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simon pope

There's no point in having an expensive and slick (or even a cheap and bulky) home theatre surround-system if you're into the movies of Truffaut, Woody

Allen or Mike Leigh. These films are fine in their own right but are rather pointless in surround-sound. It's like putting a scratchy old 78 of Caruso through a

Goldmund/Krell/Wilson hi-fi - a bit of a waste. So I doubt many lovers of such films would be the slightest bit interested in investing in home cinema. They'll be happy with stereo.

On the silver screen hi-fi is a fashion item. From A Clockwork Orange to Tomb Raider the esoteric, sci-fi turntable has always been considered eye candy for the filmgoer. What does high tech Lara Croft use to listen to her Bach on? A ClearAudio Master Reference turntable, no less. And what does smarmy millionaire Robert Redford have lying around his swanky pad for musical edification in Indecent Proposal? A nice Conrad-Johnson valve amp pairing, thank you very much. And while we're at it, there was that whopping great 211 power tube in the recent Audi/Jimi Hendrix advert. Traditional hi-fi isn't just about two channels of sound - it's broader than that.

All this adds up to what I've felt for a long time - that retro hi-fi is a lot cooler looking than your average Scandinavian style minimalist all-in-one and it has attractions other than the number of channels on tap. This was further confirmed by a chance meeting at a recent informal gathering at a friend's house. I was approached by a young, trendy looking chap who greeted me with the old line "I know your face from somewhere". Just as I was about to head for the door this Shoreditch-type hip architect told me he was a vintage hi-fi fan and was in the process of putting together an A/V system in his loft extension, using a projector and screen plus DVD and processor, BUT with five Quad II valve amps and five old ESL57 electrostatics at the end! "It'll look brilliant" he said "but will it work?". "Too right" I replied, not exactly sure - but with a decent sub and high quality processor there's no reason why it shouldn't. He was trying the impossible, or barmy - combining trad style with modern ability. The two are very different.

One thing was for sure, though, he was moving with the times, Hi-Fi World style!

how we test the products

- Hi-Fi World has its own advanced test laboratory and acoustically treated listening room.
- Hi-Fi World has a dedicated in-house team of experienced listeners. We review thoroughly by extensive auditioning, rather than by quick-fire group listening tests.
- Hi-Fi World's engineering team designs a wide range of products in-house. No other hi-fi magazine is so expert and dedicated.

£ **NICE PRICE** - Represents excellent value for money.

●●●● **EXCELLENT** - Superb sound, among the best available.

●●● **VERY GOOD** - Well worth a listen.

●● **ADEQUATE** - Room for improvement.

● **POOR** - Seriously flawed. Forget it!

Half globes are added for those products that we feel are between categories

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SUITE G4, ARGO HOUSE
KILBURN PARK ROAD
LONDON, NW6 5LF

contents



reviews

digital players

MUSICAL FIDELITY TRI-VISTA SACD PLAYER 17

This heavyweight beast is Musical Fidelity's statement source player, featuring SACD playback. David Price does the honours for digital players.

QUAD 99 CD-P CD PLAYER 34

Simon Pope checks out the latest digital source player from Quad and finds it a veritable treasure trove.

SHANLING CDT-100 38

Here's a name you probably haven't heard of, but it's certainly one to look out for in the future, says Simon Pope as he encounters this valved staged silver disc spinner.

SONY RCD W3 54

From the company that launched MiniDisc comes Sony's brand new RCD-W3 CD recorder. David Price tries it for size - and wonders where it leaves MD?

amplifiers

PRE/POWER GROUP TEST 9

Hi-Fi World listens to a quartet of the latest two channel pre and power amplifiers priced around £1,000-£2,000.

ARCAM AV8/P7 61

David Price gets stuck in to this high-end AV combination of surround processor and seven channel power amp. How will this British audio specialist fare in the world of high-end home theatre?

CHORD CPM2600 40

Alan Sircom encounters this superbly crafted 'entry level' integrated amp from one of the UK's high-end masters.

loudspeakers

ECLIPSE TD 512 21

Can full range audiophile loudspeakers take on the guise of a black egg with one drive unit? Find out what Simon Pope thinks.

SPENDOR S3 42

This is a new-look Spendor high quality bookshelf model. Noel Keywood finds out if small is beautiful.

vinyl

TRICHORD DELPHINI II PHONO STAGE 56

Find out why David Price rates this latest bit of vinyl esoterica one of the greatest!

CLASSIC CUTS 70

Andy Giles chooses oft ignored Beach Boys' Surf's Up as this month's unusual classic.

accessories

CABLES 77

Hi-Fi World checks out the Signature, the Chord Company's long awaited 'high-end' interconnect.

tuners

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DAB 300 50

David Price reviews the brand new Cambridge Audio DAB 300 and highlights some of the latest product innovations, and other alternatives.



PAGE 40



PAGE 38



PAGE 61

computer audio

COMPUTER AUDIO NEWS 81

All the latest news and views from the world of computer audio.

CHANGING VROOMS 83

David Price takes Dension's DMP3 for a spin.

THE QUIET LIFE 85

Sennheiser's new PXC-250 noise-cancelling headphones.

DREAMS CAN COME TRUE 86

David Price tries out the new DEx DVD-RW external rewriter.

hfw buying guide

BUYING GUIDE 95

Our comprehensive guide of over 1000 hi-fi components, all tried and tested by Hi-Fi World's listening team.



competition

This month we have a pair of Eclipse TD512 loudspeakers up for grabs.



PAGE 26



PAGE 9



BUYING GUIDE

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visit our website for a comprehensive list of all the products we have reviewed over the past 11 years

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regulars

WORLD NEWS 6

NEXT ISSUE 7

SUBSCRIPTIONS 24

Spare yourself the frenzied riot as you struggle with the hordes to claim the last copy of Hi-Fi World in the newsagent - Subscribe today!

READERS LETTERS 44

Hi-Fi World's wise men will reply to your letters and e-mails and put you back on the right course. And don't forget, every letter or e-mail we print wins a superb prize.

HI-FI WORLD KITS 64

Solder in one hand, glue in the other, satisfy your creative urges with a World kit.

HI-FI WORLD LIBRARY 68

A comprehensive selection of titles covering audio, valve amplifiers, loudspeakers, solid state electronics and more.

SPECIALIST HI-FI DEALERS 72

The perfect mix - excellent coffee, a comfortable sofa, and someone who really knows how to guide you through the world of hi-fi.

COLUMNS 71,73,75

The World team get to grips with issues facing both the industry and hi-fi alike.

OLDE WORLDE 74

This month David Price looks at the Sony TTS-8000 turntable.

DIAL-A-DEALER 78

Look before you leap, or alternatively listen before you buy. These are the people to talk to.

MEET YOUR MAKER 80

Not a call to the spiritual, but a list of manufacturers detailing who makes what, and how to get in touch.

WORLD FAVOURITES 87

Thinking of an upgrade or even a new system? Here's where to find our recommendations from the mass of hi-fi we've reviewed.

WORLD CLASSICS 92

Our list of products that have stood the test of time.

MARKETPLACE 107

READERS CLASSIFIED 125

The definitive place to find classic audio components.

ADVERTISERS INDEX 130

ELAC'S UPMARKET BUDGET PACKAGE

The highly respected German speaker manufacturer Elac have announced details of a new affordable surround package to be launched in the UK. The XL System package features the usual Elac five year guarantee and comprises four aluminium cabinet, two-way satellites, a dedicated matching centre channel and an 80watt active subwoofer. The package is also expandable to 6.1 and 7.1 configurations. For just £100 more than the Cinema One, the XL claims to offer larger power handling and dynamics along with a larger scale sound. The satellites feature 80mm alloy cone woofers and 19mm wide dispersion dome tweeters and the centre employs two of the alloy drivers. The system is supplied with special wall mounting and built-in bass filters to allow the centre and satellites to be driven directly from the amplifier for easy installation.



The XL 5.1 System is priced at £499.95, with 6.1 at £574.95 and 7.1 at £649.95

Elac/Sennheiser UK
Tel: + 44(0) 800 652 5002
www.elac.com

DENON NOW RECEIVING SEVEN

Denon are set to show off their latest multichannel receiver at the Bristol Sound & Vision show. The AVR-3803 7.1 surround receiver uses many features of the flagship £3,000 AVC-A1SR to bring to a wider market. The main DSP is the Analogue Devices Hammerhead SHARC as used in the AVC-A1SR. It offers seven channels of 150watts each and claims to deliver much increased musical performance and vastly improved internal video for high resolution DVD and HDTV. This new receiver claims to be the first product to feature DTS 96/24 for under £1,000 and will also handle DTS-ES, Dolby Digital EX and Dolby Pro Logic II. All internal DACs are 24bit/192kHz Burr Brown PCM1791, of which there are no less than sixteen in dual-differential configuration.

As for total features and facilities, there are enough to fill at least half the magazine, suffice to say that whatever your needs, the AVR-3803 should service them. Price is yet to be confirmed but will be around the £950 mark.

Denon
Hayden Labs
Tel: + 44 (0) 1234 74200
www.denon.co.uk



ARCAM DVD-A DEBUT

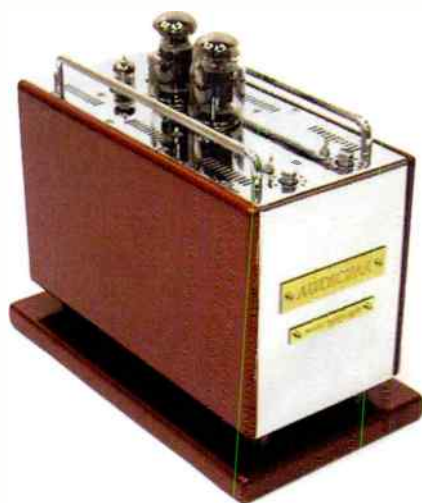
Brit hi-fi stalwarts Arcam have at long last entered the high resolution market. Along with Linn, Arcam are one of the latest specialist manufacturers to bring out a DVD-A compatible player. Although in the pipeline for a while, the DiVA DV89 (essentially a DV88+ with DVD-A platform) was launched at the recent CES show in Las Vegas and will be on demonstration at the Bristol show. Available in the shops towards the end of March, the DV89 features, as well as DVD-A playback, PAL progressive Scan video.

Dolby Digital and DTS 5.1 surround decoding is also found in the player and it includes a Zoran audio DSP for optimum fidelity. All six audio channels use Wolfson 24bit/192 DACs and the player will also decode HDCD discs. There is an upgrade path available for existing Arcam DVD player owners. The DV89 is priced at £1,199 and can be purchased in either a silver or black finish.

Arcam Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1223 203200
www.arcam.co.uk



THE BOY FROM BRAZIL



When you think of nations that produce high-end valve kit Brazil isn't necessarily the first country to spring to mind. However, Audiopax have made a bit of a name for themselves in the American audiophile market with their Model 88 power amp. This beauty is set to be distributed by none other than Ecosse, the Glasgow-based cable manufacturer. The company will be Audiopax's European distributor and the amp is set to sell in the UK for around £12,000 but final details have yet to be confirmed.

Ecosse Reference Ltd
Tel: +44 (0)141 353 0509
www.referencecables.com

next issue

here's a selection of what we hope to bring you in next month's bumper issue.

PANASONIC DVD-RA82EBS DVD-A PLAYER

Find out what we think of the latest DVD-A compatible player from one of the first manufacturers to back the format

TAG MCLAREN AUDIO AV32 & M250 PROCESSOR AND POWER AMPS

We get to play with the latest surround processor and mono power amplifiers from the high tech Huntingdon-based outfit

BOOKSHELF 'SPEAKER GROUP TEST

Does bigger necessarily mean better? We test out a selection of the best quality standmounts on the market.

next issue

THIS IMMORTAL COIL



Linn Products have announced details of a new moving coil cartridge to be launched soon. The Arkiva is the replacement for the top of the range Arkiv B which was introduced back in 1997. Priced at £1,800 the Arkiva is an ultra linear, direct coupled design and incorporates a new advanced magnetic assembly for higher output. It also claims lower distortion and spurious noise than its predecessor.

Linn Products
Tel: +44 (0)500 888909
www.linn.co.uk

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Huddersfield - Huddersfield HiFi 01484 544468
Clifford - Audio Evolution 01244 245576
Warrington - Doug Brady HiFi 01925 828009
Chester - Audio Works 01244 428887

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Droitwich - Delectables 01382 652287
Peterborough - Severnside HiFi 01733 877697
Cambridge - The Audiofile 01223 369305
Leicester - Leicester HiFi 01533 557553
Northampton - Severnside HiFi 01603 2101
Alderley Edge - Touch Audio 01527 444128
Leicester - Severnside HiFi 01532 527392
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London

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Harrow - Harrow Audio 0208 863 0718
New Malden - Unit 1 0208 942 9567
East Dulwich - Choice HiFi 0208 393 1358

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Reading - B & B HiFi 0138 958 3788
Newbury - B & B HiFi 01385 62476
Carmel - Sound Perfection 01326 227372
Exeter - Severnside HiFi 01392 218895
Oxford - Oxford Audio 01865 790879
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Bristol - Richard HiFi 0117 924 0678
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Southampton / Portsmouth 0238 022 8434
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Norwich - Severnside HiFi 01603 767605
Worthing - Music Three 01903 345577

TWO TO TANGO?

Are two boxes necessarily better than one? Hi-Fi World tests out four new pre/power pairings to give you the answer.



*Rega Cursa 3
& Maia 3*



*Parasound Halo P3
& A23*



*Roksan Caspian Integrated
& Caspian Power*



*Exposure XXVIII
& XXVIII*

The hi-fi industry has changed drastically over the past five years, perhaps more so than at any other time in its history.

As AV gradually eats into the market for audio, so two channel fans find themselves being pushed out by budget surround-sound receivers. The specialist hi-fi entry level point is now higher than it's ever been as a result of this phenomenon, so much so that many find themselves aiming higher than they'd previously imagined. For

example, a dedicated pre and power amplifier system is now a viable alternative to the entry level one box integrated, but what differences or advantages does this route offer?

Well, apart from taking up another socket in your already stuffed mains socket, there are a few bonuses to be gained from taking the two box path. Most importantly, two separate boxes can be better optimised when the preamp section and the power section each have their own power supply and chassis. Also, the more delicate preamp circuitry can be kept

away from the possible interference from heavy current found in the power amp section. Quite often, the power can be increased by using just one dedicated case and the result is a cleaner, more powerful and detailed presentation - or it should be!

Here we have four examples of entry level to mid-priced pre and power set ups to compare and contrast. Not only are they good, modern options facing anyone in the market, they also give an example of what can be had at the various prices.

REGA RESEARCH CURSA 3/MAIA 3

Like the Roksan amplifiers, these brand new models from Rega are updated and upgraded versions of earlier products. The Cursa 3 has a sleek new 'satin metal' finish with stylish use of red LEDs and a nice overall feel to the user. It's immensely versatile and can be used as a power amplifier in both hi-fi and AV systems (!). The Cursa has an improved Version-3 Rega Alpha-Encoder control system and there is digital control of the analogue switched resistor volume control and input relays.

These features, along with the twenty LED calibrated volume control and a silver extruded metal casing makes for a technologically impressive and easy to use system, in the Cyrus mould. The volume control has a resolution of 1dB per step, giving a total range of 80 steps over the available gain or volume range of 80dB.

There are twin parallel power amplifier outputs on the Cursa, which can be set to any one of the three different output levels (0.2, 0.6 and 1.2volts) and a new dual FET differential input stage is employed. As far as inputs go, as well as the usual line levels there are two tape inputs and an optional MM or MC plug in phono card in one of the line inputs.

The Maia 3 delivers 85 watts per channel into 8ohms and also features updated technology, mainly to improve thermal stability. There is a new, improved heatsink, a dual



toroidal transformer power supply and use of 200watt Sanken output transistors to help drive awkward speaker loads. It can be used as a bi-amp upgrade with the Mira amplifier or as used here, with the Cursa preamp. The Maia 3 has a fully protected output stage with DC and electronic thermal protection and a power monitor for both transformers. The Maia 3 uses a modified version of the 'common base driver stage' that is used in the top of the range Exon power amplifier.

The new Cursa and Maia combination carry on the sonic tradition of previous Rega products which is, namely, a sweet and detailed presentation that's pleasing to the ear. QOTSA's 'Song's For The Deaf' sounded clean and precise with words and percussive detail particularly lucid. Although a quoted 85 watts, sheer power isn't really what these amps do best – different designs use power in different ways. Here it is all to do with subtlety and sweetness with headroom, as opposed to drive power. Bass is good but again lean and fast as opposed to merely deep and powerful. Midrange

is impressively good and to a commendable audiophile standard, as is the treble which is sweet and detailed, although there was a hint of unnecessary cymbal splash at times. With Miles Davis and Mahler's seventh symphony, the Regas were again well detailed and there was a warm and well projected tone from John Coltrane's tenor sax, for example. Overall, though, the jazz disc fared better than classical. In the vast Mahler scoring, the Rega found it hard to portray the full scale of the orchestra and the sound staging was a bit pulled in.

The Rega combo has a sweet and inoffensive sound that's detailed and images well. It doesn't have the grunt and drive ability of rivals but it is a nice alternative to most of the crowd.

Rega Cursa 3 £498
Maia 3 £498 (£996)

Rega Research Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)1702 333071
www.rega.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Rega Maia provided 98watts into 8ohms, increasing to 156watts into 4ohms, plenty enough power for most homes and loudspeakers.

Distortion levels remained low at all power outputs and frequencies, with a miniscule 0.007% in the mid-band rising to around 0.02% at high frequencies, under all circumstances, including high current draw brought about by driving full output into a low load. This is an arduous test, but the Rega was unfazed. It produces just a small amount of odd-order distortion our analysis shows, but levels were low

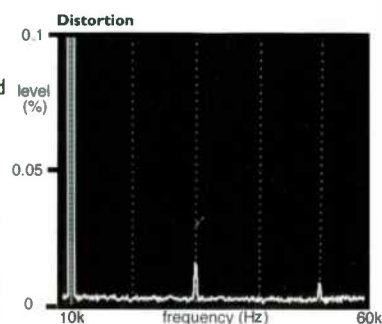
enough to affect sound quality little.

The amplifier's -1dB bandwidth measured 62kHz, so it has plenty of gain less than one octave below the upper limit of DVD-A and SACD. Sensitivity was good at 300mV for full output and noise low at -90dB IEC A weighted.

The Rega combination measured well in all areas. It should sound smooth. **NK**

Power 98watts
CD/tuner/aux.
Frequency response 9Hz-62kHz
Separation 81dB

Noise -90dB
Distortion 0.02%
Sensitivity 300mV
dc offset 4/0.5mV



World Verdict £
Sweet sounding and detailed. Not the most powerful or engaging sound around but very good value.

PARASOUND HALO P3/A23

The P3 preamp is certainly a busy looking customer, it has an attractive dot matrix display window and enough facilities to sink a warship. There are six line inputs (one of which is switchable to an MM phono input), both balanced (XLR) and unbalanced outputs, defeatable bass and treble controls and an external processor send and receive loop. A beefy toroidal power transformer sits in the chassis as well as dual layer glass epoxy circuit boards. Add to this a headphone output, RS-232 control port, ground lift switch to combat earthing problems and a ten year parts and five year labour warranty and you get an awful lot for your £750.

The A23 power amp is equally well equipped. Firstly, it has something the others here don't and that's THX Ultra 2 certification for home theatre use (Parasound also make a healthy range of AV products). There is a healthy 125 watts of power per channel into 8ohms created by Class A/AB operation, balanced and unbalanced inputs and directly coupled circuitry so there are no capacitors or inductors in the signal path. A complimentary MOSFET driver stage and JFET input stage are employed and the power amp can be triggered into operation by the P3 preamp. Also at the rear is one gain control per channel for direct connection to source capability and, again, a ground lift switch. The whole package is attractive looking and



well built.

The sound of this duo is slightly different from the rest of the products on test - and not all that bad for it. Firstly, it has that unmistakable American trait - the 'fuller figure' sound. Not in the WWF wrestler sense but more in the Sophie Dahl vein. It's a big and spacious sound that flatters anything you feed into it - and for the sensible money it's pretty hard to knock. It has an almost valve like quality.

In listening tests QOTSA's disc had power and poise, with good amounts of grunt and scale apparent as the first song, the superbly named but long winded 'You Think I Ain't Worth A Dollar, But I Feel Like A Millionaire' kicked in. Drums were huge sounding and the guitars filled the room with an all encompassing wall of sound.

Perhaps where the Parasound failed a little was in the speed stakes (this track is fast stuff). When you have this large and well structured arc of sound, something has to give and usually, like here, it was Dave Grohl's drumming.

This amplifier's sense of scale worked well with the Miles Davis and Mahler discs. Instruments had a coloured but nice tone and whilst detail wasn't intricate there was a fair amount, enough for it to be noticed. Cymbals were sparkly and sweet and there was no edge to the upper frequencies whatsoever, making for relaxed long term listening. The Mahler had great space and air, with good depth of stage too, but again the only thing stopping it from being top hole was that last ounce of detail.

The Parasound pair are a nice option and their big sound and THX certification, as well as upgradability make them a good choice for AV applications. They have more features and facilities than usual at this price and a sound that, whilst not high-end audiophile, is nonetheless easy going and enjoyable.

