pretty little mini-monitor is smooth, well mannered, and polite to a fault, lacks dynamic expression	17,30,22		86	4		٠			18
	Tannoy Mercury M3	230	Good-looking floorstander; very neutral and evenhanded, with fine midband but weak dynamics and drive			87	7		•		2025	17
	Tannoy Precision P20 Tannoy D300	400 999	A creative and attractive design with time-aligned drivers, but the sound lacks sufficient excitement Gorgeous-looking compact floorstander. And a fine all-round performer, tool	21,80,30 16-24,85,23	•	88 87	5		•		2208	17 16
•	Tannoy D500	1,999	Plenty of muscle and stereo, but short of poise and delicacy. Hard work for amps	31,93,34	•	91	6	the second second	•		1355	14
1	Tannoy Westminster TW	6,600	These awesome horn-loaded speakers are remarkably controlled and impressive	large	•	99	8	38		•		C9
	TDL Nucleus 2	130	A very competent miniature. Could be smoother, but no serious flaws, and hence good basic value	20,29,22		88	4			٠		18
	TDL RTL3SE	450	A touch of boom'n'tizz might be to taste, but this is a lot of box for the money, with floor-shaking bass	20,91,39	•	100000	6	-	•	-	2124	17
	TDL CF100 Chiltern TDL CF200 Cotswold	<b>450</b> 650	Tiny but classy monitor has a laid-back balance, a fine midband and a surprising bass; but needs space Fine midband tonality and dynamic range, but less happy towards the bandwidth extremes	20,29,23 22.5,78,23	•	85 86	8		•	•	2212	18 17
	TDL T-Line 3	700	Plenty of bass and treble, but broad midband is rather repressed	20,97,38	•	86	8	and the second second	•		1921	16
	Technics SB-M20	200	Well-balanced with natural perspectives and fine midband coherence, but bass is a bit boxy and uneven	20,32,23		70	8		٠		1413	14
	Technics SB-M500	450	This model offers a clean, open sound, offset by midbass, heavy balance and low sensitivity	25,78,37	•	85	8		•		1666	15
	Triangle Zephyr II	599	Loads of fun. Dramatic dynamics and righteous timing will give any hi-fi system a wake-up call. Utterly delightful but exasperatingly expensive luxury miniature sets the benchmark for its size	22,94,29 17,31,23	•	91 87	4		•			19
	Totem Model One Vandersteen 2Ce	1,195 1,395	Elegant staggered baffle contributes to a refreshing freedom from boxiness	41,101,27	•	88	4		•			8
		6,000	Loads of fun with wonderful dynamic and temporal integrity from horn-loaded Lowther drivers	30,110,47	•					•		19
J	Wilson Benesch Bishop	20,000	Deep and even bass sets new standards for cleanliness and clarity; lovely open midband too	23,161,561	٠	89	4	S20				18
	Wharfedale Diamond 7.2	140	A good-hearted, lively and up-front performer that's a little lacking in subtlety and smoothness	19,29.5,23		88	4		•			16
	W dale Diamond 7.2 Anniversary Wharfedale Valdus 400		Lively and exuberant, but a tad untidy with it; can sound a bit cold and hard Very loud with a minimum of amplification, but the sound is thick and uneven, with a heavy upper bass	19,29.5,24 25,80,26	•	88 91	4		•		1414	18
	Wharfedale Valdus 500	200 300	These rock boxes can move plenty of air, albeit not as subtly as alternatives	25,80,26			8		•		1414	14
	Wharfedale MFM-3	350	Smooth broad midband gives fine voice rendition; bass could be better	22,89,28	•		8		•		1922	16
1	ZYP AI	199	Cute metal-cased micro-miniature is quite coloured but great fun	14,22,12		88	8					1
	SUBWOOFERS	200		Four-							22.45	
	Acoustic Energy AE108S B&W ASW1000	299 499	Lots of loud subwoofer for your money, though ultimately more film than music oriented (Active) Very competently engineered all round, and goes (unnecessarily) very loud	50,42,43 54,47,48				20 20	-	•	2247 2248	17
	B&W AS6	499 500	(Active) Good material value with a fair amount of low bass from 100W design	45,51,45.5	•	-		30		-	1736	15
	Celestion CS135	139	Compact hideaway passive sub lacks deep bass for high sensitivity speakers	52,19,34	•	86	8			٠		12