Parasound Halo P3 £750
A23 £750 (£1,500)

CSE Distribution
Tel: +44 (0) 1423 359054
www.parasound.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Parasound was the most powerful amplifier of the group. It produced a healthy 136watts into 8ohms, rising to 225watts into 4ohms. The 4ohm output in particular is for larger loudspeakers able to absorb the power, although of course powerful amplifiers like this can be used with smaller loudspeakers providing full volume isn't used.

Distortion levels were low and remained so under most conditions, including full output at 10kHz into a low 4ohm load. This is a very arduous test but the Parasound coped well, producing just 0.02%

distortion, primarily third harmonic. Our distortion analysis shows output at 1watt/10kHz which, at 0.008% produces barely visible harmonics above the noise floor.

Input sensitivity was very high at 120mV for full output, so this amp will accept all sources, even old tape decks and the like.

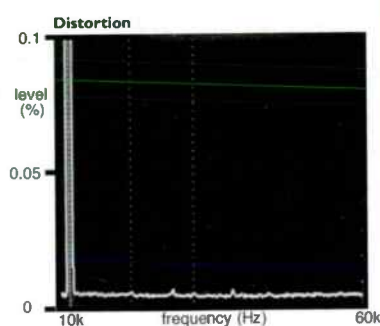
The Parasound measured well in all areas. It should give a clean, smooth sound. **NK**

Power 136watts

CD/tuner/aux.

Frequency response 5Hz-60kHz

Separation	65dB
Noise	-92dB
Distortion	0.008%
Sensitivity	120mV
dc offset	0.3/0.1mV



World Verdict £

The superb value Parasound combination has a big and enjoyable sound. It's not lean and fast but great to the ear. Great versatility and features, too.

ROKSAN CASPIAN INTEGRATED/ POWER AMPLIFIER

Although these amplifiers have been around in name for a few years, throughout this time Roksan have regularly 'upgraded and improved them, to the extent that the units here have little in common with the first models.

The Caspian units here differ in that they comprise an integrated amp paired with a power amp. Like other companies such as Arcam, Roksan offer the power amplifier as part of an upgrade package to deliver a cleaner and more focussed sound to the Caspian Integrated. The latest version of the Integrated offers state of the art microprocessor control and has a carefully designed circuit layout to keep the signal path as short as possible. High quality audiophile components are used and the preamp stage is of dual mono configuration. A high quality motorised volume control aims to mix remote control with optimum sound quality. There are five line inputs and a tape loop. For use with a turntable, you'll need Roksan's matching external phono stage.

The Caspian power amp features 70 watts per channel into 8ohms and the same microprocessing control as the Integrated. It offers a chain facility for multi-amp configuration, making it supremely upgradable for a variety of AV and hi-fi applications. In manual mode, it functions in the same manner as the standby mode of the Integrated but an auto mode will automatically set the amplifier into standby when no



music signal is received for more than five minutes. When a signal is detected the power amp will automatically 'wake up' again.

Inside the chassis is a 350VA ultra low leakage transformer and a fully symmetrical drive circuit. There's also power supply failure, short circuit and thermal overload protection circuits.

Compared to the first versions of the Caspian pairing, the current designs have more grip and control. Rhythms are held together in a tighter manner and there's more spatial appeal, too.

The rock music of the Queens Of The Stone Age (QOTSA) in the shape of their superb, rollicking 'Songs For The Deaf' album sounded full of fire and excitement. However rhythmically gripping, though, this isn't the sound that appealed to the flat eathers of the eighties. There's a good amount of detail and imaging with the Roksan pair, as opposed to mere toe-tapping involvement. The heavy layers of guitar tracks were all well presented and vocals were naturally warm and lacking overt sibilance. Bass wasn't particularly deep but it was nicely lean and fast.

With the more temperate climate of Miles Davis's 'Kind Of Blue' the Roksan combination gave a detailed and smooth performance. There was decent representation of instrumental colour and a good balance of tonality. This was further emphasised by Mahler's seventh symphony with Boulez conducting the Vienna Philharmonic. One of Boulez's traits is to meticulously pull apart the score to fully show the music's textures and this transparency and detail of playing was both emphasised and nicely balanced out by the warmth and depth of the Roksan. My only gripe is that with jazz and classical I wasn't as pulled in by the music as I was with the QOTSA CD. All-in-all though, this is a good, reliable sounding combination that won't offend or niggle the listener.

Roksan Caspian Integrated £895
Caspian Power £645 (€1540)

Henley Designs Ltd.
Tel: + 44 (0)1235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Across the mid-band this amplifier produced virtually no distortion, returning measured values of 0.004%. Even into a 4ohm load, at low or high outputs there was little distortion. At high frequencies the picture worsened a little, with odd harmonics from a 10kHz test signal measuring out 0.02% to 0.01% at full output. Our spectrum analysis clearly shows these were odd order products. Levels were so low though the Roksan's sound should remain unaffected by them.

Frequency response was

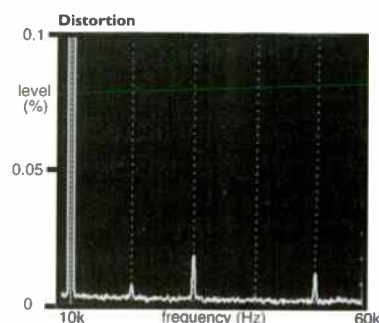
satisfactorily wide for DVD-A/SACD discs, channel separation wide too and noise low. The Roksan is fairly sensitive, needing 275mV for full drive.

This is a powerful, clean and stable design that measured well.

NK

Power	84watts
CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	5Hz-67kHz
Separation	75dB
Noise	-104dB

Distortion	0.02%
Sensitivity	275mV
dc offset	22/9mV



World Verdict

Reliable sounding and well built, the Caspian pair will impress with their control and detail. Not quite tip top though.

EXPOSURE XXIII/XVIII

Hand built in the UK (hence, partly, the higher price), these amps are part of Exposure's new Classic range. Whilst they may appear fairly basic in construction, they are actually very well crafted with a solid and thick front plate and selector knobs that give a high quality feel. The Classic range substitutes the blue LEDs of the entry level 2010 range for a more subtle and luxurious deep red.

The XXIII preamp features six line inputs, one of which can be converted into an internal MM or MC phono stage card. Round the back there are output sockets for both RCA and XLR connection. There's one tape loop, with the output selectable on the front panel, and on the inside there's a large toroidal power transformer (making for a weighty preamp) and high quality custom-made components. The audio output stages use discrete transistors and the components are mounted on high quality double-sided glass fibre circuit boards.

The XXVIII power amplifier delivers a rated 70 watts per channel and again features custom-made parts, with two large toroidal transformers and power supplies for each channel. Carefully selected bi-polar transistors are employed and there are two speaker outputs per channel. It's very much a 'meat and two veg' design with no extra fancies or flashing lights but it's weighty and very well constructed.

On paper this pair has commendable audiophile credentials and they carry over into the sound, without doubt. Perhaps it isn't surprising

considering the Exposure is a fair amount dearer than the Parasound combo, for example. But in return you get a very good sound indeed, one that betters after time. After a few days running in the soundstage depth increased and a much smoother sound emerged with superb detail rendition worthy of a 'high-end' tag.

In listening tests on QOTSA's CD the Exposure had amazing grip and depth of sound. These properties brought out all the layers of the at times highly complex mix. Bass was firm and deep, midrange clean and open and treble smooth and detailed – a good all round sound indeed. There was a good amount of drive to the sound that made it exciting and an amount of attack and poise that belied its 70 watts on-paper rating. Don't worry about partnering with dodgy loads - there seemed enough grunt here to drive a combine harvester!

With classical and jazz the Exposure kit concentrated on scale and detail. There was also an impressive amount of natural dynamics here – more than elsewhere in the test. It's partly what the extra money buys you. Mahler's seventh symphony was big and

bold and delivered a combination of subtle low level detail with grand scale that was impressive. The woodwind in the Mahler was light and spacious and brass has a natural roundness that was never raspy but still snappy and dynamic. Likewise, double basses were translucent and clean, without the mulch that can appear to make things sound smooth.

With 'Kind Of Blue' Miles Davis' trumpet sounded cleanly separated and quite distinct from the rest of the musicians, which is just the effect it needs, yet in tune with them in terms of rhythm. Bill Evans's piano was also impressive, beautifully rounded and rich, with every note as clean as a whistle.

This new range from Exposure is impressive. It may not be the best looking puppy in the litter but when it comes to audiophile credentials it has them in bundles.

Exposure XXVIII £1175
XXVIII £1275 (£2,400)

Exposure Electronics Ltd.
Tel: 01273 423 877
www.exposurehifi.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Producing nearly 80watts into 8ohms and 121watts into 4ohms the Exposure combination had a little less power than its rivals, but power supply regulation was good and the Exposure has plenty enough heft to cope with big rooms and small (insensitive) 'speakers.

Across the mid-band distortion was minimal, with harmonics barely visible above noise. From low output right up to full output levels measured 0.003% or so, with little increase caused by the greater current draw of a 4ohm load. At high frequencies a small pattern of distortion spikes appeared, as our

analysis shows, but with levels measuring 0.02% into 8ohms and little more (0.04%) into 4ohms the amplifier again remains linear under difficult conditions.

Frequency response was wide enough for both DVD-A and SACD and sensitivity sufficient to handle all sources, even old tuners and the like.

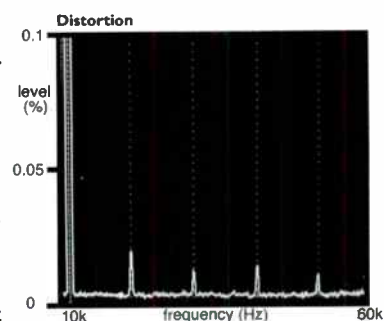
The Exposure measured well in all areas and should give a smooth, clean sound. **NK**

Power 78watts

CD/tuner/aux.

Frequency response 9Hz-30kHz

Separation	85dB
Noise	-96dB
Distortion	0.03%
Sensitivity	230mV
dc offset	24/20mV



World Verdict 
Expensive, but a true audiophile sound, this pre/power system has depth, detail and musicality. Highly recommended.

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**Rega Cursa 3
& Maia 3**



**Parasound Halo P3
& A23**



**Roksan Caspian Integrated
& Caspian Power**



**Exposure XXVIII
& XXVIII**

It may be better to invest in a pre and power combination than a one-box-does-all integrated. You'll get a better sound, invariably cleaner and more controlled, and you should also have a good upgrade path for adding more amplifiers for surround-sound at a later date.

All four of the systems tested here offer a fine upgrade route, with perhaps one exception: the Exposure. Ironically, we found it was one of the best sounding. There's good reason for this being a quality sounding product. It's packed full of decent quality components and has a nice feel about it, both in usability and sound. The Exposure pre/power are expensive, yes, and you wouldn't guess just how expensive from looking at it but here good, honest two-channel hi-fi in the traditional sense.

The next products down price-wise are the Roksan and Parasound combos. In certain respects these products are poles apart. The Roksan is quite simple in that there are no bells or whistles, but it's well engineered and has a very reliable and solid sound that's not tiring or harsh - but neither is it jaw-droppingly inspiring. It's something that most people could easily live with for a very long time, providing they don't want to move on to multichannel.

If they do, then the Parasound may well be a good option. The Halo power amp THX Ultra is certified for AV applications and there's a good surround sound upgrade path from the American company. It's also a fine looking piece of kit for the money and is jam packed full of facilities which make it good value. Sound wise it's big and spacious, and whilst not impeccably detailed the Parasound is nonetheless enjoyable.

The sub-£1,000 Rega set also offers good value for money. With few exceptions pre and power combinations don't come much cheaper than this and Rega do well in extracting such a detailed and sweet sound from such an affordable system. It's easy to use and will work with most speakers. The Rega doesn't have the grip, control and sophistication of the others here but it has price on its side!

evolution

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TRI VISTA YOU MAY!



Musical Fidelity's new Tri-Vista player is one of the biggest and best arguments for SACD, albeit in two channel, says David Price.

It's Musical Fidelity's anniversary, don't ya know! To commemorate the two long decades since its famed Dr. Thomas preamp first graced dealers' shelves, proprietor Antony Michaelson has uncorked the Krug, polished the silver and launched a celebratory range of Tri-Vista products. The first two are the Tri-Vista 300 integrated amp (of which just 500 are being made) and the Tri-Vista CD/SACD player which is here before your very eyes. MF is

making a mere 800 of these, after which the final Tri-Vista preamp and power amp will appear.

The Tri-Vista CD/SACD player starts - so says Mr Michaelson - where the Nu-Vista 3D CD player left off. It's full of clever digital stuff like upsampling (at 192kHz), fancy power supplies (choke regulated) and fine tuned DAC and filters, bespoke for both CD and SACD. Specifically, a 24 bit 192kHz upsampling DAC is fitted, which not only does in-house conversion duties but has the facility

to accept an external source - a brilliant feature now being increasingly used in high end CD players. CD and SACD circuitry is totally discrete - completely separate digital paths mean that the SACD DAC, filter and power supply are specifically and only for SACD, and ditto with the CD side. This is unlike most other SACD players, and can surely be no bad thing, even if it is expensive.

As its name cunningly suggests, the Tri-Vista series uses dinky 5703

subminiature valves, the result of scouring the world of military surplus for a successor to MF's beloved Nuvistor. Claimed to be 'the most reliable tube in the world', this player's designer says its very low output impedance and distortion allied to high damping factor and wide bandwidth make it ideal for super audio applications. This player shows attention to detail outside too - its silver moonstone finish (apparently the result of a nine step polishing process) has an arresting (i.e. overpowering) sheen which matched my gold bath taps and monogrammed his'n'hers bathrobes perfectly!

To cap this, the feet glow. Yes, I can appreciate the irony of this - a player packed full of state of the art digital trickery and I'm dwelling on this - but they really do. While the current is stabilising and the output stage is switched off, they glow red. Then they go amber for about half an hour while it warms up, then blue when it's really ready to rock. Hmmm - nice!

More important is the beautifully hewn disc tray - up there with the Linn Sondek CD12 in the pantheon of 'great disc drawers I have seen'. Shame about the top plate, which was soon resonating away in time to the low frequencies emanating from my loudspeakers - if it was my machine, I'd stick some sorbothane to its underside. And as for its wealth of exposed screwheads - if it was Japanese then some poor underling would have been expected to commit seppuku for that!

Round the back, there are a pair of digital outputs (coax and optical) and inputs (for the aforementioned DAC function), plus the audio outputs - all two of them! Yes,



amazingly perhaps, this player does only two channel SACD - some will find this a baffling retrograde step, others a purist declaration of stereophile intent! Whatever you think, it's probably the last stereo SACD spinner you'll see - all the others are multichannel. Once the, ermm, legs had gone blue, listening commenced via my upgraded World Audio KLPP1/K5881 pre-power amp combination and Yamaha NS1000M loudspeakers. SOUND QUALITY! It's very good indeed. I kicked off with ye olde 16/44 Compact Disc (very popular in the 1980s, so I'm told) and found this was a very classy player. Compared to my reference Sony CDP-X77ES (a very capable classic high end design), the MF sounded a good deal more organic - yet was also more dynamic too. Although lacking a fraction of the Sony's truly special, grumbling bass, it sounded altogether punchier thanks to its ability to sift through the mix and find the dynamic accents. The result was a very Naim-like ability to really carry the music's rhythms and

phrasing - but it could also do tonal colour too.

MJ Cole's 'Crazy Love' - a brilliant slice of UK Garage - was most instructive. Where the Sony pushed out a big, phat (sic) bassline, the MF was just a touch less ballsy, yet as soon as the drums kicked in it really took the song by the scruff of the neck and hammered it out with gusto. However, there was an incredible finesse there too - those beautifully silky vocals were there all their glory, deliciously rich and fruity. The Sony by contrast sounded altogether more artificial and digital. Moving to Scritti Politti's 'The World Girl', the MF continued the pattern with a sumptuously sweet and creamy midband - rarely have singer Green Gartside's vocals sounded more beguiling.

Van Halen's 'Jump' proved how this player can offer the best of both worlds - it really is grippy and fast with oodles of power to project the soundstage way out past (and behind) the plane of the speakers. The rhythmic gaps between the notes seemed longer and darker than with the Sony, making the music even more striking when guitar strings or drum skins were struck. Yet it's wonderfully couth too - no 16/44 nasties here - there is real tonal colouring here. You can hear the different sounds of different studios and instruments, microphones and mixing desks - it's not one generic sound. The punch and power, allied to a deliciously open and smooth midband and silky treble make even standard CD a deeply rewarding experience through this player - you never know, this



digital lark may just catch on after all!

Moving to an SACD of Marvin Gaye's 'Sexual Healing', I was struck by how similar this felt to hearing Marantz's fabled SA-1 for the first time ("we are not worthy", etc.) You get all the CD stuff, plus an even more balanced and smoother midband, plus a wonderful, overarching sense of natural musicality. The complex drum track was carried superbly, with all its little runs, breaks and modulations as clear as day. Despite this however, Marvin's voice was brilliantly carried - exquisitely smooth and silky, brilliantly expressive and emotive, it

made digital a truly special experience. The Human League's 'Love Action' on SACD was a riot - the rich harmonics of those classic Roland, Korg and Casio synths and the dark, dead thudding of a Linn LMI drum machine reminding me of hearing the original superb vinyl pressing over twenty years ago. This is a beautifully musical player - it has one an almost enchanting quality that makes you want to keep listening. Importantly though, it is so smooth and open that you can keep listening for long periods without fatigue - just like vinyl. Indeed, I'd say that short of Marantz's long-deleted

SA-1, this is the most analogue sounding digital player I've laid ears on. It's flipping expensive, but worth every penny. Only the lack of DVD-A and multichannel capability could detract some from its obvious appeal, but I'll let you be the judge of how much.

Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista
CD/SACD player £3,995

Musical Fidelity Ltd
Tel: +44 (0) 208 900 2866
www.musicalfidelity.com

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Based on a Philips SACD solution, the closest ancestor to Musical Fidelity's two-channel player is the exceptional SA-1 from Marantz, launched as a 'showpiece model' some two years ago at £5000. However, any parallels between these designs ends with MF's proprietary analogue stage which features its favoured 5703 'Tri-Vista' triodes.

As expected, distortion is low at mid-to-low digital levels (typically 0.005-0.008% 1-20kHz at -30dBFs) but increases towards its 2.26V peak output as this triode-based output stage becomes less linear. I measured 0.004% on the left channel, 0.0015% on the right - hardly 'high' by any stretch of the imagination, but still 10x higher than a more conventional solid-state CD, DVD or SACD player. This stage is also probably responsible for the relatively poor 0.13dB channel imbalance and the

reduced 101-102dB S/N ratio, manifesting as a broadly-distributed white noise rather than as an objectionable hum.

By contrast, the circuit layout is well thought out and sufficient to maintain its stereo separation beyond 100dB across the audioband - a fine result. Whatever subjective 'colour' is introduced by the valve stage, digital jitter is spectacularly low at 120psec and exerts no audible impact.

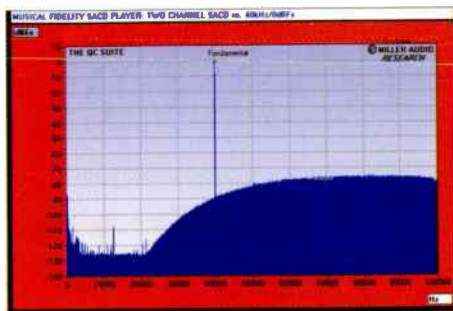
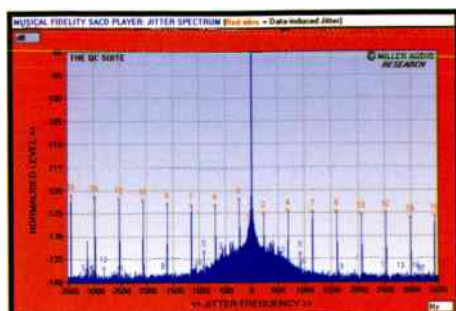
Image suppression with CD software is superb at a full 106dB though, of course, digital filtering is not required for SACD replay. Here the response extends beyond CD's 20kHz limit to reach 60kHz at -8.2dB, 80kHz at -16dB and 100kHz at -24dB. The ultrasonic roll-off not only affects the player's intended response but also the unwanted noise associated with SACD encoding. This hump of noise is clear

enough from the 40kHz plot and, depending on its interaction with partnering amplifiers, may prove the more significant factor in this player's system matching. **PM**

Frequency Response

CD
-0.1dB (20Hz) to +0.06dB (20kHz)
SACD
-0.02dB (20Hz) to -13.0dB (100kHz)

Distortion	Left	Right
-6dBFs	0.003%	0.0005%
-30dBFs	0.0053%	0.0046%
-60dBFs	0.16%	0.14%
-90dBFs	3.0%	2.8%
Separation		
1kHz	106dB	107dB
20kHz	107dB	109dB
Noise (IEC A)	101.7dB	100.9dB
Output	2.26V	2.29V



World Verdict 
Built like a tank and sounds like a dream. Although only two-channel, the Tri-Vista takes digital audio to a higher level of playback

When five stars just aren't enough...



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Loudspeakers needn't be wooden coffins with dustbin lids in them. Simon Pope encounters the highly unconventional but very impressive Eclipse TD 512.

Being a publication that has often dealt with the more, er, extreme areas of the audio industry it's safe to say that we've had our fair share of the weird and wonderful pass through our doors. No area opens the floodgates to such items as loudspeaker design. It's also fair to say that give or take a few examples such as the Quad electrostatic or a Magnepan planar design, most of the more off-the-wall models we've encountered don't really cut the mustard. They may do some-

thing superbly, but often sacrifice something else to achieve this. It must be remembered that basic design principles are best learnt before developing a 'good' idea - you can't play the piano with confidence until you've learnt your scales!

The Eclipse TD 512 is without doubt an unconventional 'speaker. Just take a look at it. We have a long, elliptical 'black' egg which houses a lone 120mm 'full range' drive unit. There's also a smaller set available for multimedia use that includes a stylish amplifier. There's a matching amplifier available with the 512s, too,

the highly chic and clean sounding A502 at £875. They are sold per 'speaker as opposed to per pair, so multichannel use is an option, too.

The first impression was good - the whole package is modern and a genuine 'lifestyle' product, but one that is superbly built - the 'speakers are remarkably heavy for their size.

However, I wondered how this loudspeaker would deliver what any audiophile requires from a full range 'speaker - starting with bass! More of this later. First there are a few essential points to mention that are contributory to the look of the 512.

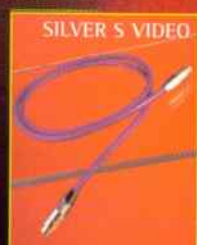
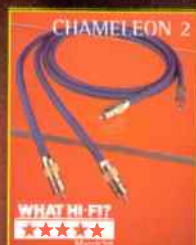
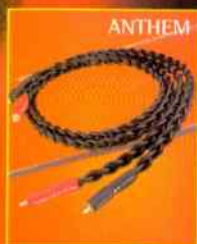
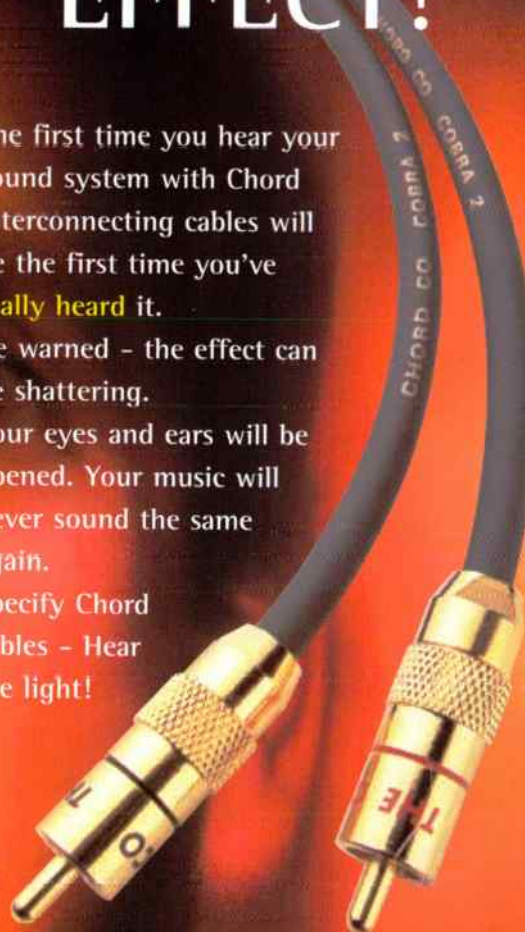
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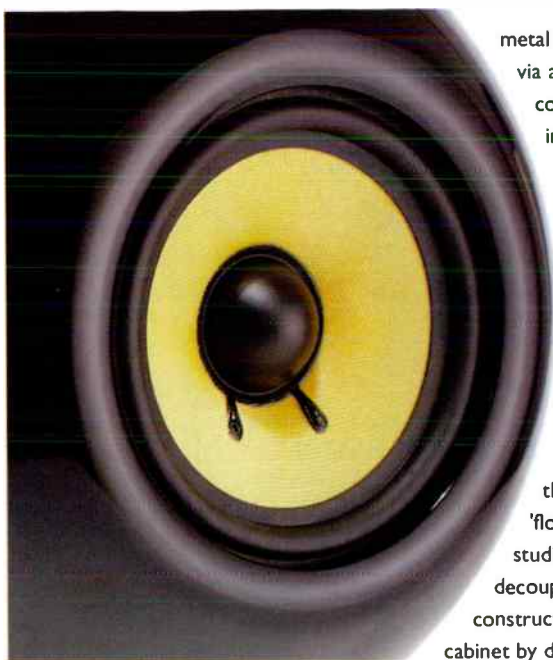
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The designer simply didn't just think "I know, I'll make my speaker look like an egg, that'll be different". There's much more to it than that and it's all very, very technical, as you'd expect from a Japanese product. Eclipse TD believe that most conventional audio systems concentrate on improving the frequency 'domain' (response), whereas the 512 concentrates on 'idealising' the acoustic reproduction of the input waveforms. One acknowledged factor that contributes to the deformation of these original waveforms is the standing wave - acoustic reflections between the facing surfaces inside the cabinet. They also believe that additional vibrations will further degrade the quality of the waveform, along with diffraction at the baffle edge of a cabinet box. Hence the elliptical design with its constantly curved structure and lack of baffle. No flat surfaces exist and it's also incredibly well constructed and rigid, which should eliminate any vibrations. There is also no baffle as such to interfere with the spherical waves emanating from the drive unit but a single port features at the rear.

Next, Eclipse state, rightly, that most conventional 'speakers have the drive units screwed or bolted directly onto the enclosure. They claim that this transmits unwanted vibrations directly from the drive unit into the cabinet which further radiates these vibrations and colours the overall sound. In answer to this, Eclipse have a unique way of housing the single drive unit. The driver is actually directly mounted onto the

metal base of the design via an integrated construction (see image). Therefore the drive unit is effectively decoupled from the enclosure which provides single point grounding, eliminating vibration. The overall enclosure of the 512 is essentially 'floated' (as recording studios are) by the decoupling of the metal construction from the cabinet by diffusion arms. And

there's more - attached to the rear of the drive unit there is a 3kg 'grounding anchor'. The back of the drive unit is grounded by the weight in an attempt to improve the transient impulse response and phase accuracy.

Finally, the third section of the Eclipse Holy Trinity is the use of a single drive unit. This dispenses with phase problems and a crossover too. So, whilst the design may appear technically complicated, much of it is simple common sense.

I admit that all of the above could read as a load of technical cobblers if the thing sounds duff - but they don't and these technical outlines actually make sense when evaluated with the overall sound. It's so detailed and transparent that these are instantly recognisable as a studio reference (they're used by none other than Brian Eno as monitors in his studio). I used them with the matching stands and a Sony 555ES SACD/CD player as source. Amplification was supplied by the matching Eclipse TD 30 watts A502 among others, ranging from a Cyrus 8 up to 20 watts 300B monoblocks!

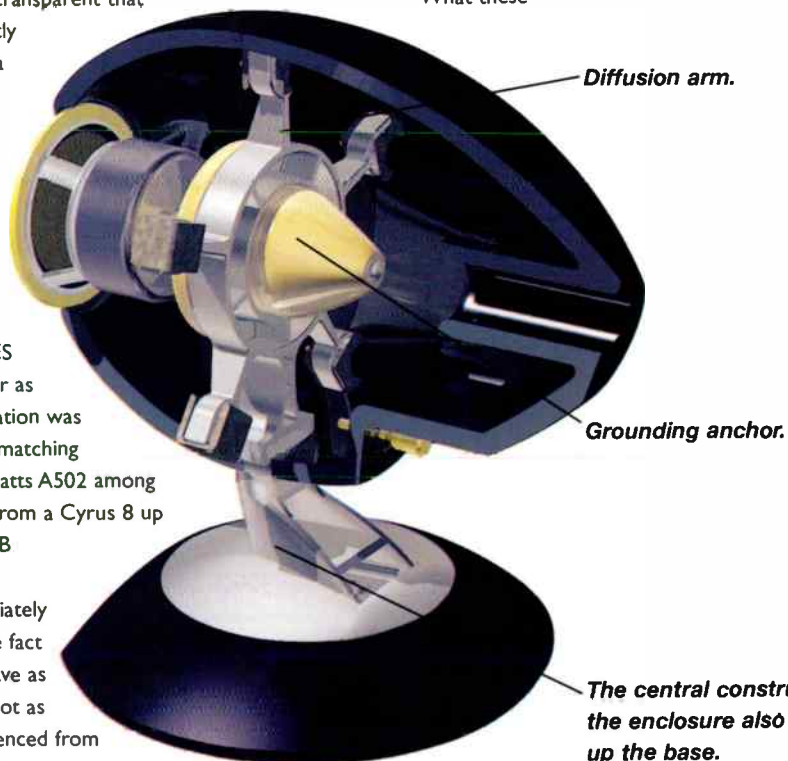
Also immediately noticeable is the fact that the 512s have as defined a hot spot as I've ever experienced from

a loudspeaker. You don't quite need a neck brace but turn your head to answer a question and the majority of what this 'speaker does so well is lost in an instant. What it does well, though, it does like few I've encountered. You want pin point imaging - it doesn't get any better than this. Nor does transparency and neutrality.

Put on Miles Davis's Kind of Blue and you'll be looking around for a snake. Don't worry, though, it's the tape hiss. Then you'll be treated to some of the most engaging sounds to teased from this album. Incredibly natural instrumental timbre, a fine sense of depth and space and spot on timing are bread and butter for these 'speakers. And as for detail, you'll get key fingering on the sax and a realistic presentation of breathing into the instrument. It's all quite gobsmacking.

As mentioned earlier, one thing you wouldn't expect these to do is bass. However, as I discovered, if the bass is there on the recording, then it'll be there in the room. A fine HDCD recording of Stravinsky's Rite Of Spring had me jumping out my seat with the force, depth and downright realism of the bass drum. Likewise, Massive Attack's 'Angel' and Wally Brill's excellent The Covenant (a mix of Jewish cantors and trip hop beats!) had the Eclipses plumbing the depths. It's some of the tightest and cleanest bass available through any design, too.

What these



Diffusion arm.

Grounding anchor.

The central construction of the enclosure also makes up the base.

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The stylish matching A502 amplifier can be bought as a optional extra.

'speakers won't do is make the best of a bad situation. If a recording is bad then it'll sound bad, if it's good it'll sound good and if it's superb. .

.you get the message. It's here that they demonstrate their 'professional' monitor pedigree better than most that claim to be. Low level detail is exquisite and transparency is amazing.

Now for the down sides. Firstly, you need to get rid of all preconceptions about 'speaker design or sound before you listen to them - they sound like very little else around and can be disconcerting at first but stick with it.

Secondly, they are unbelievably directional, there's none of the Quad electrostatic mix of imaging combined with dispersion here - they're like laser beams.

Thirdly, the treble isn't always the smoothest but this is, again, largely recording or system dependant.

Lastly, they could be a bit too

much like hard work after a while. Whilst the sheer detail and involvement is invigorating at first, I was so pulled in by them that I could not help but concentrate.

If you're in the market for a transparent and detailed sound then try these 'speakers out, because they have traits that many audiophiles would pay a lot more money for. They are by no means a run of the mill design, or purchase for that matter, but they may just have you gagging for more. However, once you've got them remember not to move around too much or you may have wasted your money. These 'speakers aren't for fidgets!

Eclipse TD 512 £875 per speaker (£999 including stand)

Eclipse TD (UK) Ltd.
Tel: +44 (0)20 73288 4499
www.eclipse-td.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

A small, single drive unit in a symmetrical cabinet with tapered sides like this one will give excellent dispersion and have no inter-drive unit phase problems. However, lack of a tweeter will hamper treble quality, making a small cone necessary to extend response, but small cones cannot deliver serious bass without distortion – and those are the trade-offs in this 'speaker.

Not surprisingly, frequency response of the TD 512 isn't especially flat by current standards, treble rolling off above 2.5kHz, our analysis shows. The roll off is smooth though, and the peak at 2kHz will make the TD 512 sound bright, rather than dull. It will help vocal projection too, but lack of upper treble will suppress fine detailing and compromise sonority.

Bass rolls down below 63Hz, the rear port being tuned high, to

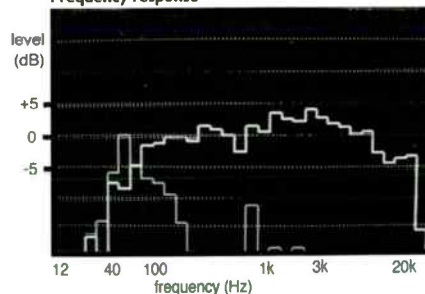
around 55Hz our impedance analysis confirms. Consequently, the acoustic output of the port makes no contribution below 60Hz as our port output analysis shows. The TD 512 will sound fast and punchy, perhaps tight and controlled, but not deep.

The impedance curve is a classic, with twin peaks of a ported driver and rising impedance with frequency, due to voice coil inductance unaffected by a crossover. This, and high DCR of 5.6ohms, make the TD 512s an easy load, with average sensitivity of 85dB SPL from one nominal watt of input.

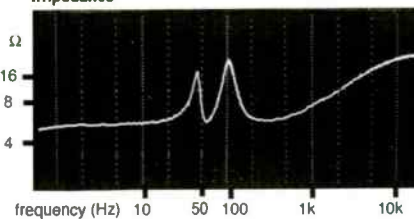
The TD 512 will image well and have a bright sound. It should be aurally

palatable all the same. But bass output will be limited in depth and power. **NK**

Frequency response



Impedance



World Verdict

Exceptionally well detailed and transparent, the 512 is a quirky but valid audiophile product. Solid construction, too.

HI-FI WORLD'S GREAT COMPETITION GIVEAWAY

WIN A PAIR OF ECLIPSE TD 512 'SPEAKERS WORTH £1,700 IN THIS MONTH'S GREAT HI-FI WORLD GIVEAWAY!



Competition Questions

[1] In which year was Eclipse TD UK founded?

- [a] 2001
- [b] 1991
- [c] 1990
- [d] 1000

[2] At which famous studio did they launch the 'speaker in the UK?

- [a] Air Studios
- [b] Abbey Road Studios
- [c] Maida Vale BBC studios
- [d] King Tubby's, Jamaica

[3] Which famous musician/producer uses the Eclipse TD 512 in his studio?

- [a] Brian Wilson
- [b] Brian Harvey
- [c] Brian Eno
- [d] Jay Leno

[4] From what material is the 512's drive unit made

- [a] Kevlar
- [b] Fibre-glass
- [c] Carbon-fibre
- [d] Paper

March Competition
Hi-Fi World Magazine
Unit G4 Argo House
The Park Business Centre
Kilburn Park Rd.
London NW6 5LF

There are very few loudspeakers we come across that truly break the mould of the traditional two or three-way box cabinet. When we do encounter something different the chances are that we won't necessarily be impressed. However, the moment we set eyes on these superb Eclipse TD monitors we knew we were in for something different and exciting. And indeed we were, the sound is spectacularly transparent and detailed - it's a true audiophile product. The design comes in two different sizes, the larger 512 models that you can win in this competition and the smaller 508 models. There is also an extremely stylish matching amplifier designed by Eclipse TD available for use with the monitors.

The 512s are equally comfortable in the recording studio as they are in the home, as many

music professionals testify. Eclipse TD UK Ltd. was founded in 2001 and they launched the 'speaker at a press conference in the famous Abbey Road studios, London. Since this time the product has made a name for itself amongst top engineers. Supporters include the award winning classical recording engineer Klaus Hiemann, Simon Osborne - another award winning engineer and Brian Eno who uses a pair in his studio.

Designed by the company's Chief Engineer, Hiroshi Kowaki, and made in Japan, the Eclipse TD 512 represents a fundamentally different outlook to the conventional theory of loudspeaker design. Known as Time Domain technology the company explain it as "a return to first principles in determining the way in which we listen to music; the design, construction and build materials all depart radically from prevailing convention."

The design solves the inherent problems of phase and time distortion by substituting the traditional box cabinet for a stylish and solid ovoid enclosure and using only one high quality drive unit. This fibre-glass drive unit is actually mounted on a metal structure which forms part of the stand. This structure is also internally decoupled from the enclosure to eliminate

vibration. It's a startlingly different outlook to designing loudspeakers and one that gives equally startling results, as our review in this issue shows. The Eclipse TD 512s have the transparency and detail of an electrostatic design, with the superb imaging of a top point-source loudspeaker. It's one that all audiophiles will appreciate and they look absolutely fantastic in the home as well. They're simply one of the most different and exciting designs on the market today.

If you want to benefit from the enjoyment these radical loudspeakers could bring to your system, then here's your opportunity. Winning a pair of these fantastic products couldn't be easier. Simply answer the following questions on a postcard and send it to our address, at left, by February 28th. The first correct entry out of the bag will receive this superb prize.

Hi-Fi & Computer Audio World Competition rules and conditions of entry

1. Only one entry per house hold.
2. Multiple entries will be automatically disqualified.
3. Purchase of the magazine is not a pre-condition of entry.
4. No correspondence will be entered into.
5. The Editor's decision is final.
6. No employees of Audio Publishing Limited, or of any companies associated with the production or distribution of the prizes may enter.

As well as four dedicated dealers, Eclipse TD now have their own demonstration room in London where you can experience the 512 monitor in either two channel or a 5.1 configurations. Phone 0207 328 4499 for an appointment or check out www.eclipse-td.co.uk for details.

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Mrs. M Thompson of Aberdeen, in Scotland, the winner of our January competition.
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Designed to celebrate Musical Fidelity's twentieth anniversary, the new limited edition Tri-Vista series offers both audio excellence and value for money. The first products released are the Tri-Vista 300 Integrated Amplifier and the Tri-Vista CD/SACD Player, with the Tri-Vista Pre and Power Amplifiers following in 2003. According to Musical Fidelity the Tri-Vista "Produces stupendous performance... No stone has been left unturned in our efforts to make the Tri-Vista series absolutely the best it can be in circuitry and physical layout, build quality and aesthetics."



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World Radio History



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is a fine turntable, and it clearly reveals the benefits of listening to vinyl, with a rich and detailed soundstage, and a good dynamic response.

It's available in six funky colours, so you should find one to suit your decor, and at just a smidge over £100, you can have no excuse not to keep that old vinyl collection in employment for a good few years yet.

★★★★★ Awards 2000

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RCD-02 CD Player "Whether it's the raw, and sometimes just plain barking vocals of Tom Waits, or the stinging guitar stabs of Pete Townshend on some old Who tracks, the Rotel is one of those players that can't help but bring a smile to the face - it's a breath of fresh air."

★★★★★ September 2002

RA-02 Amplifier "The amp has a fast, detailed and yet satisfyingly full presentation. That allows it to make a fine job of the beats of Groove Armada's *Goodbye Century* set without losing sight of the fine details of the mix, and also husking out

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★★★★★ August 2002

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"The original Aegis Ones were great speakers, to the extent that they were category winners in our 1998 awards. Since then a host of new models have raised the standards in the sub-£200 category, and the Aegis Ones soon went from stunner to also ran. AE's response to that is an EVO version

The Aegis Ones genes are clearly evident. The original's refinement and bass weight are preserved and backed up with better openness and more free-flowing dynamic ability. The old speakers would have delivered a cool and calm version of Pink's *Missundaztood* set - they'd be enjoyable, but would lack a little drive and excitement. The new speakers, however, address those limitations. Add authority and good stereo imaging to the list of plus points and it comes as no surprise to find these speakers at home with classical, too. Indeed, running



through our test room's extensive CD library we couldn't find a genre that these AE's weren't happy playing."

★★★★★ July 2002

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DiVA CD82T "Arcam's latest sounds like a more mature version of its little brother. On an initial listen the increased solidity and refinement are obvious, but over time the subtler dynamic shading and more assured handling of transients come to the fore... The Arcam CD82T is one of the best CD players available at this price point." **WHAT HI-FI? ***** September 2002**

DiVA A85 "You'll have realised by now that we rather like this amp. It took us completely by surprise, and further strengthens Arcam's already impressive product range... The A85 is superb, and we can't wait to put it up against its peer in a group test." **WHAT HI-FI? ***** March 2001**



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PURE DIGITAL DRX-701ES Digital Tuner £249.95

This new tuner from the recently renamed Pure is based on the 2001 Award-winning Videologic DRX-601ES, but under the lid is an all-new third-generation digital radio engine, in the form of Frontier Silicon's Chorus FS1010. Its biggest advantages are lower energy consumption and above all cost - it's the major reason why the DRX-701ES is £100 less than last year's model.