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5	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	V					V
	Jamo SW600	530	(Active) Has some neat styling touches and remote control, but deep bass is limited	38,41,53	•	30		1736	154
	JPW SW60	349	A real heavyweight, sounds clean and transparent, if perhaps a little understated. Usefully flexible	55,47,39		20	•	2249	179
	KEF Model 30B	499	(Active) Commendably discreet with good sense of timing but limited extension	38.5,37,43	•	45		1736	154
	KEF AV1	2,499	(Active) Works well, looks great, shakes the windows but costs a lot and is bulky	56,43,50	•	45			128
	M&K VX-7B	450	(Active) Baby of a big range; this active design delivers deep, plenteous bass but lacks transparency	35,25,37	•	40	1	1736	154
4	M&K MX70	900	(Active) Justifies cost and belies its diminutive size, with an agility that makes sense of the toughest mater	al 25.5,46,35		25	•	2250	179
	REL Q50	375	(Active) Genuinely deep, clean bass from an attractively compact and cost effective package	40,41,42		20		2251	179

## **Stands & Supports**

Hi-fi supports are more important than you might imagine - they can have very unsubtle effects on the sound of your system! There are two kinds of support: those for equipment and those (stands) for loudspeakers. Equipment supports keep vibrations and resonances from affecting electronic components, while speaker stands hold endosures stock-still and ensure they are at the correct height for your ears. Equipment supports may be rigid affairs fabricated from steel or more exotic materials; or they may have a form of suspension. Speaker stands come in a variety of sizes and styles to suit different models, and vary between open-frame and solid-pillar types. Always check with speaker and electronics manufacturers to see which supports they recommend.

#### KEY TO SPECIFICATIONS • HEIGHT (cm): How tall is your support? • TOP PLATE SIZE (cm): Dimensions of top surface on stand or equipment support. • FILLABLE: Some speaker stands can be massloaded with sand or lead-shot to improve sound. • WELDED: The better stands and supports are welded together rather than just bolted. NUMBER OF SHELVES: The number of tiers on an equipment rack or support. SHELF TYPE: The material from which shelves High End Review

are made. Wood generally means Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF). • FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of the magazine. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in

which an original review appeared.

RECOMMENDED BEST BUY

# **Stands & Supports**

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SPECIFICATIONS TOP PLATE SIZE (CTT) NUMBER SHELF TYPE WELDED OF SHELF TYPE IZE (m) HEIGHT