The tuner uses 24-bit/192kHz conversion with 4x upsampling and data interpolation, and is powered by a low-noise toroidal transformer - such attention to sonic detail pays off. Digital outputs are provided



Also Available
Denon TU260L/II • £99.95

on electrical and optical feed, but most people will use the analogue out, and these sound very good indeed. As usual the tuner is subject to the signal quality off-air, but when it's fed from a high-quality outdoor aerial and a good signal it's capable of a crisp, powerful and detailed presentation. Even more populist music stations like Radio 6 benefit from the mix of a neutral balance and fine weight, while speech is also neutral and easy to follow... If you want a quality home tuner for digital radio, you need look no further." **WHAT HI-FI? ***** October 2002**

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World Radio History

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CD7Q CD Player £1149.95
8 Integrated Amplifier £799.95

Cyrus 7Q CD "How it compares directly (with the competition) is a matter for a group test, but I can tell you now that it'll be a close one, because the CD7Q is a fantastic CD Player, offering all you'd expect from a disc spinner at this price, and more... The CD7Q's a major upgrade from the class-leading CD7. Its weighty, detailed sound puts it at the pinnacle of CD players at this price." **WHAT HI-FI ***** July 2002**



Cyrus 8 Amplifier
"The 8 is a large step forward from older generations of Cyrus amplifiers, and takes the company back into the leading pack in the sub-£1000 integrated amp sector... The Cyrus 8 is a must-audition product." **WHAT HI-FI ***** January 2003**

ROKSAN

Kandy KA1 MKIII Amplifier £544.95

Free Interconnect Cable* Worth £100
When Any Roksan CD & Roksan Amplifier Purchased Together

"When we last reviewed Roksan's Kandy integrated amp in February it fought off serious competition to come top in a *Supertest*. This is its replacement, the MkIII. Internal changes include an upgraded power supply for the preamp section and identical mono modules for the left and right power amp sections. Roksan also claims 50 percent lower distortion on line-level inputs and a whopping 150 percent less on the phono input. The rated power output is an impressive 120 watts per channel into 8 ohms, and this amp has a confident, muscular way with music that bears this out. But don't be fooled into thinking this amp is raw but unrefined. With Van Morrison's *Down the Road* the Kandy has the guts to render the performance exciting and dynamic, but also the guile to deliver subtle details.



The upgraded Kandy MkIII is an excellent amp; the MkII version was impressive, but MkIII is a stunner. It betters all the amps here in the timing department, and has a wonderfully robust character that works well with all types of music. It manages to retain the good points of the MkII while adding extra resolution and subtlety. All the amps here have a place in the market. It's just that at £550 the Kandy really does set the pace." **WHAT HI-FI ***** October 2002**



Free Speaker Cable* worth £50
with **ALL** Speakers over £280

QUAD

11L Speakers £379.95

"Quad is best known for its superlative electrostatic designs, which start at £3500. So any £379 pair of speakers that carries the company's name has to be going some to avoid tarnishing the family reputation. The first surprise is that the 11Ls come in real-wood veneers covered with piano-gloss lacquer. This type of finish is almost unheard of at the £1000 mark, let alone at this price. Has anything been sacrificed for such a luxury finish? Here's the second surprise: apparently not



The final surprise? Well, saving the best for the last, the sound quality of the 11Ls is phenomenally good. These are small speakers at just 33cm tall, but the scale and authority of their performance is terrific. The laws of physics dictate bass extension limitations, but thanks to a clever dual rear firing port arrangement the 11Ls plumb the depths with the determination of a rottweiler, even when placed in free space

If you're in the market for a pair of top quality standmounters these Quads are a must listen. Quite simply, they're good enough to scare the competition big time." **WHAT HI-FI ***** August 2002**



Speaker Selection

Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo Three.....	£349.95
B&W CDM 1NT.....	£749.95
B&W CDM 7NT.....	£1249.95
B&W DM303.....	£179.95
B&W DM601 S3.....	£249.95
Cyrus CLS70 (Black).....	£799.95
KEF Q1.....	£249.95
KEF Q3.....	£399.95
Linn Katan (Maple).....	£634.95
Linn Ninka (Maple).....	£894.95
Mission 780.....	£249.95
Mission 782.....	£599.95
Mission m71i.....	£119.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 10.....	£799.95
Monitor Audio Gold Reference 20.....	£1499.95
Ruark Epilogue II.....	£344.95
Wharfedale 8.1.....	£99.95

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page four

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World Radio History





MUSICAL FIDELITY A3.2 Series

A3.2 CD Player £999.95
A3.2 Amplifier £979.95

Replacing the **WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION** Award Winning A3 CD and Amplifier, the new A3.2 models have been further refined and re-styled. The A3.2 CD Player now incorporates the same DAC, filter assembly and control mechanism as the highly-acclaimed Nu-Vista CD Player. The A3.2 Amplifier draws on experience gained through the development of the Nu-Vista M3 amplifier and as such has inherited many of its qualities, producing a sense of ease and flexibility that is normally only associated with far more expensive designs.

Free Interconnect Cable* Worth £150

When Any Musical Fidelity CD & Musical Fidelity Amplifier Purchased together



MONITOR AUDIO Silver S6 Speakers £599.95

Free Speaker Cable* worth £70 with ALL Speakers over £500

British loudspeaker manufacturer Monitor Audio has introduced a replacement series for its acclaimed and award winning Silver Series speakers. "The aim has been to offer real advances in performance and value", says technical director Dean Hartley. "New models include the S1 and S2 standmounters, the S6, S8 and S10 floorstanders.



Also Available Gold Reference GR10 & GR20

"With a close-miked track such as James Taylor's *Line 'Em Up* from SACD they really deliver the character of the singer's voice and they're just as expressive with the cultured rhythms of Groove Armada's latest outing, having just the right mix of rhythmic control and fluidity... But amazingly the best is yet to come: these are simply beautiful speakers for classical music, once a few days' thrashing has tamed their initial rawness. With the latest release of Holst's *The Planets* on DVD-Audio, they thunder out *Mars* with true conviction.

These are rather magical speakers, with a poise and grace that belies their ability to turn on the power when required. Pair them with a good CD player and suitably accomplished amp, and you won't go far wrong."

★★★★★ October 2002

Pioneer PDR609 CD-RW Recorder £199.95



Also Available Marantz DR6000 CD Recorder • £299.95

"While it looks simple, the Pioneer has an impressive array of features, including the handy double-speed disc finalization and CD-Text compatibility. Internally, the PDR609 is a big step up from the Award-winning PDR-509 it replaced. The DAC is now a 24-bit/96kHz number, aided and abetted by Pioneer's Legato Link conversion technology, and it has 24-bit A-to-D conversion, which is ideal for copying your vinyl onto CD. If this is your plan, you'll appreciate that the Pioneer makes it easy to create first-rate copies from any source, helped by the manual recording-level controls. It was hard to tell our copy of Jim White's *No Such Place* from the original.

While the Pioneer's replay quality can't match the Marantz, it costs £120 less, which would buy you a lot of blank discs. If you've already got a dedicated CD player, we'd go with this recorder."

★★★★★ August 2001

Recorder Selection

- Marantz DR6000 CD-RW.....£299.95
- Sony MDS-JE770 MiniDisc.....£219.95
- Yamaha KX393 Cassette Deck.....£109.95
- Yamaha KX580SE Cassette Deck.....£179.95
- Yamaha CDR-HD1300 CD-RW.....£549.95



pricing policy

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World Radio History

Sale

Free Interconnect Cable* Worth £150
When TAG AV30R & TAG 100x5R Purchased Together



AV30R AV Processor £1799.95
100x5R Power Amplifier £2994.95

TAG McLaren's AV30R AV Processor is aimed at the home cinema enthusiast who is concerned with keeping up-to-date with the latest surround formats. When partnered with TAG's 100x5R Power Amplifier it makes an exceptional combination.

According to What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision magazine in their October 2002 issue: "In use, the AV30R, connected to TAG's 100x5R power amp, is superb. True, it can't quite match the clarity and power of the latest-specification TAG flagship, the AV32Rbp-192, but by any AV standard this is a very high-end piece of kit, with excellent impact and fine detail across a range of movie soundtracks from Once Upon A Time In America to the explosive actionfests. Channel steering is immaculate, and the sense of a soundfield wrapped around you - even in 5.1-channel mode - entrancing, with spine-tingling rear-channel effects.

The fine Pro Logic II implementation serves music as well as it does non-discrete AV soundtracks, and with an SACD machine hooked up via the 5.1 channel inputs, the lack of coloration and sheer bass oomph is extraordinary." **What Hi-Fi? ★★★★★ October 2002**



ACOUSTICS



Pro 50 Subwoofer (Black) £299.95
Pro 100 Subwoofer (Black) £599.95

M.I Acoustics is a new company based in Cambridgeshire. During the past year, they have received favourable reviews across their product range. The Pro 50 was awarded 'Best Buy' by What Hi-Fi Sound and Vision in their 2002 awards. "This is a black satin finished miniature sub that nevertheless packs in a 20cm long-throw driver and a 50w MOSFET amp designed for good power reserves even at high levels... And it sounds great: whether with the floorshaking basslines of dance music, the slam of rock or an orchestral swell, when correctly set-up, the Pro 50 provides a subtle underpinning even of big loudspeakers. The bass it delivers is well extended and tightly controlled with both music and movies, giving a subjective impression of greater clarity across the frequency range, the added low-end complemented by better midband focus. It's truly thrilling stuff."

What Hi-Fi? ★★★★★ Awards 2002

Claim £120 Off The Speakers* of your choice when purchased at the same time as the Linn Classik Music System - Minimum Value £200

Claim £250 Off • The Speakers* of your choice when purchased at the same time as the Linn Classik Movie System - Minimum Value £500



What Hi-Fi? Awards 2001 BEST BUY

Systems Best Buy £1000 plus

LINN
Linn Classik
Music System £999.95

The Classik Music System is an alternative to the sound and looks of mass market compact systems. Designed to be useful throughout the home, the Classik is simple and stylish with all the advanced features needed to satisfy the most demanding hi-fi enthusiast or discriminating music lover.



Classik • Movie System
£1999.95

"Since the Scottish company added a tuner to the amp/CD player, mouths have gaped even wider in appreciation. The addition of colour options panders to the public's taste for kit to match their interior design, but it doesn't just look lovely in the lounge: the Classik sounds simply marvellous. Boasting fine impact and drive, it retains its grip even as it thumps out rock and dance tracks. Ask it to play quiet acoustic music and its smooth, liquid presentation impresses still further. The Classik offers the performance you'd expect from high quality separates in one lovely package - this is a very superior product." **What Hi-Fi? ★★★★★ Awards 2001**

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With 48 outlets nationwide, the Sevenoaks Sound & Vision group stock and display a wide range of products. As individual models and product ranges are changed or superseded the preceding models are made available at a reduced price for clearance. Visit our Website for an up-to-date list of the clearance stock, listed by outlet within the Sevenoaks Sound and Vision group

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MAXIMUM INPUT



As the world moves headlong to DVD, Quad believe there's life left in the Compact Disc. Simon Pope reviews their new 99 CD-P CD player.

The CD player is nearing extinction out on the high street: DVD players are taking over. But whilst the budget end of high fidelity accepts DVD into its bosom, things are a little different higher up, where people with a few bob to rub together still want and need a good quality CD player to get the best from their music collection, something DVD is notoriously poor at doing. Sure, there are numerous high end, great performing DVD-A and SACD players but there's still a market for well-

built CD players, despite industry infatuation with DVD. There are plenty of players around able to get the best from CD and many believe there is more yet to achieve.

This is certainly the opinion of hi-fi stalwarts Quad, as they launch their latest CD player in the compact form of the 99 CD-P. The chances of success for yet another £1,000 CD player would perhaps seem a little scarce. When it comes to both build and sound quality, competition is stronger than the whiff from a French cheese stall. Unwanted bedfellows in this market are

Meridian, Arcam and Exposure, all with superb players.

Ideally, Quad should offer all or most of what these players have but some addition to win over buyers. This is exactly what Quad have achieved with the 99 CD-P.

Whilst the CD-P directly replaces the cheaper 99 Series player it also offers a whole load more. OK, so the aluminium case is the same, but that's all. One big difference is that the CD-P has an on-board power supply. This wasn't the case with the old 99 player, which could only be connected to the 99 system



and used the Quad-link connection for output. Quad were never going to sell shedloads of these with that kind of compatibility

The other main differences are obvious by a peek at the back panel. Firstly, I found two sets of stereo outputs. One of these is fixed whilst the other is variable, meaning that a preamp is not strictly necessary, since a straight connection into a power amp is possible, making for a tidy system with a great sound.

What if you use other digital sources and wish to switch between them without the need for getting off the sofa and mucking around with interconnects? It's plain sailing. Quad have integrated a number of digital inputs into the player. A total of six possible digital sources can be accommodated: three coaxial and three Toslink optical inputs.

Now you may be wondering just how many digital sources you need. This brings into focus yet another handy feature of the CD-P. It features a new 24/192 Crystal DAC (the old 99 player was 18-bit) with two times upsampling. So connect up a digital recorder, DAB tuner or anything with a digital output (such as a Sky Digibox) and, hey presto, you have

vastly improved sound for the cost of a single interconnect.

Add to this the fact that the CD-P uses the top spec. three-laser transport from Philips (as used in much more expensive players) and you really do have one of the most unassuming looking bits of gear on the market containing the most useful features.

The highly ingenious design is similar in theory to the likes of Musical Fidelity's CD24 CD player and preamplifier, although the CD-P isn't designed to offer a full preamp service, but rather offers the digital inputs and variable gain output as a useful bonus.

The appearance of this player may not be to everyone's taste but it's inoffensive, usefully small and very well built. It also comes with a comprehensive remote which includes functions such as volume control and source switching.

So, the CD-P offers plenty of goodies and extras for your money, but how does it compare when it comes to sound quality?

For my listening I used primarily an all-Quad system using the company's cracklingly secure-sounding and powerful (and yet again

unassuming) 140 watts per channel 909 power amp and a pair of ESL-988 electrostatics with the option of REL Quake for low bass duties. The power amplifier was swapped around for offerings from Exposure and Cyrus and also a pair of 300B single-ended triode monoblocks. The 988s shared duties with their stable mates, the 11L standmounts.

As well as being a superbly useful bit of kit, the CD-P also sounds the business and is up there with the best in the bracket. Like Meridian's players, the CD-P sound concentrates on overall smoothness married with detail, as opposed to mere speed and attack. But it's also big – far bigger than you'd somehow imagine – stretching the sound stage throughout the room in terms of both width and depth.

Massive Attack's 'Mezzanine' was first in the drawer and the opening bass pulse of 'Angel' immediately grabbed my attention. At the track's guitar-driven climaxes I noticed that although played at fairly high levels, the CD-P still had a good grip over the music and not once did it err on the harsh side. It was smooth and enjoyable, yet big and bold: very impressive. Superb detail was





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revealed in the track 'Inertia Creeps', where the closely mic'd drums delivered an exact and frighteningly lifelike sound that leaped out from the electrostatics with lightning speed.

So once the old Quad tag – that their products only sound good with classical – was proved wrong yet again I moved onto some classical music. Two vastly differing discs of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, Fauré's string quartet and a compilation of twentieth century organ music showed that the CD-P was nigh impossible to trip up. Bass in Messiaen's awesome organ pieces was full and earth-shakingly deep, the strings in the Fauré were sweet and detailed and the impossibly overwhelming final five minutes of Mahler's Eighth Symphony remained together - which is more than I did as I leapt around the room ecstatically wielding my knitting needle

baton.

The CD-P has the knack of not only sounding full and warm but also being able to capture intricacies and nuances that other players can't muster. Miles Davis' 'Kind Of Blue' demonstrated that the Quad can pick up on subtleties such as brush strokes on a drum skin and the flow of breath down a trumpet. However, this kind of detail is never there in a kind of sterile or demonstrative way. It's simply part of the music. The Quad picks up on the atmosphere and communicative effects of a recording as well as just the notes and rhythms.

This player is an absolute gem and I could tell that a lot of work and thought has gone into its design. It's a superb music maker (as opposed to a mere player). Whilst it may not have the ultimate sheen and luxurious sound of Meridian's £1,200 507 it comes within a hair's breadth

of it. The sound is incredibly easy going yet suited to all types of music and recordings. It offers a good deal of detail, enough to make it truly high end quality.

As far as faults are concerned, it's very hard indeed to find any. If I were being over critical, then perhaps someone used to the attack and bite of a player such as the Naim CD5 may want a bit more from the CD-P. Overall, though, it's a hugely likeable product which as well as offering some of the best sounds under a grand also offers a veritable treasure trove of facilities. Highly recommended.

Quad 99 CD-P £999

Quad Electroacoustics
Tel: +44 (0)1480 447700
www.quad-hifi.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

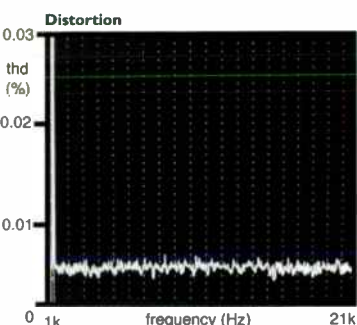
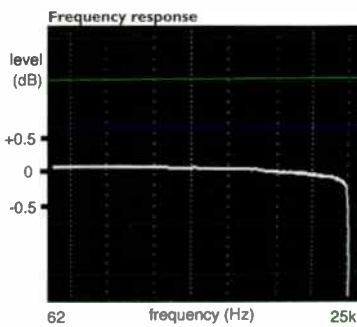
As you'd expect from Quad, this player's frequency response has a gentle slope down toward high frequencies, ensuring there's none of the glassiness or bright edge that comes with either a ruler flat response or high frequency lift. All the same, the upper response limit measured 20.75kHz (-1dB), which is as far as CD goes, giving the new 99 CD-P a figure comparable with most other players. A response like this will provide a smooth sound that's a little less challenging than many Far East products.

Distortion was well suppressed at all signal levels. With CD, digital converter non-linearities start to show up at -60dB or so, as fewer bits are available to describe the signal and precision becomes critical. The Quad was as linear as possible, within 16bit precision, throughout the range, producing no discernible harmonics at -30dB and small amounts of quantisation noise at -60dB that gave a low 0.3%

distortion figure. Down at -90dB a dithered signal came in at just 2.6% distortion, a very low value.

With healthy output at 2.3V, low noise and very wide EIAJ dynamic range (111dB) the new Quad CD measures well in all areas. It should sound clean and smooth. **NK**

Frequency response		5Hz-20.75kHz	
	left	right	
Distortion			
-6dB	0.004	0.004	
-30dB	0.005	0.005	
-60dB	0.32	0.34	
-90	3	2.6	
Separation	left	right	
1kHz	-116	-117	
20kHz	-91	-92	
Noise		-112dB	
Dynamic range		-111dB	
Output		2.3V	



World Verdict 
A great buy, the unassuming CD-P is a fine sounding player with an amazingly wide range of features.

BEAUTIFUL STRANGER



Simon Pope stands agog at the stunning looking Shanling CDT-100 CD player. But will it sound as good as it looks, he asks?

This exquisite bit of hi-fi esoterica comes from the People's Republic of China. Over here it costs £1,650. I've seen stuff of this build quality on retailers' shelves for no less than £5,000. That's what ball park you're in here, build wise. Quad has proved it can be done with their latest ranges of quality products, the latest of which shares the pages of this very issue. Shanling puts it beyond reasonable doubt. And the two have more in common than you'd think, as both hail from factories in the Shenzhen area of China – just inland from Hong Kong.

As soon as you open the box you get extras by the dozen: a free sampler HDCD, an audiophile standard power lead – even a pair of white gloves for budding snooker refs! This gives you some indication of what to expect in the machine itself.

Firstly, you'll notice four stunningly positioned valves. Two of these 6N3P triodes are for one of

the two variable output stages of the CDT-100 and the other two are reserved for the headphone output, the socket of which you'll find on the right hand side. In front of the valves is the stylish acrylic cover that secures the disc onto the top loading mechanism using a Philips CDM 1201 transport. When switched on, this glows a magnificent, eerie blue, which along with the illuminated valves makes for the best CD player to use with the lights off...ever!

Four basic control buttons are featured atop the chassis along with three transformers and a choke filter that make up the four lumps to the rear of the player. Inside the sleek yet solid case are two Burr Brown PCM 1704 DACs per channel, a Pacific Microsonics chip for HDCD replay and top spec Crystal semiconductors. These are devices found in much more expensive machines. Getting the picture?

At the rear there are two sets of stereo outputs – one 'direct' solid state and the other a valve output. A preamp section, should you wish to

keep it minimal, can therefore be bypassed. There's also a single digital phono output.

The well built remote (reminiscent of that supplied with the top Marantz models) controls all of the functions, including the gain. The 24/96 upsampling is controlled by the remote and when an HDCD disc is played the blue upsampling light switches over to the HDCD recognition LED. Putting a disc on the player is a very manual deal; you have to physically lift up the acrylic 'platter' and plop the disc down on the hub.

Initially I played around with the various outputs and filters and the best sound (of a very good bunch, incidentally) came with the valve output and the upsampling filter switched on. Sensing that the player could be something special I pulled out all the stops and went straight for the HFW 'simple but effective' reference system which consists of direct connection from the variable output straight into our World Audio Design 300B parallel single-ended monoblocks (stuffed full of

interesting components to boot) and a pair of Quad ESL-988 electrostatics.

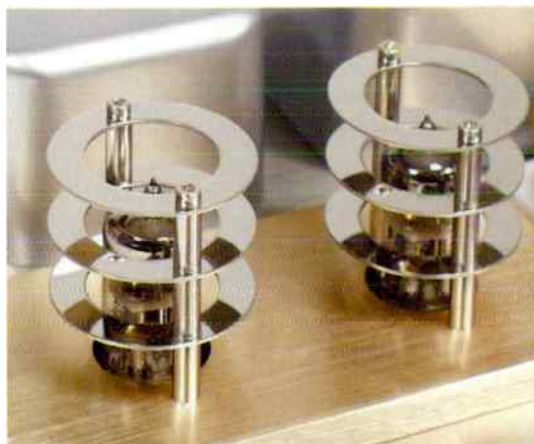
The CDT-100 proved worthy of such rich partnering. Immediately I was hit with a fast yet supremely smooth and big sound that's rare with similarly priced players (with perhaps the exception of Quad and Meridian). Wally Brill's mesmerising mix of Jewish canting and break beats, The Covenant (distributed in the UK from Discovery Records – go buy it now!) had amazing purity in the modal vocal lines and an overall richness that took it well into high end territory. Bass was very firm and tight, midrange well detailed and the treble as smooth as a newly bathed baby's bottom. Comparing to one of our reference Sony SACD players (the similarly priced 555ES) made the Japanese sound like a dentist drill – and it's a very good player indeed. This also means that the valve output stage of the Shanling is very warm and smooth – but that's surely no bad thing with CD?