S	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	V	VI	/ •	V			
	EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS									
	Alphason GR 17/17-AS	275	Great looks but sound can be bettered at this price	36	60,39		4	Glass		181
	Elemental Isotube x 4/Ref	1199	Blockbusting size and build. Super sound quality	92	45,49	•	4	Marb		181
	Fi-Rax R4	399	Lively, exuberant sound, slightly weak bass				5	Glass	1633	151
4	Frameworks H500/H175	404	Two-shelf stand and isolation platform combo in tubular steel - made a spectacular impression on audition	70	52,34	•	3	Glass	1952	166
	Ixos Deadrock 704	250	Looks unassuming but sound is full and inviting		46,39		4	Resin		181
	Kudos Corinthian	599	True heavyweight that doesn't quite manage knockout sound	91	46,38		4	Wood		181
	Mana Acoustics Ref. Table	350	King of its type: angle iron, chipboard and glass combine to make a significant difference to sound quality	56	49,39	•	1	Glass		147
4	Mana 5 Tier Sound Table	600	Infinitely upgradeable. Persuasive and thrilling glass and angle-iron design that adds speed and bandwidth	91	49, 39	•	5	Glass	1633	151
	Optimum Int 2000 OPT490	299	25kg stand with shelves between variable-height tubular uprights. Sounds smooth and relaxed with sturdy bass	50	60,40		4	Glass	1953	166
	Optimum Int 2000 OPT660	349	Glitzy style isn't reflected in sound, which is wholesome	82	60,52		5	Glass	1999	181
	Quadraspire Q4	250	Easy to live with, tonally neutral	54	40,49		4	MDF	1633	151
4	Sound Organisation Z038	135	Too lively and lacking order – but inexpensive	50	84,40	٠	5	Wood	1633	151
4	Sound Organisation Z560	160	Welded and bolted members give structural integrity. While performance is not up with the best, it's great value	90	46,36		5	Wood	1954	166
4	Soundstyle X100	230	Looks lovely, sounds lively but slightly bright	64	49,28	٠	4	Glass		181
4	Soundstyle Select 6105	290	Respectable sonics: structurally solid and smart	78	43,36		5	Glass	1633	151
	Soundstyle Finewoods W105	320	Veneered shelves clamped between tubular uprights. Delivers with classical material	82	48,27		4	Wood	1955	166
4	Sound Organisation Z545	150	Budget gem from the stalwarts of sound supports	70	46,36		4	Glass		181
	Stands Unique Sound Tower	289	Wooden uprights combine with glass shelves to provide a fresh, forward sound, but bass could be quicker	81	72,42		5	Glass	1633	151
4	Target B5	175	Free of colorations, fine grip and good value	81	49,36	•	5	Wood	and the second second	151
4	Townshend Seismic Stand	1245	It's big, it wobbles and it's pricey. But this is the ultimate equipment support	72	58,45		3	Wood		181
4	Wilson benesch Asside	590	Sounds even better than it looks. And it looks wonderful	72	37,50	17	4	Wood		181
	SPEAKER STANDS			1				1000		
	Alphason NC I	45	Filled single-column design without threaded spike holes, that's appropriate for non-critical applications	40-60	16,16				1373	146
	Alphason NCII	85	Tall, slim and elegant, though sound and value are unexceptional		17,17			102.00		159
	Alphason HDS	85	A reasonable stand with a smooth but rather bland sound balance. Good finish options.		15.5,15.5					189
	Alphason Titan	125	Excels in the midband and allows voices to come across in a detailed and expressive fashion	_			1	-	1373	146
	Apollo Olympus	75	A popular stand and a decent performer, but unremarkable by today's standards		15,12.5	-	1		1373	189
	Apollo AZ6	80	Fine engineering value, but sound is unexceptional and top-plate small	66	The second s			1		159
4	Atacama BD21	55	Good-looking and good value, but doesn't match the SE24's sound quality	56	15,17			-	-	159
4	Atacama R724	150	Atacama uses its market strength to deliver a superbly appointed product at a very reasonable price	60	15,17			-		189
4	Atacama SE24	70	Stands out from the budget crowd because of the consistency and overall quality of its performance	61	19.5.17				1373	146
-	AVF Tower 400	35	Ridiculously cheap and much better than no stand at all	54	17,20			-	15/5	159
	Black Box Speaker Stand	797	A strange and costly beast. Bass is a touch thick, but performance with synthetic music types is worthy of the price	92-112	Contract Contractory	-	-	-		189
	Custom Design R/S 300	70		40.6-60.				-	-	189
4	Elemental Isotube SZse	599	Stands of distinction, able to free the speaker's sound from its box in a way budget stands simply can't	61				1		189
4	JPW HS1	120	A purposeful stand, a touch dry-sounding but particularly strong with bass. Great for rock and dance music	61	19,21			-		189
4	Kudos S50	100	Better sound than the budget stands, particularly in low-frequencies	60	15,21					159
4	Kudos S100	270	The best all-round stand around Probably	63	15,21					159
4	Mana Soundframes	125	For use under floorstanders and equipment racks, these make music effortless and natural. Can be stacked	5	13,21				1373	139
4	Partington A-4	119	An odd-ball stand with a sound that's sheer class. More open and focused than almost anything below £150	50-100	19,22		-		13/3	140
4	Revolver RS1	70	A good blend of performance and appearance for the price	53	18,18					159
4	RMS/Stands Unique Vivus	349	Pricey carbon fibres give ultra-clean sound with exceptional voices	55	N/A	-		-	-	159
	Russ Andrews Torlyte	599	Subtle and musical-sounding stands, though a touch more 'pizazz' is need for Recommendation at this price		33.5,24	-				1.001.00
		69	A coherent-sounding stands, inloging stands, inloging to the midband, though quality drops at the frequency extremes	61		-	-	-	-	189
	Sound Organication 7534			61	16,17					189
•	Sound Organisation Z524 Stands Unique HP		Real wood disguises high-performance tuned technology	50	22 22					
90	Stands Unique HP	220	Real wood disguises high-performance tuned technology Truly high-mass four-pillar decign with superb weight and speed, giving music delicious attack	59	22,23		-	-	1777	159
999			Real wood disguises high-performance tuned technology Truly high-mass four-pillar design with superb weight and speed, giving music delicious attack Lively, dynamic midrange and detailed treble from a less-than-audiophile-oriented, twin-column design	59 53 60	22,23 15,21 15,15	•			1373 1373	159 146 146