Stick on a high quality audiophile disc such as the Reference Recordings version of Mahler's *das Lied von der Erde* conducted by Eije Oue and you'll get a heady mix of

smoothness and fine detail. Whilst not as deep and three dimensional as some (very) high-end players the CDT-100 has a natural and large sound stage that also has fine space and transparency. Violins, even in the dubious Mahlerian high registers, were sweet and sinuous and the exposed woodwind passages were gloriously transparent.

The key to this player's sonic ability through the valve stage is that it still manages to retain resolution, detail and rhythmic speed whilst possessing supreme smoothness. Like a good valve amp it has lots of natural timbre with instruments – there's none of the grey transparency you'll find with other CD players. As an added bonus the player's valve headphone stage is also hugely impressive, with an open and spacious sound. It will have you ignoring the missus for many an hour.

This is a cracking product. It sounds wonderful and gets towards the big, analogue sound of the superb but expensive Wadia players. OK, so it's a little warm, but it's still well detailed and the direct output has a little more kick and edge to the sound for those who crave those traits.



Then factor in that this player is simply stunning looking and superbly put together and you have one very tempting package indeed – it should be very near the top of anyone's audition list for any type of digital player at the price.

The CDT-100 is simply one of the best sounding, superbly built and certainly the most stunning looking CD players on the market. Competitors watch out – this is a serious warning shot from the East!

Shanling CDT-100 £1650.00

Real Hi-Fi
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MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Shanling CD T 100 has a slow roll off in its frequency response and some filter ringing at high frequencies our analysis shows. It will likely sound a little warm as a result. Upsampling smooths things out a little though.

Distortion levels were high by modern standards. At –30dB, a typical average music level on CD, a figure of 0.12% distortion was produced, around six times higher than usual. At –60dB the picture was the same, with 0.9%, against a modern norm. of 0.3%. However, the player did resolve a –90dB signal correctly. The sound of this player is likely to be a little sharpened or hardened by the extended distortion pattern it produces, and it may lack the smoothness of more modern players. Upsampling did not affect distortion behaviour, nor did the valve stage.

Output measured a healthy 2.27V, with a little less from the valve, probably because it is a

cathode follower line driver with a gain less than one. Channel separation was acceptable at –80dB and noise was satisfactorily low at –97dB, all reasonable figures; the valve stage inserted just a little measured hum, but at an inaudible level.

Dynamic range was limited to 105dB by the –60dB distortion result.

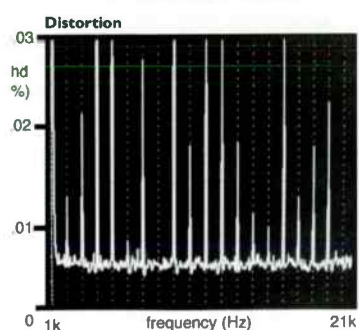
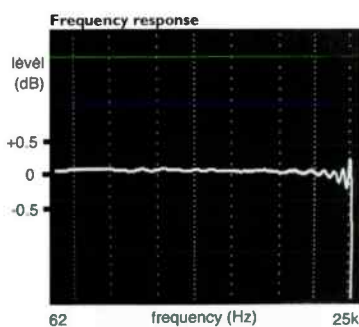
The Shanling measures normally, except for high distortion, which is a pity. **NK**

Frequency response
5Hz-21.25kHz

Distortion	left	right
-6dB	0.003	0.003
-30dB	0.12	0.13
-60dB	0.9	0.9
-90	8	9

Separation	left	right
1kHz	-80	-83
20kHz	-82	-82

Noise	-97dB
Dynamic range	105dB
Output	2.3V



World Verdict £

A high end sound and look for sensible money. The Chinese-made Shanling is well put together and an all-round class act.

THE LOST



The latest piece of gorgeously styled hi-fi esoterica from Chord Electronics hits the retailers' shelves. Alan Sircom listens to the CPM2600 'entry level' integrated amplifier.

Here's a quick tip how to make one of the finest integrated amplifiers money can buy. Make an extremely well respected range of pre and power amplifiers, take two of these and plonk them in the same box. Sounds too easy? Well, you need to have the world-class pre and power amps to begin with...

Chord Electronics' 'entry level' integrated amplifier takes the already well loved CPA600 line level preamplifier and adds a SPM600 power amp all in the same case. Aside from sharing the same power supply and obviating the need for a set of interconnects between the pre and power amplifiers, there's only a few differences between the separate components and this one-box wonder.

The CPM2600 has six line inputs (four single-ended phono inputs, two XLR balanced inputs each with corresponding asymmetrically wired phono inputs for good measure) all with adjustable input gain, to prevent one source sounding significantly louder than its counterparts. It also has two sets of phono outputs for

tape loops, and a pair of phono sockets for main outputs to an external power amplifier should they be needed. Two pairs of beefy WBT speaker terminals complete the back panel line up. It delivers a healthy 120watts into an 8ohm load, which is claimed to rise to 170watts into 4ohms. Add to that excellent distortion and channel separation claims and the suggestion of a better than -103dB signal-to-noise ratio and the CPM2600 has a spec sheet of doom! All this is fitted into a compact case thanks to Chord's switch mode power supply. The case does have rear mounted heatsinks and side bars that increase the bulk of the amplifier but the main chassis is the size of a record sleeve and is only 100mm or so high if you remove the feet.

Chord has designed most of its range to feature a couple of different options when it comes to legs and end cheeks. This model sports the very natty Integra legs, two Red Bull sized cylinders on either side of the main amplifier with three little sub feet on the undersized and matching indents on the top. This means if you plan on stacking this underneath a Chord DAC, the two sit snugly

together. This adds a further £540 to the basic £3,500 asking price, but also seems to make the amplifier more solidly built than ever.

And that is saying something! This amplifier is built to survive anything the average audiophile will throw at it, unless the average audiophile has taken up listening while falling down stairs. The casing and what lies beneath are hewn from dense stuff indeed; nothing flexes, nothing gives and it feels like you could jump up and down on it and the only thing that would suffer is shoe leather. Add to that, the CPM2600's short, squat looks and a remote control that looks like an alloy ingot with buttons and the whole look takes on the sort of purposeful composure of a Bull Terrier.

Somewhere down the line, audiophiles and studio folk diverged; the audiophile thinks the studio engineer is a Neanderthal who takes pleasure in setting faders to kill, while the engineer thinks of the average hi-fi buff as an obsessive with a pointless rich-mans hobby. It's products like Chord (and PMC) that show we are both really aiming at the same goal; reproducing the best

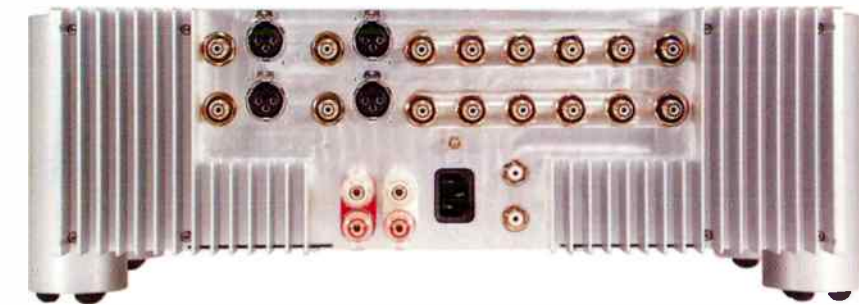
CHORD?

possible recorded music, whether in the home or in the studio. In both cases, what is patently needed is headroom; the Chord has so much musical headroom that nothing phases it at all. Play Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan at whisper levels and follow it up with Mahler's Eighth at such a lick that wisps of smoke appear from the ports of your speakers and the Chord just replays what comes out of the CD player's phonos as accurately as possible.

Despite its bruiser appeal, this is a remarkably subtle performer when the music dictates. Of course, it also has the power and ability to cope with grand scale music and the energy to play nice subtle stuff like The Datsuns' 'MF From Hell' at the sort of levels such a pleasant track deserves.

There is nothing jaw-dropping about the Chord CPM2600's performance. It doesn't make an immediate impression; instead, you gradually come to realise that the amplifier is just that bit more honest than almost any other you have heard, in whatever aspect you notice it.

For me, its imagery was first to creep into my psyche, with a sound just a bit more holographic and three



dimensional than I have heard, regardless of what speakers were used. Then the speaker seemed to be a bit more smoothed out – if it had an artificial boost in the frequency response, that would still be there, but it seemed to be less important than before.

After this the amplifier's detail started to strike home; it's only slightly more detailed than almost everything you've heard.

Last - and in a rush - came its improved transparency, vocal articulation, dynamics and the rest.

Interestingly, I had a brief chance to experience the Chord next to the Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista integrated. Both have similar price tags and similar on-paper performance, but behave very differently to one another. Although they have lots of common sound cues, it seems as if the MF is ruled by the heart and the

Chord by the head. Music is a more cerebral experience through the Chord and has less of the impassioned tonality of the MF, but of the two, the Chord is the one that probably gets closer to what the sound was like in the studio.

For your money you get an amplifier that is as solid as military hardware (at a pinch, you could dig trenches with the remote), sounds remarkable and is about as trouble-free as you are ever going to get in hi-fi. It's the pre/power combinations at this price that seem like poor value once you've tried the Chord CPM2600.

Chord Electronics CPM2600 £3,500
(Integra barrels £540)

Chord Electronics
Tel: +44 01622 721444
www.chordelectronics.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The Chord looks purposeful and it delivers plenty of power to back this up, producing 128watts into 8ohms. This figure increases substantially to 196watts into 4ohms and since most loudspeakers now are close to this value it's what's most users would get in practice. This is plenty enough to drive modern loudspeakers to high volume in all except the largest rooms.

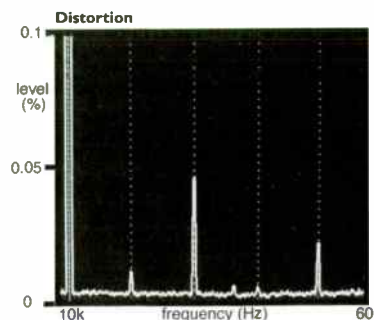
Under all circumstances the distortion pattern of this amplifier was dominated by odd order harmonics, comprising mainly third and fifth. Levels hovered around

0.05% at low powers, some slight increase occurring as current draw rose into low loads. Near to full output at 10kHz distortion rose to around 0.1% into a 4ohm load. The Chord has a steady distortion pattern, which is good in the sense it did not modulate much with level and load, but may well impart a sheen to the sound.

The SPM 2600 is powerful, and likely to have a bright sheen to its sound. **NK**

Power 128watts

CD/tuner/aux.	
Frequency response	4Hz-66kHz
Separation	80dB
Noise	-93dB
Distortion	0.06%
dc offset	1mV



World Verdict 
An integrated amplifier to savour, with the most honest sound around. Not cheap, but impeccably crafted.

SMALL BLESSINGS

Noel Keywood listens to the latest high quality miniature 'speaker to hit the retailers, the Sendor S3.

There's always a place for a high quality miniature and traditionally Sendor have had a product to occupy this niche. Since 1986 their version of the small BBC monitor, LS-3/5a has sold well around the world, gathering a good reputation. The S3, available for around £600, is its spiritual successor, designed to appeal to anyone in the market for high fidelity, but without the intrusion. A design like this answers the common plea: why do loudspeakers have to be so large? Or that's the idea. Whether any small 'speaker really can do what a big one does is very doubtful, but that's not to say a high quality miniature can be anything other than very impressive, especially when it comes to imaging - as Mission's m70 and 780 demonstrate so well.

A lot has changed in loudspeaker design since Sendor first set out, although the improvements are not visible. Computer aided cabinet and crossover design has removed much of the theory and prototype donkey work necessary to design and build a loudspeaker. It has improved consistency and raised overall standards. As a result, today's small loudspeakers are difficult to better, but I notice the beginnings of a trend back to infinite baffle (i.e. sealed cabinet) loading of drive units in an attempt to improve bass quality - and Sendor have surprisingly used it in the little S3.

Sendor have gone down the IB path with the S3, producing a miniature with really compact dimensions of 165mm wide, 190mm deep and 305mm high and, of course - no reflex port. You might think this

means the S3 can be pushed up hard against a wall as a result - and it can. There's no port to start chuffing away against the wall, but as the company point out in their instructions, all loudspeakers sound cleaner and clearer away from a wall. With a weight of 4.7kg these speakers won't strain a shelf, that's for sure - and that is where many may well end up I suspect, for there's not much point in buying a small loudspeaker then putting it on a stand out in the room.

Our measurements show Sendor have done a good job in getting this tiny speaker to work right down to 40Hz, the lower limit of most instruments, except a few like big acoustic double bass and organ. This is impressive for such a small box - especially a sealed one.

For this review I substituted the

clean and solid sounding Roksan in this month's group test for my usual Cyrus 7 with PSX, just to ensure I had enough power on tap. My 300B push-pull was also hooked up and sounded balanced and sweet, but like so many insensitive miniatures the S3 really needs more than the 28watts of this amp to make it really sound fast, tight and clean.

For bass quality and depth I turned to the Angelique Kidjo's Houngbati, with its striding bass line. Emphasised in the mix, the bass line in this track usually dominates and can even sound a bit overpowering. The S3s certainly gave a clean and tightly controlled take on the performance, but it was restrained in terms of sheer power. Tight and resonant, like a taut drum skin, the S3s do very well for their size but they are restrained. With a clean



DVD-A track like The Corrs 'Breathless' there was a better sense of clarity and precision that comes from 24/96; the S3s conveyed these properties well. Again, the strong bass line that kicks in was dry, well wrought but low on real power. With a track like this the S3s come over as basically detailed and analytical, with plenty of activity from the tweeter up in the higher registers. Dynamic contrasts were muted and this tended to make the S3s sound a bit flat, no matter how I goaded them by turning up the volume.

Low colouration made vocals sound clean and natural enough, if a little light and shallow in their portrayal. Things She Said from Toy Matinee's DVD-A had harmonies well spread between the speakers and Kevin Gilbert's lead vocals cleanly wrought, but the overall picture lacked weight and ease of delivery; the S3s lack fluidity and can sound strained if pushed.

Small loudspeakers image well and here the Spondors were as good as most, if not a match for Missions and Mordaunt Shorts, whose contoured fascias provide a sense of cohesion, by suppressing surface wave effects, that few currently match. All the same, the small Spondors were very good in this area, giving a wide spread of sound with plenty of detail and insight into events.

Violins were brightly lit and

vividly portrayed across a range of recordings, from CD to DVD-A. The tweeter's contribution is pronounced and highly specific right across its operating range, and with classical works it gave violin some prominence. A clean midband and tight bottom-end brought credibility to Ashkenazy's piano in his playing of Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No4, although there wasn't the fulsome bass weight that larger speakers reveal but then, that's a drawback of a miniature. With classical music in general I found the S3s came over as truthful and revealing.

In today's competitive and well stocked loudspeaker marketplace there are plenty of superb designs, especially at the lower end of the scale where demand is greatest. KEF have their excellent coaxial Uni-Qs, Wharfedale and Quad are busy and effective, Mordaunt-Short currently have their lovely 912s and Mission have always set the agenda for everyone else. The market today isn't what it was a decade or more ago and within it the S3 doesn't, in my view, possess any convincing advantages. It is well engineered and thoroughly competent, and it does possess



greater accuracy and less colouration than a lot of similarly sized rivals, but it also has a rather hard tonality that isn't exactly beguiling. It's an interesting, well made and accurate miniature, but whether it can really justify such a price tag in the face of today's effective competition I somehow doubt.

Spendor S3 £600

Spendor Ltd.
Tel: 01323 843474
www.spendor.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

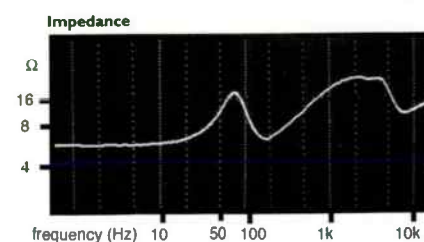
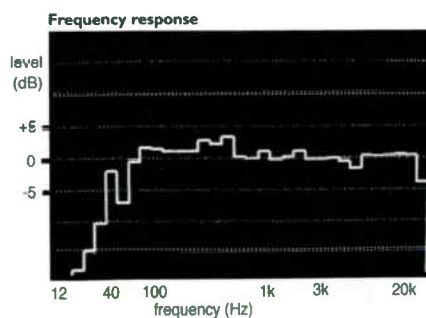
Our response analysis of the Spendor S3 reveals an unusually smooth characteristic, right up to 16kHz. This suggests very low colouration and low overhang too (i.e. time domain smear). All of which suggests the S3 will sound very clean, as well as accurate of course. It will also sound quite bright but very detailed, due to extended treble and complete absence of a crossover suckout.

Low frequency output extends down to 40Hz and rolls off below this. Like all IBs the S3 cuts off clean and fast at low frequencies; it will display cleaner, better damped bass than a reflex, although without some of the sense of depth.

The S3 has an easy impedance

curve, mostly unreactive and with a high overall value of 9ohms. Unfortunately, the downside of both this, and smallness, is a really low sensitivity of 81dB. The S3 needs lots of volts to go loud and is likely to be limited in how loud it can go as well. It is for small rooms, but big amplifiers of around 100W.

The Spendor S3 is a high quality miniature, best for those who want a fast, accurate sound in a small room. **NK**



World Verdict

Well built and tight sounding but the competition is very tough and the Spendor's can't quite deliver like the top flight models.

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letters & emails

Letter of the month

OLD SCHOOL REQUIRES NEW STAFF

Having sold all my hi-fi to afford children (I know it's a poor swap!) several years ago I found myself longing for my old Garrard 401, Decca Gold, Croft Pre and Radford STA 25 valve amplification/vinyl set-up. Then I saw an interesting amplifier on eBay for sale called an AMC CVT3030. Not knowing much about it, an internet search flagged up your website and review of said valve/mosfet hybrid amplifier! To cut a long story short it was ideal. It looked like my stand-in NAD 3020i, the kids couldn't burn themselves on the valves and the cooling fans meant that it would go in the hi-fi support stand - plus it almost sounded like a valve amp.

I have the following system built around the amp: AR EB101 turntable (recent eBay acquisition) with ARCAM C77 cartridge (new stylus bought in '93 and never used), Marantz CD52 II, Denon TU215-RD RDS tuner and Technics RDS-AZ6 three-head cassette deck.

The CVT fires up a pair of QED silver anniversary bi-wired Tannoy 603 bookshelf speakers. The question is what next? I have a Nagaoka MPI I with new stylus I sourced from your trade pages. Is this better than the C77 or should I dump both and get a better MM cartridge? Or perhaps I should go the whole hog and get a headamp /phono stage so that I can use an MC cartridge with the CVT3030?

Finally, we are extending the listening room from 12ft square to 12ft x 16ft and I wondered whether larger 'speakers will be warranted. As you have gathered I'm into second-hand and was considering the bigger boxes from Tannoy such as the 609 or 611. Your advice will be most welcome.

Paul Bates
Wakefield
West Yorkshire

Well, you've got yourself a pretty well balanced system, despite the rather 'roundabout' way you've done it! The AMC CVT3030 is an interesting product for sure, and is probably

as close as you'll get to a 'valve version' of your old NAD3020. It's a good mid-price amp with plenty of power (all things considered) and a nice, airy, sweet sound. Allied to your AR EB101 turntable, which is a very respectable budget design and your Tannoy 603 speakers, of which the same thing can also be said, it should be making great music.

The question of cartridges is a tricky one. The A&R C77 is a feisty, bouncy performer with a nice rich low end that you simply don't get from the likes of Audio Technica's otherwise excellent AT110E rival. The Nagaoka MPI I was a 1980s rival to the Arcam, offering a little more finesse and treble detailing at the expense of the aforementioned C77's grunt. All in all, much of a muchness, then.

Frankly, I'd invest in a new cartridge. Pickups have come an awful long way since 1978 when the A&R was introduced (or 1981 when the Nagaoka was born), and any upgrade would breathe fresh air through the whole system. Sadly though you're not going to get a secondhand bargain in this instance - I'd urge you to think very strongly before you buy used cartridges from eBay or anywhere else. To wit, look around for the cheapest Goldring G1042 you can find - if you're lucky you should be able to get one for £90. This would add tremendous grip, slam and focus to your records, as well as producing a high, phono preamplifier-friendly, output for maximum dynamic performance.

This done, I'd suggest a speaker upgrade to Mission 752s. These mid-nineties designs can be found in the classifieds occasionally for around £250 and are a dreamboat for a valve amplifier such as yours. With super light High Definition Aerogel drive units, they're both very efficient and very easy to drive - meaning your

AMC will be able to sing at last! They're also floorstanders, so you'll get another octave or two of bass. Finally, a turntable upgrade to a secondhand Linn Axis/Akito or Michell Mycro/OL RB250 will give you a front-end to match - good luck! **DP**



The Mission 752s are a great value, valve friendly second-hand buy

PASSIVE POSITIVE

Being a big fan of Hi-Fi World, I wanted to seek some expert advice from you. I have a hi-fi question on which I would greatly appreciate your advice. I am looking to purchase a powerful high-end amplifier, but unfortunately cannot justify buying both pre & power. What I intend to do is to purchase the power-amp section and to run it from an affordable pre-amp (passive or active). The power-amp quality will be around the Chord/Krell/Levinson level, and I presume I would probably get better value purchasing second-hand. What would your thoughts be about this plan?

Are there any pre-amps, passive or otherwise, around £50-£200 mark, which you would recommend to partner Chord/Krell etc. amps? I really need some names to start with, for initial auditioning. Would going for the newer SPM 600 justify itself over the old 400, 800 & 1000 models? My budget is £2,000. I hope you can help.

**Regards,
Louis Bevist Clementson**

This is an interesting question Louis, as it raises a host of possibilities. Firstly, let's stick with the first option of getting a secondhand high-end power amp and partnering it with an affordable preamp. As for the preamp the obvious option is Creek's excellent OBH-12 passive at £199. This has two inputs that are selectable via the supplied remote, plus a fine, clear sound. Although it doesn't have the smoothness and sophistication of a £750+ preamp it will do the job very nicely. I once used the OBH-12 for a period with a pair of £4,000 Quad II Forty valve monoblocks and it sounded fabulous!

The subject of the power amp is a different matter. Firstly it seems that you favour the clean, detailed sound of Chord's products. Any of the above Chord Electronics power amps you mention will fulfill the role nicely. Personally, when used with a passive I'd go for the more powerful options. Obviously, with £2,000 to spend you'll have to go to the secondhand market for Chord (the older versions being more affordable for you), as well as similar high-end products such as those of Pass Labs, Krell or Levinson.

Moving away from these rather 'obvious' high-end options though, you'll find a couple of alternatives, including some non-secondhand products. Firstly, there's the likes of Sugden, who do the Class A design in a very 'British' way, giving an organic-

sounding alternative to the shimmer and sheen of Pass Labs' and Krell's more powerful Class A designs. The superb Masterclass stereo power amplifier could be picked up for around £2,000 (should you find one) in the secondhand adverts or a new A21 will only set you back £1,000. However, you'll need fairly high sensitivity (89 dB-plus) 'speakers to make them sing.

It would be daft to overlook the relevant Musical Fidelity power amplifiers available to you, too, such as the whoppingly powerful and well built 308. At £1,999 it's also bang on budget for you and when you have enough, you can match it with the 308 preamp at the same price. Also test out the Unison Research Unico DM which delivers a healthy 150watts of power into 8ohms and can be bridged into mono for a pair to deliver a whopping 500watts per channel. Being a valve hybrid design you get the smooth yet detailed traits of Class A designs and the amp is only £1250, to boot. **SP**

Denon TU250 tuner and Castle Harlech 'speakers. They are all joined with VDH interconnects and QED Silver Anniversary bi-wiring.

I, like a great many people nowadays, live in a modern semi-detached house with paper thin walls. Therefore the only way I can turn up the volume is to wait till my neighbours go out for the day.

The Castle's just don't give their best until the volume is neighbour antagonistic! I have tried an old pair of TDL RTL 3s with the same results BUT.... after connecting up my parents pair of KLH speakers (nice older design with a large bass unit) I seem to get the quality at a lower volume?

I have tried the "how do you fancy swapping?" to my mother who will definitely not consent, so I need to find a modern pair of speakers which will give the same results (but keep the nice treble response that modern speakers seem to have).

This is where you nice experts come in! The only speakers I can find after trawling through various hi-fi mags



The Creek OBH-12 passive pre-amp can sound better than more expensive, powered counterparts

BIG DRIVER FOR LOW LEVEL

I thought I would e-mail Hi-Fi World with a query I have been struggling with for some time. I have, over the years, managed to build a system which I am generally happy with, but I am of the opinion that the design of modern hi-fi 'speakers are missing the point.

My system at present consists of the following components, a Systemdek 9 with Rega arm and Dynavector 10X4, Musical Fidelity X-ray CD, Primare 30.1 Amp, Primare R20, MIF X-cans2, Sennheiser 565 headphones,

are the Spondor SP2/3s, but as I can't find a dealer within reach who stocks them, I can't hear them.

Do you know of any modern speakers which have a nice 3-way system and a large, efficient bass driver. I have read how all the manufacturers changed because it is not easy/cheap to construct a cabinet to handle a large bass driver but surely nowadays, with modern materials, this could be overcome? I would rather buy new than old equipment (but could be tempted by a bargain, as long as future repairs could be assured?).

Thank you for any answers you could give me with this.

**regards
Andy Burtchaell
Bath**

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This raises an interesting question, and one that manufacturers should acknowledge more than it appears they do. I find that very few modern loudspeakers can deliver a wide ranging and detailed sound at low levels. They appear designed not to work well in such circumstances. This is especially true at the lower end of the market. Good low level 'speakers generally fall into one of two categories - high sensitivity or extremely well detailed. The Quad electrostatic is a fine example of a model that will deliver the goods at low volumes due to its 'crossover-less' design and its amazing detail. No 'speaker will truly plumb the bass depths to impressive standards at low levels, so the somewhat bass light electrostatic, which substitutes very low bass for a heightened sense of realism through detail, is a perfect example of the 'quiet' 'speaker. However, if you want a new pair (988s or 989s), they are dear and the older 57s - and even the 63s - can need an expensive overhaul if bought on the cheap.

My suggestion would be to look for a relatively high sensitivity floorstander or a well detailed and high sensitivity standmount.

Standmounters that have good detail and are easy to drive again aren't cheap, but one outstanding example is the Diapason Karis which is big and warm yet can pick up on intricacies in the kind of way that only real high-end products can. The Karis (used by us for demonstrating our valve kits) is over £1,000 for the pair but they look beautiful and are inconspicuous - look out for a secondhand pair.

Along the same path, but at a lower level, you could opt for the Quad 11L. Again, this is a very precise sounding standmount that has most of the detail, if not the warmth of the Karis.

Big three-way floorstanders with large bass units are a bit of a rarity these days, especially at the affordable level. Good examples such as the bigger KEF Reference range models can run into second mortgage territory. Look at a good two-way and there are a few options. One example (although it's a very large standmount!) is the AudioNote E (once upon a time, Snell). This is a very sensitive 92dB+, and it is a warm sounding 'speaker that whilst perhaps not having intricate detail has a big and all-encompassing sound at low volume. The E is again over £1,000 for the pair but secondhand

examples are around. As far as Spondor goes, the models you mention are - relative to this query - quite hard to drive, so may not give enough at lower volumes for your liking. However, one example from their range that would fit the bill is the impressive S8, which although expensive at over £1,600 is, again very sensitive and detailed and also uses a large, high quality bass drive unit in its two-way design. **SP**



The Karis is a small loudspeaker but also ideal for low level listening.

AN INJECTION IN THE ARM?

I would be very grateful if the collective wisdom of your excellent magazine could be brought to bear on my tedious hi-fi problem: in fact a response from anyone would do! My system is as follows: Michell Syncro deck with Linn Basic Plus arm and Linn K9 cartridge, Sugden A21a amp with phono board, Sugden CD21 player, Precide MDM cables and first generation Heybrook HB1's on sand filled Atacama stands.

Musically my tastes encompass jazz, funk, soul, classical and dance and my preference is totally towards vinyl. I'm going around in circles perplexed by the following: despite the obvious quality of most of the components the vinyl just isn't "singing". The Sugden CD and amp are excellent together, giving the impression that the 'speakers are not really up to the task. I know they are fussy about speaker matching because of the low wattage. Do you think the speakers lack sensitivity and control? With Sugden's background I was expecting something truly sublime with vinyl - why am I not there yet? Any thoughts? My thoughts so far are:- [1] their phono stage is not quite as

sparkling as I would expect.

[2] The cartridge is not of sufficient quality for the electronics.

[3] The arm needs upgrading or improving

[4] The deck needs hot rodding

Given your knowledge and experience, if this was your system, what order would you address things in? If you reckon on the speakers as a good starting point, would AVI Neutron III's be better than Epos M12s at around the same price?

Could I have stopped all this fretting by buying a Trichord Dino phono stage straight away, or am I better off waiting and saving to get an EAR 834?

I'm so confused I don't know what to touch first - please help! Budget is around 1500 English pounds. I feel better now I've got it all off my chest.

**Yours,
Julian Barrett**

You're right about [2], [3] and [4], but I think [1] remains to be seen. Your system is suffering from a below par vinyl front end, as evinced by the great results you're getting with CD. And so you should - the Sugden A21a is a giant killing integrated and true 'budget esoterica'. The Heybrook HB1s are also superb - despite being ancient and completely overlooked, this classic Peter Comeau design can still cut the mustard and frankly, you'll have to spend quite a lot to better them! The problem is your deck, which is good but not brilliant, and your tonearm and cartridge which are well below par. In fact, I suspect it is these which are really holding things back - as I have heard the Syncro make nice enough noises.

First, change your arm to an Origin Live Silver 250 (£599), which will give you one of the best ton-

earns money can buy and the potential to upgrade all your other vinyl components to the heavens without having to change the arm. Then get a Dynavector DV10X4 (£199) high output moving coil cartridge. This has a very big, powerful, punchy sound and will make the K9 sound thin and anaemic. It will also drive your Sugden's phono stage with far greater aplomb, giving it a half-decent chance to shine. Actually, I suspect that this is better than you think – it's not brilliant, but shouldn't really hold back the system too much; Sugden know what they are doing.

If you find, as I suspect you will, that your vinyl sound has greatly improved, you may like to leave it at that. At this stage your vinyl front end should easily better the CD player, but if not then it's time for more drastic action. Sell your Syncro – you should get £200 for it as Michell decks have incredibly high residuals secondhand – and buy a GyroDec SE. In conjunction with your new arm and cartridge, you'll be amazed at how good vinyl can sound – and indeed how good your A21a and HB1s can sound too.

If you're still into upgrading your phono stage then personally I wouldn't have an EAR 834P, which I think sounds leaden and plodding, and would opt instead for the aforementioned Trichord Dino in its newly

updated guise. Other alternatives for less money include the fine and underrated Creek OBH-8SE and LFD Mistral Phonostage. When this is done, come back to us for speaker advice in the unlikely event of you ever wanting to upgrade again! **DP**

DIGITAL DILEMMA TO DEAL WITH

This may seem a bit convoluted, so please bear with me. I have a bit of a mish mash of a system and want to 'rebuild' it over the next few years. Don't get me wrong, I am not unhappy with the sound, but I think I could be doing better. It consists of a Naim Nait 3 amp, a Sony DVD 7700s which doubles as the CD source, a Rega Planar 3 ('95), Sumiko Blue Point cartridge, Musical Fidelity XLP-S, Nordost Blue Heaven interconnects and Flatline Gold speaker cables, B&W CM1 speakers with Kudos S50 stands.

I listen to a wide variety of music, but mainly 60/70s rock and Classical/Jazz, and though you may not think it, my system currently sounds relatively easy on the ear but still offers a nice degree of immediacy without sounding strident. What it does lack is a spine tingling factor.

First things first. I want to upgrade the turntable and am budgeting around £600-£700. I have noticed that the Rega plays faster than 33 1/3 rpm to what equates to about a semi tone in

pitch shift. I wrote to Rega and they suggested that I re-oil the bearing, but this made no difference. I was considering the options of replacing the motor with either Rega's own upgrade or Origin Live's Motor upgrade, however, given the pitch problem, I am not sure whether I should just get a new turntable. I was considering the Origin Live Kit, the Audio Note or a secondhand Linn. If I keep the Rega and opt for the motor, is Rega's upgrade a better option than Origin Live's? Also, will it be worth my while getting the arm re-kitted by Origin as well?

Next on the agenda are the speakers. I want to look at getting floorstanders. I have listened to System Audio SA1270s with which I was well impressed but have also heard that Pro-Ac and Ruark give good value for money. I also heard the Opera Super Pavarottis recently and they sounded great, though it was in the context of a system out of my budget (Pathos Logos amp and Audio Analog Paganinni CD - this system really impressed me). It was at a hi-fi show where they were also showing crazy priced systems using Clearaudio, Tom Evans, Halcro and B&W Nautilus 800 Reference speakers with Classe amps and CD. All these systems were wired with Valhalla speaker cable and interconnects. I can honestly say I found the sound of these systems harsh and grating compared to the Pathos/Audio Analogue/Opera combination! Can you offer me suggestions with respect to Speakers.

Finally, amplification. I was considering getting a second-hand Naim pre-power but am wondering whether one of the Hi-Fi World valve kits might be a worthwhile option. I have also heard the Primare integrated amp with the System Audio speakers. It was most impressive, but again, this was also using their CD player and I am not sure whether there is some special Danish synergy at work there. Which might offer the best upgrade path?

For the time being, I am steering away from getting a new CD/DVD/SACD player until the format wars sort themselves out. Also, I have more than enough vinyl and CD to keep me listening for the rest of my days! However, I would consider a cheap DAC/upsampler. I was also impressed with the difference the X-LPS made to the Naim (I thought it far superior to the Naim phono card!) and was wondering whether the new Musical Fidelity 24-bit upsampler would yield similar improvements.

**Many thanks in advance
Mark Finucane**



The Dynavector DV10X4 is one heck of a budget MC cartridge

It's normal for most belt drive turntables to run just ever-so-slightly fast – it's a common trick that manufacturers use to make the deck sound sprightly and more importantly allow for wear and tear in future years. When belts stretch, for example, they'll often settle the deck down to exactly the correct RPM. If however they were bang on when new, they'd go slow and – for some reason – it's easier for people to tell that their decks are running slow than fast (it's also probably the reason why most people recognise a flat note easier than a sharp one, it simply sounds 'worse!' - Ed). Hence the gentle fillip that many companies give their turntables!

However, if your Rega is obviously fast (and a semi-tone is obvious) then it's possible there's some kind of fault in the system – perhaps the pulley is ever-so-slightly out of tolerance?

Personally speaking, I wouldn't hack my Rega around. Rather, if I was spending £700 then I'd seriously consider saving my pennies for another month and buy a Michell GyroDec SE (£815). This advice may have readers falling asleep at this point, but I really think there are no rivals at the price in terms of sound, build quality or upgradability. And in its latest DC motor incarnation it's even better! You could remove your RB300 from your Rega and have it Origin Live modded, fit it to the Gyro and you'd have a serious sounding front end. Your Naim amp would really sing with a source like this – you'd find massive improvements in grip, focus and dynamics, the overall effect being a 'substantial step closer to the mastertape'.

As far as your speakers and amplification is concerned, it's very difficult to recommend equipment because – frankly – even you don't seem to know what you want. You say you'd quite like a Naim pre-power, and then mention a valve amp combo in the same breath! This is akin to asking whether you should buy a Ferrari or an Aston Martin – if you don't appreciate the qualitative and philosophical differences between the two, then no amount of other people's advice can help! Naim amps are superb solid-state designs focussed on bass grip and slam at the expense – some would say – of sweetness and lucidity. Valve amps are all about making a beguiling, euphonic and enchanting sound at the expense of power, analysis and authority. I sug-

gest you audition both types and then decide which of the two approaches 'floats your boat'. It is only then that sensible recommendations can be made about loudspeakers, whose relationship with your amplification is critical.

As for upsampling the 16/44 output from your Sony DVD player, again I think this is a rather 'head over heels' approach. If I was in your position, I'd go for a DVD-Audio player later this year to give you 'advanced resolution' capability (and also to play your DVD videos), and possibly pick up a high quality CD player secondhand from the classifieds. Although some DVD machines make a fair fist of CD, you have to pay serious money to get truly excellent CD replay, so right now I'm of the opinion that the cheapest solution is to simply get two purpose-built silver disc spinners. You could, for example, go for a Marantz DV-8300 (£1500) and pair it up with a used Marantz CD63KIS (£150) – this player has fallen out of fashion but is still a brilliantly musical design and a veritable bargain secondhand. In the great scheme of things, I really don't think upsampling 16/44 will amount to a hill of beans – it makes a marginal improvement, but then so does cleaning your contacts with isopropyl alcohol and putting Foculpods under your CD player – both of which can be done for under £15. See what I mean? **DP**

BUDGET REVAMP

My system comprises an Arcam Alpha 7 SE CD player, Arcam Alpha 7 integrated amp and Mordaunt Short 812 'speakers.

I wonder if you can help? I'm thinking of an upgrade but have limited funds and I don't know where to start. I have around 400 notes to spend. The problem with my system is that to me it

has a very smooth sound but lacks punch and detail. I'm not sure whether to upgrade the existing Arcam to an Arcam 8. Will this bring the benefits I am looking for? Please help as I'm stuck in a rut and not sure what to do!

Regards
Paul Lancaster

The obvious thing to do here would be to start at the source and, bit by bit, revamp each component. You'll find that the new Arcam DiVA gear has a more engaging character than the slightly duller Alpha equipment. However, the new CD62T will take up most of your budget at £370 but may seem the best option if you are interested in CD replay only and upgrading the system over time.

Getting funds for the rest of the kit could take you a while though and newer gear may be on its way. Ideally the CD62T would be matched with the A65 integrated (same price as CD62T) and a pair of Wharfedale Evo3 standmounts which would get you the sound you crave from your current system.

However, for a few dollars more than the CD62T you can get your hands on a Pioneer DV-656 which will not only play CDs to a decent standard (not as good as the Arcam, though) but also DVD-A, SACD and movies too. It's a tempting offer and one that will make you easily upgradeable for the future.

For a new compatible CD system in one fell swoop, though, you could opt for a NAD C521i CD player at £200, matched to the excellent NAD C320BEE integrated at around the same price. All you'd need to do then is gain the extra few quid for a decent pair of budget loudspeakers. Look at the Wharfedale Diamond 8.1 at £120 or the Acoustic Energy Evo One at £180 as your choice. **SP**



The NAD C320 BEE could be the lynch pin of your budget system.

DIGITAL



Thanks to a disappointingly slow start, Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), now renamed Digital Radio, seems one of hi-fi's current imponderables. David Price tries out Cambridge Audio's new DAB300 tuner, and two interesting alternatives.

Digital Radio is a format about which much has been written, mostly negative. There's no denying it had a 'difficult birth', which involved arcane, hard-to-fathom press announcements accompanied by a tiny handful of very expensive DAB tuners that few people, it seems, bothered to buy. The mud stuck, and the idea that the format was madcap 'boffin-led' technology that 'real people' wouldn't want took hold.

To make matters worse, the issue of Digital Radio's poor reception began to dominate. There's no doubt that small but significant areas of the UK simply cannot receive the signals, and even within the officially sanctioned reception areas, it's possible to lose the signal periodically. The idea that it was a sort of latter day AM radio, where signals faded in and out depending on reception conditions, was hardly the image its proponents wanted to project.

Finally, there is the vexed issue of sound quality. Early DAB transmissions involved high bitrate broadcasts, giving undeniably fine sound. Recently however, the BBC

dropped the bitrate of a number of its networks and even pushed some programmes, available in stereo on the FM analogue band, into mono! This was hardly an incitement for audiophiles to go forth and purchase, particularly when they're exactly the kind of people who are the 'early adopters' of new technology.

Overall then, many commentators - especially from hi-fi backgrounds - simply can't conceal their contempt for the new medium. Not exactly ideal conditions in which to promote a new format! However, cut through DAB's numerous negatives (many of which are undeniable) and there really are some redeeming virtues, to the point that many who experience it find it hard to go back to conventional analogue tuners.

DIGITAL FUTURE

From a dyed in the grain audiophile point of view, the best way to understand DAB is to think of the way CD replaced LP in the nation's affections. The new digital format's sound wasn't ultimately as good, but by the same token it was dramatically better than most turntables actually in use at the time. Digital Radio is an identical parallel in this

respect. Likewise, CD removed the need for the user to have any technical sympathy or understanding for their music carrier - you simply selected the track and pressed play, instead of faffing around setting up the arm, manually cueing discs, etc. So too does DAB.

Essentially then, Digital Radio improves the radio listening experience. It banishes the need to listen to AM, and gives all stations a degree of clarity and finesse that half decent analogue FM tuners struggle to attain. It gives instant access to 40 stations, with comprehensive text display - tuning becomes a thing of the past. And lastly, it now offers a range of stations that are simply unavailable on analogue - some of which are rubbish, others of which are superb. Despite all the politics, technical issues and tittle-tattle, when it works it works very well indeed - slick and elegant with better sound (generally) and a wealth of listening experiences, many switchers understandably say they can never go back.

COST CUT BITRATE

An unabashed hi-fi separate, with all the audiophile pretensions that entails, Cambridge Audio's DAB300

READY?

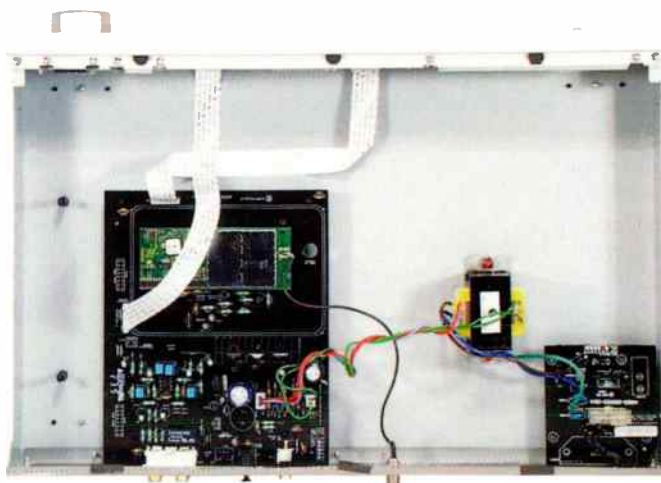
looks superb value for money at just £150. The unit comes in a standard sized (430x285x80mm) box, and weighs a light but not flimsy 3.5kg. It's well finished considering its low, low price - even extending to a brushed aluminium front panel. This has a bank of five buttons which give access to ten presets, plus a large 'jog dial' (i.e. knob) on the right. To select a station you simply twist it to move up or down the list available. When you find the one you want, you push the knob in, wait a second or two, and suddenly you're listening to it. All very easy to use.