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## HI-FI CHOICE ARCHIVE NEED A BACK ISSUE OR COPY OF A PARTICULAR REVIEW? FIND OUT IN **OUR ARCHIVE, PAGE 129**





### Tonearms

ess expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). However, hard-core vinyl fans should invest in a more expensive separate motor unit with specialist tone-arm - the only way to make the most of vinyl LPs. It is essential to achieve operational synergy between such components, so this is one area of hi-fi where the skills of a knowledgeable dealer are invaluable. The quality of a tonearm's construction and design affect sound quality significantly. There are three basic arm designs listed in the key, and each has strengths, but pivoted designs are the most popular, being usually the most practical and affordable

SPECIFICATIONS KEY ТО • EFFECTIVE MASS: This relates to cartridge compliance. Generally high mass arms are suitable for low compliance cartridges and vice versa. PARALLEL TRACKING: An arm which allows the cartridge to track the disc in a linear fashion. • PIVOTED: Arms which allow the cartridge to describe an arc as they traverse the record. • UNI-PIVOT: Pivoted arms with a bearing that allows movement in two planes • EFFECTIVE LENGTH (CM): Length of the

arm from bearing to cartridge mounting ADJUSTABLE HEIGHT: Important for accurate cartridge set-up. • FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback ad on the penultimate page of this issue. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared. H End Review

**RECOMMENDED BEST BUY** 

#### EDITOR'S CHOICE E

SPECIFICATI

# Tonearms

TATUS		40		RALL EF	ADJUSTABLE LEN PIVOT	ISSUE NUM BACK NO.	BER
S	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS				
4	Kuzma Stogi Ref	1,250	Large, solid and well-made arm, gives exceptionally clear sound with just a hint of brightness	High	•	•	79
4	Linn Ekos	1,500	Superb, state-of-the-art design which builds significantly on predecessor's strengths	Medium	• 229	•	67
4	Moth/RB250	109	The ultimate budget arm? Refined, sweet, detailed and natural	Low	• 237		60
4	Rega RB300	174	Despite its modest price it sets exceptional standards and could be used on many high-end turntable	s Low	• 237	1	60
4	Roksan Tabriz Basic	350	Targeted at the Xerxes, this is a good alternative to the Rega arm in many cases - a touch bright though	Low	• 240	•	91
4	SME Series IV	983	Superb engineering and finish with a finely balanced sound, impressive stereo focus and low coloration	Low	• 233	•	60
4	SME Series V	1,461	Excellent in all respects, this arm arguably sets the standards for pivoted arms, regardless of price	Low	• 233	•	60