The other minor buttons let you dim the backlit LC display, change it to show technical information (i.e. bitrate) as opposed to the default radio text and select between auto and manual tuning.

Inside is one of the very latest DAB chipsets, with a Frontier Silicon FS2020 module and FS1010 single-chip DAB/Audio processor. The highly integrated, third-generation unit is based on the META processor design and Enigma DAB IP licensed from Imagination Technologies - better known to us punters as VideoLogic. This is coupled to a 24bit/96kHz four times oversampling DAC from Wolfson Microelectronics.

Round the back, you'll see gold plated analogue, coaxial and digital outputs, plus a captive mains lead complete with mains plug, plus a BNC connector for the supplied 'wet string' antenna.

Usefully, the Cambridge has the ability to route through a standard analogue tuner, therefore letting you have both Digital Radio and AM/FM through the same 'tuner' input on your amp. As soon as it's powered



up, the DAB300 automatically scans for every station in the area. Duly acquired, you can order them alphabetically, or by most used or favourite via the Menu button. A signal strength meter, accessible by holding in the jog dial, helps make aerial placement straightforward. There's also a Dynamic Range Control (DRC), which lets you enable or disable compression levels.

As with all DAB receivers, sound quality depends on the bitrate. The good news is, however, that whatever this was, the Cambridge Audio displayed a refinement and finesse that completely belied its price point. I challenge anyone to find an analogue FM tuner that can come close to this for £150 - even much respected models from Denon and NAD would find it a tough call. From 80kbps mono Talksport football reports to a 192kbps Radio Three live stereo broadcast, the DAB300 was never less than clean, detailed and polished.

Even with 128kbps Radio Two, this tuner threw out an impressively wide soundstage, inside which a

wealth of detail could be heard. Bass was taut and decently powerful, although it lacked the 'bloom' that blesses NAD's 414 on FM stereo broadcasts. Midband displayed excellent clarity - smooth and even with no sign of the brightly lit upper midrange that afflicts CD - thanks in no small part to the compression codec and the superior 48kHz sampling frequency. Treble was decently crisp - although DAB isn't famous for its high frequency sweetness, the Cambridge Audio was certainly civil up top.

Compared to a decent FM Stereo tuner, you'll find the DAB300 has a cleaner, tighter, less woolly sound that's great fun to listen to, albeit lacking in the former's euphonic warmth. At 128kbps and under, there's just the slightest sense of high frequency compression artefacts, but you really have to concentrate very hard to tell. The overall effect is far from the cold, clinical experience its detractors would have you believe. Couple its fine sound to the superb convenience that's at the heart of the medium, and this is a great advertisement for the merits of hi-fi Digital Radio.



World Verdict £ 
A clean sounding and useful bit of kit that shows up the best traits of digital radio for a super low price.

Cambridge Audio DAB300 £150
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The compact Opus 21 with **ON-BOARD UPSAMPLING** is the first product in a new **STYLISH** range, to include a power amplifier and a tuner. See www.aimdesign.com

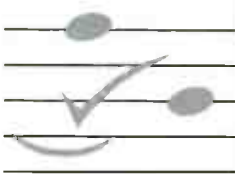
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ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE

For those into DAB who don't want a regular hi-fi separate, here are two Digital Radio receivers with a difference:

PERSTEL DR101 £169
WWW.PERSTEL.COM



Combining DAB and FM tuners in one petite package is no mean feat, but this is an elegant looking bit of kit. Providing you spend £20 on Sennheiser MX500 earphones to replace those supplied, you'll get great sound from its analogue FM section, but the Digital Radio receiver sounds thin and harsh and takes an age to set itself up. Another problem is that rival analogue designs like Sony's SRF-M95 (£50) are smaller still, more stylish and far cheaper. Still, this is well built and blessed with a large, crisp display. It's also very simple to use, until the signal drops away and it's necessary to extend the long 1970s-style

telescopic aerial, completely spoiling its 'pocketability'. Short battery life doesn't help out on the move, either. Although good in some respects, if this is any indication then portable DAB just isn't quite there yet.

Specifications:
 size: 60x84x24mm;
 weight: 62g;
 features: DAB/FM tuner;
supplied accessories:
 in-ear headphones,
 carrying case,
 2x AA batteries
 (6 hour life),
 mains adapter



TERRATEC DR-BOX 1 £299 WWW.TERRATEC.DE

An interesting mix of portable and hi-fi separate, this gadget plugs into any PC to offer full DAB functionality. Brilliantly versatile, it offers the usual channel search, presets and text display facilities, plus the ability to digitally record broadcasts direct to a hard drive and listen to one station while recording another. It even boasts a full Fraunhofer MP3 encoder, too.

Installation is simple as any other USB device and the supplied software of good quality, but the menu based navigation is a tad fiddly. Sound is the big disappointment - the DR Box is clean and dry alright, but lacks sparkle, is thin and even prone to harshness. The DR Box's austere look and feel - akin to laboratory measuring equipment - doesn't exactly make it friendly for DAB novices, either. A fairly capable, albeit quirky device.

Specifications:
 size: 145x160x40mm;
 weight: 1kg; features:
 Auto Tune,
 Radio Text,
 headphone output,
 digital audio output;
supplied accessories:
 analogue audio cable,
 USB cable,
 mains adapter,
 MusicMatch Jukebox software
 CD-ROM, portable antenna

THE VERDICT

Digital Radio is a great idea - it offers a vast array of stations at the press of a button or two, with the possibility of fine sound quality too. Of the three units here, only the Cambridge Audio DAB300 was a truly convincing proponent of the format. Clean and detailed yet smooth and sophisticated, its sound was genuinely impressive for any tuner costing just £150. The Perstel DR101 portable simply felt clumsy and unwieldy compared to any analogue walkie at a third of the price, despite its lovely build quality. The fact that its sound was rough, fuzzy and altogether uninspiring (via digital, but not analogue) hardly swung things in its favour, either.

TerraTec's DR Box 1 is a nice idea poorly executed - its sound isn't dramatically superior to the Perstel and a long, long way behind the Cambridge. Although well built and packaged, its ergonomics aren't exactly welcoming, and it's expensive too.

Game, set and match then to the Cambridge Audio - cheap, cheerful and capable far beyond expectations.

AFTER MINIDISC?



From the company that launched MiniDisc comes Sony's brand new RCD-W3 CD recorder. David Price tries it for size - and wonders where it leaves MD?

It was late 1998 that Sony's first CD recorder was released in the company's home market of Japan. At the time it came as something of a surprise, as Sony had previously intimated that MiniDisc was its rival to Philips' (then) new CD recordable format, and that as a result, we could not expect a CD-R machine! It was interesting because, at the time, MD sales were going great guns in the land of the rising sun and DAT was still a popular high end consumer format.

That first machine was a middle of the range 'ES' series product selling for around ¥60,000 (£350), suggesting that Sony felt MD was a fine budget format and DAT the semi-pro standard, but that there was a gap that needed plugging in the middle. Now, five years on, the new RCD-W3 has finally reached British

shores. First seen at the 2001 Tokyo Audio Expo, it's been priced to sell at just under the £200 mark - pitching it right into the fray.

Sony has gone on record as saying it's still 'committed' to the MiniDisc format, but you'll notice that there's been a gradual shift downmarket. A few years ago you could have got an MDS-JA50ES for just a few pence under a thousand pounds, but now you'll struggle to find a Sony MD hi-fi separate in the High Street for over £150. It's looking increasingly like a niche format, its days of rampant sales now long gone.

Into the gap steps the machine you see before you. Driven by the immense PC computer market, economies of scale have enabled CD-R technology to crash down dramatically in price. The first hi-fi CD-R recorder introduced by

Meridian in the late eighties cost £3,000 and used blanks retailing for £35 a go. The Sony you see before you will probably be discounted to under £150 by the Spring and uses the very same media, now just 35p each. That, I guess, is progress!

What then of the RCD-W3? Well, it's a twin-tray design with a single playback deck and another recorder. The two are linked digitally, allowing 4x copying and finalisation, meaning that an average music CD can be transcribed in about fifteen minutes - Sony reckons this makes it the fastest gun in Europe. The machine can function as a CD multiplayer by using both transports for playback. It plays standard CDs, and reads and writes to CD-Rs and CD-RWs - in the case of recording however, only 'audio' CD-R/Ws are accepted.

Frankly, there's not much sign of

audiophile tweaking here. It's an undeniably handsome machine and at 4.6kg not as flimsy as some sub-£200 CD hardware, but neither is it anything special. Its greatest claim to fame are four 24bit 'Type H Pulse' DACs and an 'intelligent disc servo system' to optimise playback - neither of which are anything to write home about. Its largish fascia (possible thanks to largish 430x108x451mm dimensions) is very cleanly laid out (in true Sony fashion), making it a breeze to use.



Down each flank are each drive's respective transport controls, while their displays can be found under each disc drawer. A modicum of facilities is provided, including the aforementioned 'Synchro Start' high speed dubbing which makes a fully synchronised recording. For optimum sound quality of course, a 'Normal' 1x option is provided. Selectable CD play modes, including 32-step programmability, are available, along with CD Text display. A button on the lower right edge of the fascia switches between inputs, comprising one optical digital and one RCA phono analogue. The latter's level is adjusted by a front panel level pot, in conjunction with the display-mounted peak level meters. Variable line out is available via the bundled Sony RM-R50 remote, and a 6.3mm headphone jack completes the package.

SOUND QUALITY

First, as a playback deck, the RCD-W3 is totally standard budget Sony


fare. This means a decently smooth, even and musical presentation, with few obvious signs of raggedness, harshness or nastiness. Propaganda's 'Dr Mabuse' proved an enjoyable listen, with a decently fast and tuneful bass, reasonable midband detailing and a couth treble. However, you simply can't pretend this is anything more than a cheap player - in absolute terms midband is thin and one dimensional, bass loose and lightweight and treble a tad too splashy.

As a recording deck, at normal speed the Sony made excellent direct digital disc copies. There was very little audible degradation between original and CD-R, which is much as you'd expect when it's a case of simply sending the digital datastream a few inches down to the burner drive. Ultimately there was a very slight flattening of depth perspective, a subtle lightening and loosening of bass and a softening of treble, but

overall really nothing to complain about. Would that budget cassette decks have sounded this good!

Analogue recordings weren't anywhere near as encouraging. Frankly, the onboard A-D converter is worse, relatively speaking, than the D-A, which itself is nothing of note. I fed a rich, warm, sumptuous reel-to-reel recording of Randy Crawford's 'You Might Need Somebody' in, and got a thin, cold, harsh and steely digital copy out! Using my Sony TCD-3 DAT recorder's own A-D and piping it in to the RCD-W3's digital input, I got a dramatically warmer, cleaner recording.

Overall then, this is undeniably an excellent product given its low, low price and comes thoroughly recommended. If you happen to have a higher quality A-D and D-A at your disposal, then all the better. As for me, I wish Sony would do an 'ES' version with better digital converters and Super Bit Mapping for its analogue sources (why not - as many will use this kind of thing for archiving their vinyl!) for £400. Still, there's no denying RCD-W3's superb value for money.

World Verdict £ 
Excellent value, but its onboard converters could be better. Does what it says on the box without fuss at an incredibly low price.

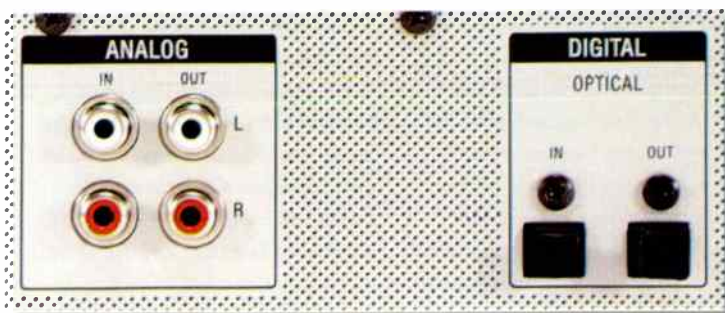
Sony RCD-W3

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CHORD CHANGE



Michell's popular Delphini phono stage has just undergone radical surgery under the knife of its creator, Trichord's Graham Fowler. Was it a successful operation? David Price finds out.

Two years ago, Michell announced a replacement for its tremendously popular ISO phono stage - a late 1980s design from the great Tom Evans. The Delphini offered an altogether more sober sound, with a good deal more refinement and grace than the perky, terrier-like ISO. In doing so, however, the Delphini lost a little of its predecessor's joie de vivre, proving a tad less musical when all things were considered.

I first set ears on the £1895 Monoblock version back in December 1999 and found it immensely enjoyable, but the cooking version (which at £895 was the Iso's spiritual heir) wasn't quite the same kettle of fish. Although excellent in some respects, just as modern cars are invariably more capable yet less fun to drive than classics, so it proved less compelling.

Its designer, Trichord's Graham Fowler more or less admitted as

much when he dropped the new version round to me. The Mono version, we both agreed, was pretty special, yet far too expensive for your average UK audiophile, yet the standard option was just wide of the mark. With this in mind, he set about creating the replacement you see before you - the Delphini 2. Retailing for £995 it's a ton more expensive than its predecessor, but Graham reckons it sounds even better than the £1995 Delphini Mono did.

In fact, this new phono preamplifier sort of came about by accident. One of Graham's other creations, the Trichord Dino (which arrived early last year) has proved a great success on account of its big, bouncy sound and low £299 retail price. When I compared it with the Delphini, frankly I was surprised. Although lacking the latter's focus and detail, it was in many ways a more enjoyable listen, with a nice full bass and fluid midband. Recognising this, Graham duly started experimenting and the result was a sort of

Dino-Delphini hybrid, which duly became the Delphini 2.

To wit, it has the same user adjustable gain and loading as the Dino via a set of four DIP switches mounted (unlike the Dino) inside the unit. Fear not - they're easy to get to - you simply unbolt the front panel with the Allen key provided and slide it forward to reveal the DIP switches. Class-A IC-based, the new Delphini 2 uses 0.1% metal film resistors and selected 1% polystyrene and polypropylene capacitors. Its 160x240x65mm casing is of non-ferrous polished stainless steel and acrylic, claimed to eliminate Eddy current propagation. Its signal non-inverting circuitry uses audio grade bipolar and JFET op amps. It has a fully passive RIAA equalisation section, located between two active gain stages, using high performance 'MCAP' film and foil polypropylene capacitors. Two ultra low impedance, low noise wide-band voltage regulators are employed to power both channels. The only clue that it's

new is the front mounted LED, which is now blue instead of green.

The visually similar power supply connects to the amplifier unit via a four way PTFE insulated silver plated copper lead. Inside are completely independent and isolated DC supply circuits - one for the positive voltage rail and one for the negative. An audio grade 160VA toroidal transformer is followed by two bridge rectifiers built with ultra fast, soft recovery diodes for low RF generation. The bridges are followed by massive RC/RC filtering comprising sixteen 1000uF capacitors before conventional 3 pin voltage regulators. Graham says this level of filtering and regulation provides very low noise power supply lines before entering the main amplifier unit. Together, the two boxes weigh a substantial 3.3kg.

Duly burned in and connected to my *Michell Orba/OL Illustrious/Ortofon Kontrapunkt B*, the new *Delphini 2* proved most interesting. A kind of sonic hybrid of the old *Delphini Mono* and *Dino*, plus 'a bit more', it's a very natural and open performer that lies just on the warm side of neutral. It isn't as stark and piercing as the original *Mono* version, but is considerably more transparent than the standard *Delphini* of yore. In a sense it takes the best characteristics from both, and adds a little bit of *Dino* warmth for good measure.

I kicked off proceedings with *Madonna's 'Get into the Groove'*, an appalling Sony PCM recording from 1984. Ahh - the early days of digital! Through the old *Delphini*, the track was decently clean and bouncy, but I couldn't help dwelling on the crimes against fidelity committed by that Palaeolithic studio recorder. Treble was fuzzy, bass mechanical and plodding and the whole soundstage sounded even more artificial than it should have with all those (then) cutting edge digital synthesisers.

Switching to the new *Delphini* did little for the intrinsic nastiness of the sound, but did string things together better. In short, it was more natural and organic sounding.

Moving to *Pat Metheny's 'Bright Size Life'*, an altogether more successful all-analogue affair from 1975, and the improvements wrought by the new version became crystal clear. It proved far more open and spacious, yet less conspicuous and intrusive too. Whereas the old model leant a touch of transistory 'fuzz' and 'haze' to those beautifully recorded hi-hats, the new version let them shine through with aplomb. Brighter and cleaner yet less harsh, it was obvious this product is a major step forward.

Midband was perhaps its strongest suit. *Rose Royce's 'Wishing on a Star'* showed an altogether greater sense of scale and perspective. Whereas the older model sounded vague, congested and slightly brittle on those sublime female vocals, the newbie was more relaxed and yet more incisive, allowing the recording's delicious tonality to flood out. No less impressive were its dynamics, which were more marked. There was a greater sense of the singer's accenting and inflections, and the power of those crescendos when she truly belted it out. By comparison, the old model sounded rather 'sat upon'.

Bass was another area of improvement. Here, the old *Delphini* was a little lean and matter-of-fact. It was tight and lithe, I suppose, but still managed to sound mechanical with



it. The new model was a resounding improvement, as *Joy Division's 'New Dawn Fades'* proved. Peter Hook's famous basslines sounded fuller, warmer and yet more dynamic and energetic. With more grip, power and punch the song was a far more enjoyable listen. There was also the added benefit of better tonal accuracy; you could really get a sense of the instruments being used in the studio.

If it sounds like I've been a bit harsh on the old *Delphini*, it's only because I now think the original *Mono* version was really special and the standard one merely fine. In comparison, the new *Delphini 2* gives almost all the grip of the original £1895 *Mono*, with an altogether more fluid and cohesive sound. So, if you're treading the path of the solid state phono stage, then this is the one to have right now. The fact that it sports moving magnet capability is even better - now you can buy it to partner your cheapo *Goldring 1042* (which sounds truly special through it) and upgrade to that *Koetsu* moving coil that you always promised yourself later.

Michell Delphini 2 £995

Michell Engineering Ltd

Tel: +44 (0)20 8953 0771

www.michell-engineering.co.uk

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Equalisation was accurate and there's no warp filter, giving this stage a flat frequency response from 12Hz-41kHz.

Trichord provide three basic MC gain options that measured out at x6000 (very low output types), x3360 and x1467 - a wide and useful range

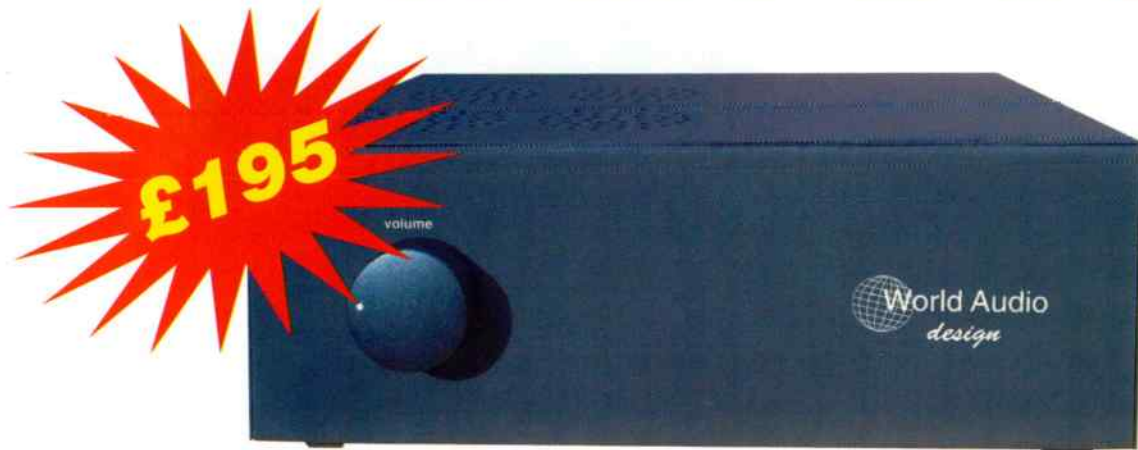
capable of accommodating all MC cartridges. For MMs, gains are x250 and x400, both just right. With a variety of input loads and low input noise of 0.057uV (MC), plus high output overload of 11V the *Delphini* measures really well in all areas. **NK**

Frequency response	12Hz-41kHz
Separation	72dB
Noise	-74dBV/0.057uV
Distortion	0.002%
Overload	11V out
dc offset	4/0.5mV

World Verdict

Brilliantly musical and involving yet clean and open too, this is one of the best solid state phono stages around right now.

BARGAIN BULBS



If you've always thought of valve amps as temperamental and expensive beasts, think again. World Audio Design's latest kit is designed with the budget conscious beginner in mind.