	Turnera	ΚΕΥ ΤΟ	SPECIFIC	ATIONS
	Tuners	WAVEBANDS: FM - (VHF),     M - MW, L - LW.	red control handset supplied.	button-based approach. ● FACTSBACK REFERENCE:
<u>r</u>	TV has stolen radio's status as the foremost broadcast entertainment medium, but with its Radio Four plays and Radio Three music, the BBC still makes a potent case for audiophile reception equipment. For how much longer, under the cost-conscious Birtist régime, remains to be seen. Another new imponderable is the arrival of digital radio broadcasting, though reception apparatus is currently non-existent outside of the in-car market. These days tunes play second fiddle to hi-fi sources like CD, but in many ways they are a greater engineering chalenge than digital equipment, and thus higher price-	<ul> <li>PRESETS: Number of station frequencies that can be stored.</li> <li>RDS: (Radio Data System) was originally designed for in-car applications. RDS tuners can identify and display the name of the radio station being received, traffic news and other information about broadcasts.</li> </ul>	METER: Indicates strength of signal from aerial – useful for aligning your twig' during installation,	The Factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faved review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback advert on the penultimate page of this issue. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of Hi-Fi Choice in which an original review appeared. • High End Review
500 - E	tags dearly equate to superior performance. High-quality, roof-mounted antennae are essential for audiophile listening, so factor them into your budget.	성 BEST BUY 🗸		EDITOR'S CHOICE

STATUS	Tun	el		S P E C RESETS RESETS		STRE	A T I C		E NUMBER	R
ST	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS	V	V	V	<b>V</b> 1	<b>v v</b>	V	V
	AMC T7	130	Performance adequate but price is sharp, especially with remote control. Some hum	FM, M	30		•	1	1945	166
4	Arcam Alpha 7	230	Indifferent RF performance but a touch of audiophile sound quality with clean, strong signals	FM,M,L	24			-	1946	166
	Arcam Delta 280	300	Fine sound quality marred by mild synthesiser whine; RF performance only average. Remote £60 extra	FM	20					120
	Denon TU-425RD	200	A fine all-rounder with advanced RDS, good RF performance and decent sound. Remote extra	FM, M	40	٠			1947	166
4	Denon TU-1500RD	250	A well-balanced and clean sound with good bass and treble extension	FM,M	40	٠	-	•		184
	Magnum Dynalab FT11	499	All-analogue tuner: receives weak or tightly packed stations but loses out on noise and sonic neutrality	FM	3		•	•	1000	184
4	Harman/Kardon TU950	200	Bulky but effective, delivering fine RF performance and good sound for the price	FM,M,L	30	٠		•	1948	166
4	Linn Kremlin	2,600	Controversially good sound at a very high price	FM	80		• •		1254	142
4	Magnum Dynalab FT101	825	Although fairly expensive given its minimum set of facilities, its excellent sound provided ample compensation	FM						72
	Marantz ST-48	120	A dassic budget model which manages a performance only just behind much more expensive models.	FM,M	60	٠				184
4	Micromega Tuner	750	Has digital output but even without the Micromega DAC, this provides exceptional sound quality. Looks good too	FM	39		•		1810	157
	Mission Cyrus FM7	400	Open, generous soundstaging gives the music plenty of foundation, if a touch shut-in at the top	FM	29		• •	•	1254	142
	Musical Fidelity E50	300	Sounds involving if coloured and with a subjectively larger-than-life presentation	FM	20				1810	157
	Myryad T-10	530	A very smart unit which works well and offers good rhythmic drive and vitality, albeit at a price	FM	20		(	•		184
4	Naim NAT01	1,730	There may be better sounding tuners in the world, but we have yet to hear one	FM	1			and the	1254	142
	Pioneer F-504RDS	250	Cable-friendly with advanced RDS and excellent RF performance; slightly disappointing sound	FM,M	40	•	•	•	1949	166

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	DIR	ł	9	C	Т	0	R	Y	(		F	Т	3	S	Т	9	D		P	R	0	D	U		]	<b>F</b> 8	5	
TATUS	Tun	e	r	°S	5																P E (		1 C	A T	10			R
	PRODUCT Pioneer F-504RDS Precision	30		and a part of a	MENT f featur		s a sou	nd that's	s low or	nois	e and h	igh on	commu	unicatio	n, adds	up to	a goo	d value p	packag	e Fl	M.M	40	•		•	•		184
	Roksan Caspian	59						nomics,				0					<u> </u>				FM	50		•	•	•		184
	Rotel RT-935AX	16	50	Good	ergono	omics a	and sou	ind qual	ity at a	realist	ic price	but lir	nited fe	atures	and RF	selecti	vity			F	M,M	20				1824	1950	166
	Sony ST-SA3ES	25	50	Clean,	lean p	present	ation b	ut needs	a qual	ity aer	rial to p	erform	at its b	est						FN	A,M,L	30	٠		٠	٠	1810	157
	Sony STS-B920S	18	0	A little	hiss a	nd ima	age cor	npressio	n don't	detra	ct from	the cle	an per	forman	ce of th	nis feat	ure-p	acked tur	ner	FN	۸,M,L	30	٠		٠	٠		184
1	Technics ST-GT350L	13	50	Decen	it RF pe	erform	ance is	offset b	y sound	quali	ity more	e typica	l of a m	nini/mi	li syste	m				FN	Л,M,L	30		•		٠	1254	142
L	Thorens TRT2000	49	99	Not ex	kactly n	neutral	soundi	ng, but i	nonethe	less n	makes li	stening	fun							FI	M,M	59	•	•	•	•	1810	157

# 15 18

## **Turntables**



Specialist turntables are at the heart of high-fidelity sound. D players may offer ultra-low noise and a flat frequency response, but they can't match the dynamics and superlative rhythmical timing taken for granted by serious turntable users. Less expensive turntables are usually supplied with a matching tonearm (and often a 'starter' cartridge, too). Still better quality is found at higher prices among the separate motor units and tonearms. Because turntables are mechanical devices, designed to retrieve micron-small modulations engraved into vinyl, engineering quality is of paramount importance. This is also the reason why turntables cost as much as they do, and require the finest equipment support systems.

KET IU SPE	CIFICATIONS
MANUAL: You do all the work.     AUTO: The record player does all the work.     SEMI-AUTO: You put the needle on, the turntable lifts it off at the end of the record.     SPEEDS: In RPM to correspond with long-playing records or severy12-inch singles.     SUSPENDED SUBCHASSIS: Sprung suspension to minimise structural interference.     CITERNAL PSU: Outboard power supply; generally indicative of higher-quality performance.     SUPPLED WITH ARM: Wany turntables do	not come with a tonearm fitted, but if this category is checked, the deck is already thus equipped. • SUPPLIED WITH CARTRIDGE: If a turntable comes complete with arm and cartridge. • FACTSBACK REFERENCE: The factsback Reference number permits direct access to our faxed review reprint service. For full info, see the Factsback ad on the penultimate page of this issue. • ISSUE NUMBER: The issue of <i>HFri Choice</i> in which an original review appeared. <b>If High End Review</b>

#### he issue of Hi-Fi Choice in appeared. E EDITOR'S CHOICE BEST BUY KICOMMENDED

SPECIFICATIONS

# **Turntables**

STATUS	Turn		ables	NANUAL AUTO	SPL SPL SPL	SUSP. EXTERNAL PSU EDS SUBCHASSIS	PUED FAC	TSBACK N Y CART.	UE NO. O.	
S	PRODUCT	(£)	COMMENTS			VVV				
	Clearaudio Reference	3,990	Opulent beast tested with Souther TQ-1 arm. Tends to gloss over detail, but can sound bol	d •	1	33/45		_	1328	144
	DNM Rota 2	5,600	Tonally slightly bleached, but extracts detail like few others. Works well on its own table	•		33/45 •	•	•	1328	144
	Dual 505-4 UK	250	Consistent sounding and well isolated turntable. It is slightly lacking in oomph			• 33/45 •	•			103
	Kuzma Stabi/PS	1,950	(Tested with Stogi Reference) Solid oak plinth; sound is very clear, detailed and extended	•		33/45 •	• •			91
R	Linn LP12 Basik	1,100	Trails the full LP12 significantly, but pace, rhythm, timing etc still top rank	٠		33 •	•			103
	Linn LP12 Lingo	1,750	The classic reference is improved by the Lingo, but charming character remains	•		33/45 •	•			91
	Michell Gyrodec	875	Sweet and natural-sounding player, well matched to Rega RB300 arm	٠		33/45 •	•			55
E	Michell Gyro SE	775	A stunningly desirable combination of looks, solidity and sound make this a tempting turn	ntable 🛛 🔴		33/45 ●				190 H
	Moth Kanoot	329	Rather coarse-sounding deck that requires decent isolation and comes with a Rega RB300	arm 🔴		33/45	•		1907	164
4	Notts Analogue Spacedeck/Arm	750	No frills, just a first-rate, outstandingly natural-sounding deck that will last forever	•	1015	33/45	• •			159
	Pro-ject 2	300	Remarkably effective at the price, with decent timing and a generally well defined sound	•		33/45		•	1907	164
4	Pro-ject 6/Sumiko	850	Don't think of this as a deck with a good arm, but as a scaled-down Oracle Delphi - it's th	at good 🔹 🔵		33/45 ●	• •			138
	Rega Planar 2	214	A remarkable product at the price, surprisingly articulate and confident	•		33/45	-			48
4	Rega Planar 3	274	Sounds musical in a balanced manner, needs decent isolation and suffers a little pitch insta	ability 🛛 🔵		33/45	•		1907	164
	Reson RS1	600	Supplied set-up and ready-tuned, this unconventional deck is packed with mid-band detail	•		33/45	• •		1	159
4	Roksan Radius 3/Tabriz zi	890	Elegant-looking turntable with a tidy, ordered sound. Bright and breezy if a shade lightweig	ht 🔴	aller	33/45 ●	•	1		159
E	SME Model 20.2A	4,863	Beautifully built, extremely neutral damped and suspended deck with superb sound. Inc V	/ arm 🛛 🔴		33/45/78 ●	• •			186 H
4	Thorens TD166 VI/UK/RB	400	Refined, solid sound with well-focused imagery; suitable for use with good MM/MC budge	t cartridges 🔎		33/45 ●	-	•		103
	Thorens TD2001	700	Balances convenience and sound well, but deck lacks detail and bass could be better contr			• 33/45 •		)		159
	Well Tempered Record Player	!,850	Intriguing and challenging. Musically not ideal, but its limpid quality and lack of artificiality set			33/45 •	•	197	1180	136



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	Naim NAT 03 FM Tuner £615.00
	Rega Radio Tuner (NEW!) £298.00
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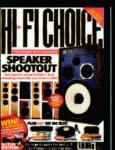
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## **SHOWING OFF**

You might not think Belfast would be an audiophile haven, but the success of the Northern Ireland Hi-Fi Show proved otherwise. Andrew Rothwell paid it a visit.



he Northern Ireland Hi-Fi Show held at the Stormont Hotel in Belfast may have been one of the UK's smaller shows, but what a great show it was. This is just a selection of the new, newsworthy, or simply outrageous kit we found.

The Michell/Trichord room had a system comprising the GyroDec 'SE' and Trichord's third generation Genesis CD player as sources and Inner Sound Isis speakers, elegant hybrids with an electrostatic panel mounted above a small transmission line bass unit at £2,000. Michell had the Delphini, a new phono stage available with a basic PSU for £495.

Making its debut in the GT Audio room was the Tron Retro valve preamp. At £4,000 it wasn't the cheapest at the show,



but at least it has a phono stage. Tron also had one of the wackiest items at the show, a valve mains synthesiser called the **Disc Drive which** uses KT88s to generate a 50 Watt output, or 5881s for 25 Watts. The latter is £1,250 while the big 'un costs £1,495. Equally bizarre is Purist Audio's Aqueous

speaker cable, which is housed in a waterfilled jacket. They don't say what type of water it is - mineral or spring, still or fizzy but it's surely only a matter of time before the liquid dielectrics debate starts. A 1.5m pair costs £390. The wet wire was used with

a pair of ARS Acoustica speakers. As a brand name, ARS wouldn't be my first choice for attracting customers, but I'm sure there's some logic behind it.

The Audiophile Club had the Frenchmade BC Acoustique range, notable for its

"Purist Audio's Aqueous speaker cable is housed in a water-filled jacket. They don't say what type of water it is – mineral or spring, still or fizzy..."

high sensitivity. There are 12 speakers in the range, half of which share the same unusual shape – floorstanders which are narrower at the top than the bottom. Prices range from £560 to £3,140. Also present was the Arcici air-filled support, a high-tech rack from the US which costs from £275 for a small isolation platform up to £1,855 for a five-shelf rack.

And guess what type of cable was used to connect this lot up? More water-filled stuff, this time from Shinpy

of Italy. A pair of 1m interconnects will cost you the princely sum of £1,995. And you thought Perrier was expensive...

Across the corridor was Ruark with the new Solus. This £1,200 speaker is the baby of the Sterling range, so named because of its silver wiring. Exceptional bass extension is claimed for this smallish standmounter by virtue of its very long throw carbon bass driver.

Northern Ireland's own valve amp specialist, Arion, had a room full of new products. The Triton is a push-pull 40 Watter, while the Nereus is a single-ended 300B design. Arion also had a pair of prototype speakers playing at levels you've no right to expect from a handful of Watts. Sensitivity is claimed to be 96dB and the expected price is £2,095.

Preparing for the new digital formats was Picture The Sound with an AV preamp from Anthem called the AVM 2, a combined surround processor-cumpreamp. It'll handle any digital info you can throw at it, and it even has a tuner built in. Prices look to be around £2,500.

Back to vinyl and yet another product making its debut. The Acutus turntable from Avid is a heavyweight design with a very thick platter and a suspension system which seems to work perfectly. Very impressive – but at £4,000, it should be. Sharing the Avid room were Cadence Speakers and Audion Electronics – worthy of the 'Best Room at Show' accolade.

UKD had some new Italian amps. The Pathos Classic One 50W hybrid has a valve front end and a very sleek appearance for £995. Aanvil Audio was showing off its Meracus Onesta integrated amp, a distinctive offering with glass top and styling which it appears was inspired by an Aztec temple. It has its piano black paintwork done by Steinway – who better to do a piano finish? – and costs £2,395.

Another French manufacturer at the show, Siemel, was demonstrating its new HY20 integrated amplifier, a hybrid design pushing out 20 Watts via toroidal output transformers. The box is huge and hot, and has a hand-finished walnut front panel – not bad for £1,750.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE ...

#### SPEAKER MEGA TEST

Choice tries out the latest speakers, with offerings from the likes of Blue Room, Heybrook, JM Lab, TDL, JBL, Mission, Tannoy, Triangle, B&W, Castle, Celestion, Sonus and Rega. We put 13 models in three price groups, from £200 to £600, through their paces. **STANDS THAT DELIVER?** 

Not content simply to take David Vivian's word for it on the suitability of bargaintastic Ikea tables as superb stands, Lee Dunkley takes a Super Test look at the specialist end of the market, with supports from likes of Aavic, Audiophile Furniture, Atacama, Soundstyle, Sound Organisation, Avid and Elemental.



#### NAME THAT DAB TUNER

Now that there's more than one DAB tuner on the market we can see just how good the alternatives are and whether the limitations we initially encountered have been sorted out by the hardware manufacturers – or, for that matter, the Broadcasting Corporation that we so generously sponsor.

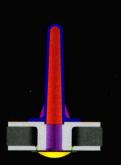
#### **HIGH-END LOVELIES**

Look out for a scoop review of Rotel's RCD-991, a giant slaying £500 CD player. Plus high-end reviews of Copland's 402 valve amp, the Advantage CDS and the Wilson benesch ACT 2s. The September issue will be on sale from Thursday 29 July 1999.

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