The Kecl82 was created from a brief that demanded simplicity, ease of build and a super low cost. In order to achieve a reasonable power output we went for a push-pull amplifier.

We chose the ECL82, a triode/output pentode. This tube is readily available and has a good sound. In push-pull mode it delivers 8Watts. Realistically you need a speaker of around 89dB or above. This is possible at a budget price - try the smaller Triangle models, or a Tannoy mX3 or even one of the older Missions like the 773e, or if you like building your own speakers, try the Adire Audio HE10.1, as reviewed in HFW October 2002 issue.

You will see that the front has only a volume control, and it is fed by one pair of phono sockets. A selector and tape/source switch were not used in this amplifier as they are tricky to wire up, and the aim was to make it easy to build. In fact, in many ways the Kecl82 would be great powering a second system, using a CD player as a source, and will definitely give you a taster of what valves can offer. Measuring 30cm wide, 23.5cm deep and 11cm height with feet, it is entirely self-enclosed. The valves are visible through the four upper circular vent holes (one directly above each valve). We have kept the look simple with the minimalist front panel holding the volume potentiometer. The two-part chassis is constructed from 1.6mm mild steel with a durable black powder-coat finish. The whole unit is very sturdy, weighing in at 9kgs.

The signal input is in the form of a pair of gold plated RCA phono sockets that sit at the rear of the chassis. The speaker sockets accept 4mm banana plugs as well as bare wire. The mains switch is positioned at the rear of the amplifier, on the right hand corner for easy access. Mains power is received via an IEC lead. The Kecl82 is based on a printed circuit board (PCB). The PCB is easy to follow with all component names, locations and orientations shown clearly. The amplifier requires no set up, you just turn it on. The kit will come with comprehensive instructions taking you through the build step-b-step.

SOUND QUALITY BY SIMON POPE

Purity is the key to this amplifier's design and sound. Because there's very little to get in the way of the signal what you get is an exceptionally sweet and simple sound that also has a superbly wholesome roundness to it. A high quality recording of Mahler's Das Lied Von Der Erde on Reference Recordings showed that the Kecl82 faithfully reproduced all the depth and space of a full symphonic orchestra without any problems. Violins were smooth and sweet, as was percussion (which virtually sparkled) and the woodwind section was especially impressive, with a spacious and airy sound.



A run through Miles Davis's Kind Of Blue saw the little integrated delivering a detailed and precise sound that highlighted the warmth of Coltrane's tenor sax and the rich, deep sound of the upright bass. Rock and Pop records such as Radiohead's 'Lucky' demonstrated that the valves inside the amp, whilst small, are quite robust sounding, with commendable clout and bass depth for a humble budget 8W valve amp. This is a great introduction to the sonic art of the valve amp and a big upgrade for anybody with a mid-price solid-state amp that wishes to swap over to something more musically engaging, for a price that's virtually as cheap as chips!

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

Frequency response	+/-3dB 15Hz - 75kHz
power output	8 watts into an 8 ohm load
sensitivity	850mV (suitable for CD)
hum	0.5mV

**The Kecl82 amplifier kit is available from World Audio Design
Tel/fax: 00 44 (0) 1908 218836 or order on-line at
www.worldaudiodesign.co.uk**

**Kecl82 amplifier kit (UK price) £195.00
(inc. vat & carriage)**

**Kecl82 amplifier kit (EU price) £195.00
(inc. vat, exc. carriage)**

**Kecl82 amplifier kit (Overseas price) £170.00
(exc. carriage)**



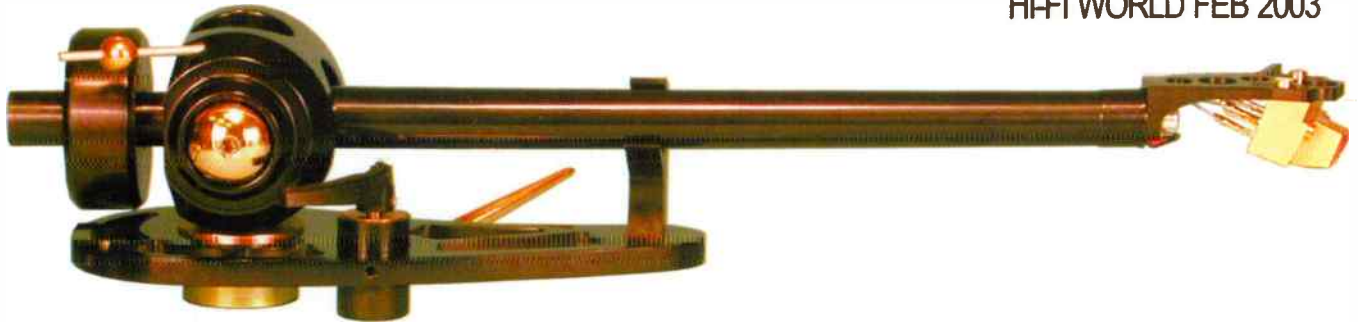
As usual Hi-Fi World will be out in force at the annual Bristol extravaganza. We will have our own show booth where you'll be able to meet the staff, peruse the latest issue or simply pop in for a chat!

In the World Audio Design room we'll have our complete range of DIY valve kit amplifiers on demonstration. We'll be featuring a range of integrated, pre and power designs, all at remarkably low prices. Come and hear just how superb valve amps can sound - these are as good as it gets! Plus, you'll be able to browse through our selection of numerous books on subjects such as loudspeaker and valve amplifier design.



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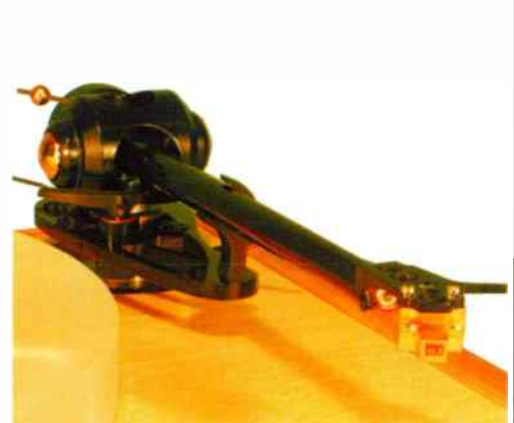
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7TH HEAVEN

After nearly three decades of purveying high quality mass market hi-fi, Arcam has gone high end with a vengeance. Its FMJ AV8/P7 is a statement product, as David Price finds out.

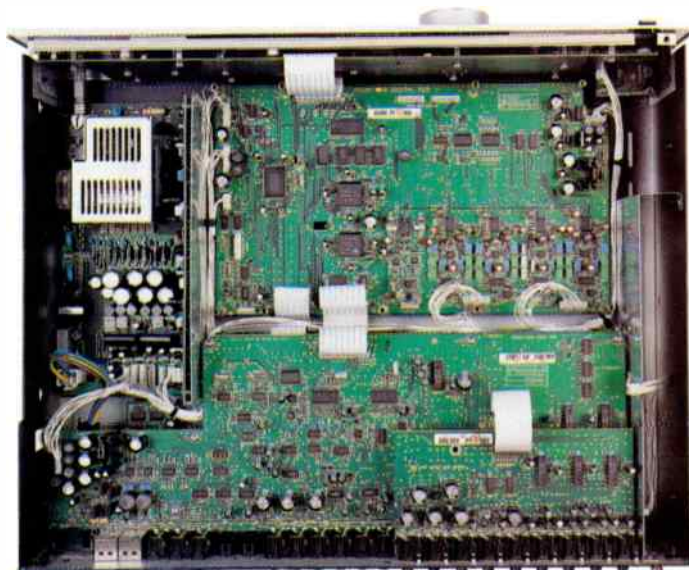
Arcam is moving heavily into multichannel. Its new DVD88+ DVD player is 'all its own work' (with the exception of the main DVD processor chip and transport mechanism), whereas most rivals simply re-engineer Japanese or Chinese designed players. Into this scenario the new FMJ AV8/P7 seven channel preamplifier and power amplifier slots, an avowed 'statement' product and an engineering tour-de-force with a host of technological innovations. Watch out Meridian and Lexicon - Arcam is gunning for you!

The company has put its money where its mouth is - \$1,000,000 of it,

to be precise. The result is the promise of superlative sound, a welter of facilities and brilliant video connectivity. There's real engineering depth behind its cleanly laid out silver fascias - intelligent switched mode power supplies, 'active ground' earthing systems, top notch Wolfson 24bit, 192kHz DAC and digital filter chips, studio quality Burr Brown digital volume controllers, super-wide bandwidth video switching and the option of a top quality (for £110) MM/MC phono stage are just some of the highlights.

Inside the AV8's beautifully machined aluminium (433x430x130mm) casing lurk more features than you can shake a stick

at. THX Ultra 2 Certification, THX Surround EX decoding with 7.1 output (music and movie modes), Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro Logic II, DTS, DTS NEO, DTS ES Matrix and Discrete 6.1 decoding all come as standard. Its display is uncluttered yet informative, working in conjunction with the large volume knob and smaller minor buttons to make the system easy to use. The DIRECT button ensures that the DSP circuitry is put to sleep when not needed, and thankfully, the optional phono section keeps things in the analogue domain (unless you choose otherwise) and all analogue signals are kept on one board for the shortest possible signal paths.



The FMJ P7 is one of the most awesome power amplifiers I've ever seen. Essentially seven fully discrete mono power amplifiers in one massive (433x460x180mm) box, each of which delivers a claimed 150watts into 8 ohms, 235watts into 4 ohms or 300watts into 3.2ohms - and all of which can deliver maximum output simultaneously - it is utterly OTT. Each module comes with its own bridge rectifiers and 20,000 microfarads of storage capacitance, fed from a total of fourteen individual windings on the P7's two massive 1500VA toroidal power transformers which are shared between the seven amplifiers. Four Sanken heavy duty bipolar output transistors per channel are bolted to large custom designed aluminium heatsinks, although a variable-speed cooling fan is fitted as backup. A heavy duty mains cable and socket is fitted, coupled to a microprocessor controlled 'softstart' sequencer which turns on the channels one by one and subsequently monitors them for temperature, output current and DC offset to ensure instant shut-down under fault conditions.

Together, the AV8 and P7 form an impressive pair. In stereo mode you'll be amazed at what it's capable of. Clean, open and smooth in the extreme, this amplifier is akin to my reference Musical Fidelity A308 integrated, but on steroids - the Arcam has 'creamy' smoothness allied to brilliant transparency and openness. Roxy Music's 'More Than This' came over bristling with energy, atmosphere and low-level detail, along with the complete absence of the hard, mechanical edge that

normally comes with AV products forced to just play music. Allied to this is superb power and control - the P7 is able to pump current like there's no tomorrow, and yet retain a vice-like grip on proceedings. The result is speed, depth and focus in spades.

Moving to The Crusader's 'Street Life', the Arcam combo painted a wonderful picture. Randy Crawford's vocals were given all the respect and attention they deserve - carried with an eerie realism that made her appear live in my living room. Every inflection, nuance and breath was made clear as day - yet it was supremely smooth right across the range and yet tonally accurate. Behind her powerfully projected vocals were The Crusaders in all their glory. Supremely tight and superbly syncopated, the Arcam combo held on to their rhythmic and dynamic inflections with true grit. Behind this was the P7's 'velvet fist' - massive current swinging ability that nailed the snare drums to my temples and pounded the back of my chest with that fluid jazz bassline.

Josh One's latest (24bit, 96kHz) techno extravaganza, courtesy of Onkyo's DV-SP800 DVD-Audio player,

showcased the Arcam in surround mode. If its stereo is superb, then the multichannel is magic. That blend of delicacy, finesse and sophistication allied to vast, untrammelled grunt made it a joy to behold. Unlike the (admittedly cheaper) Naim AV2/NAP 150/NAPV 175, the FMJ AV8/P7 had a sweet - almost silky - treble that flattered anything that fed it. Hi-hats were deliciously smooth, while piano notes shimmered with rich harmonics. Bass was bold and brusque yet neither overblown nor overpowering - the P7 simply served what was on order without lagging three bars behind, unlike much mediocre A/V from the East. Able to start and stop with the best of them, its brilliant attack transients and mega wallop mean that as 'audiophile AV' goes, few better the Arcam.

Ultimately there's little to criticise - which is a testament to the absolute 'rightness' of the design. True, a meticulously balanced valve system - complete with tubes made by the hand of Thomas Edison himself and output trannies rolled from the finest silver - might just have the legs on it terms of beguiling musicality. The ultimate Naim AV system could just beat it on control and grip. And the top Meridian processor-power amp combo may offer a shade more insight. But as a do-everything, go-anywhere package this is unbeatable at the price or near it - which is quite something for the company's first foray into true high-end. Right now, this the best reason to go multichannel I can think of. Exquisite.

Arcam FMJ AV8 £2999.90

Arcam FMJ P7 £2499.90

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GET CONNECTED!

AV8 PREAMPLIFIER

7x coaxial digital audio inputs, 2x TOSLINK digital audio inputs, 1x coaxial audio output, 5 pairs of RCA phono audio inputs, 1 pair of RCA phono turntable inputs, 1 pair of RCA phono tape inputs, 1 pair of RCA phono tape outputs, 1 pair of RCA phono VCR inputs, 1 pair of RCA phono VCR outputs, 1 set of 7.1 channel RCA phono audio inputs, 1 set of 7.1 channel RCA phono multi-channel preamp audio outputs plus 2 additional RCA phono subwoofer outputs, 1 pair of Zone 2 RCA phono audio outputs, 3x RCA phono video outputs, 1x RCA Zone 2 phono video output, 5x RCA phono video inputs, 5x S-VHS video inputs, 3x component video inputs, 2x S-VHS video outputs, 1x IEC mains input, 2x 3.5mm remote control ins, 2x 3.5mm remote control outs, RS232C interface, 1x earth terminal.

FMJ P7 POWER AMPLIFIER

1 set of 7.1 channel RCA phono audio inputs, 2 pairs of RCA phono bridge outputs, 1 pair of RCA phono bridge inputs, 4 pairs of loudspeaker outputs, IEC mains input.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

The AV8 processor is a very sophisticated design, based on the latest Crystal dual-processor configuration and able to accommodate every format save dts 96/24 (which requires twice the horsepower). Dolby's various metadata tests are passed with flying colours (Dialog Normalisation, Compression, Noise Modulation etc) while its bass management seems well constructed. The response plot shows the normal emphasis of LFE data (which is typically encoded -10dB below main channel data) in addition to the sub-120Hz roll-off anticipated from the main channels in "small" mode. The toughest bass re-direction occurs when all main channels are set to "small" and their LF content is re-directed to the LFE channel. The mean increase in bass level to the sub is +17.6dB with an attendant increase in distortion of just 0.2% (a limit of 3% is specified by Dolby Labs).

A nominal 2V output is achieved from peak level digital inputs when the volume control is set to "+55", rising to a maximum output of 10.1V with the volume set to "+69". The maximum "+72" volume position will result in a clipped output with any digital signals in excess of -3dBFS.

With LPCM data up to 96kHz, distortion is typically just 0.003% at peak level, falling to a minimum of 0.0015% at -15dBFS. Putting this into

some perspective, the distortion incurred by the partnering P7 amplifier is typically just 0.0005% over much of its power bandwidth, increasing to just 0.0012% at 1kHz/150W/8ohm and 0.006% at 20kHz. Moreover, the extended response of the P7 (see graph) which is just -0.9dB at 100kHz is also just -0.4dB down at ~48kHz which is the maximum bandwidth available from the AV8 with, say, 96kHz DVD-V source material. It's worth bearing in mind that the AV8 is only crystal-locked to 44.1kHz and 48kHz digital inputs - hence the exceedingly low ~120psec jitter (black trace) - while the CS8415A input receiver is 'free running' at 96kHz and suffers a relatively massive increase to ~5000psec (dark blue trace). As a consequence, the AV8 is not an ideal processor for the few 24/96 DVD-V audio discs that are available.

With all other analogue and digital source material, the AV8 is very transparent indeed and ably assisted by the load-tolerance of the partnering P7. This tremendous amplifier yields 2x190W/8ohm, 2x325W/4ohm and a full 5x180W/8ohm and 7x175W/8ohm in multichannel mode.

Under dynamic, music-like conditions this increases to 245W, 445W (10.6A), 745W (19.3A) and a whopping 830W (28.8A) into 8, 4, 2

and 1ohm loads respectively.

The low-ish ~0.08ohm output impedance will also help maintain a more uniform system response, provided that suitably low resistance cables are employed. I have found that the heavier gauge of QED's X-Tube series are a particularly good match, by the way. All told, the Arcam combination is both a subjective and technical tour-de-force and very highly recommended.

AV8 PROCESSOR

Frequency Response

48kHz LPCM 0.00dB (20Hz)
to -0.45dB (20kHz)

Distortion	Front	Surround
-6dBFS	0.0035%	0.0030%
-30dBFS	0.0017%	0.0015%
-60dBFS	0.09%	0.11%
-90dBFS	1.8%	1.9%

Separation

1kHz	101dB	102dB
20kHz	95dB	96dB

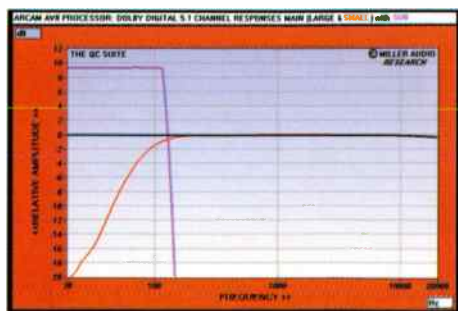
Noise (IEC A) 105.8dB 104.9dB

Output 2.02V
1.99V (Vol = 55; Max = 10.1V)

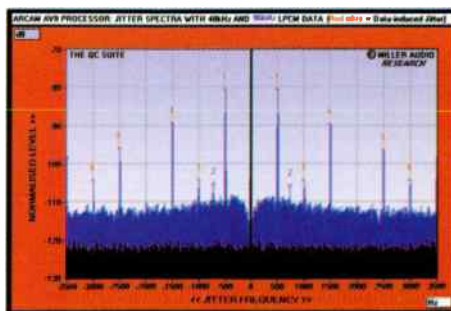
P7 POWER AMPLIFIER

Power output	
Stereo (2 ch.)	190watts
Surround-sound (7 ch)	175watts

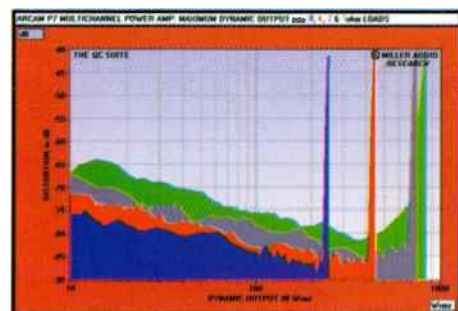
Arcam AV8



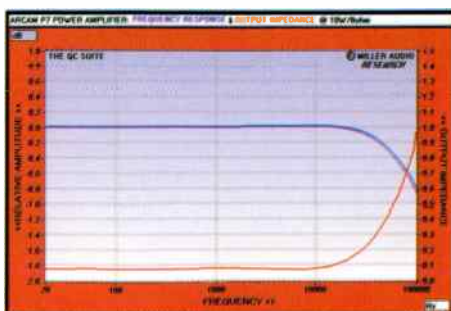
Arcam AV8



Arcam P7



Arcam P7



World Verdict 
Assuredly Arcam's best ever product to date, it catapults the company to the top of the AV tree.



DEMONSTRATION ROOM AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL, MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218836

KECL82 VALVE AMPLIFIER KIT

The Kecl82 is our latest introduction for the true beginner and designed by Andy Grove. A simple and elegant design based on the classic ECL82 valve, a triode and power pentode sharing the same glass envelope. The amplifier consists of two ECL82s per channel, the triode sections work as the input/phase splitter and the pentode sections work in push-pull for the output stage. The amplifier offers 8 watts into an 8 ohm load, the hum level is extremely low, comparison to solid state standards. The chassis is constructed of 1.6mm mild steel with a black powder coat finish. There is only one signal input pair controlled at the front by a volume control for that simple touch. The speaker connects are the standard 4mm banana type, positioned at the rear, as are the mains input which is received through an IEC lead, mains switch and earth post. We have made the construction as simple as is humanly possible with comprehensive instructions. The circuitry is based on a single printed circuit board. Ultimately this kit is for the guy who has always fancied a go at building a kit, but never dared. Simon Pope says, "It's a great introduction to the valve sound. For it's humble price it delivers a full and rich sound with great detail and good depth." Kecl82 weighs 9kg. External dimensions are 30cm(w)x23.5cm(d)x11cm(h)

NEW KIT

£195



KIT6550 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT & KAT6550 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT

£595



**KIT6550
upgrade kit now
available £130**

£580



**KAT6550
upgrade kit now
available £120**

These are our new 6550 series amplifiers. A pure class A design providing 40 watts into a 8 ohm load.(available in a 4 ohm version if required) A truly high end design by Andy Grove, using Svetlana 6550Cs in push-pull (any 6550 or KT88 tube can be used with this amp). It features valve rectification (5U4) a choke pi filter power supply and is hard wired. Weighs 19kg with dimensions 390mm(w) x

330mm(d) x 190mm(h) with valves or 220mm(h) with cage. Simon Pope says - "If you favour attack and rhythmic grip, together with a smoothness of sound that's incredibly easy to live with, the KiT6550 could well be the kit amp for you. The 6550 is one for those who like a valve sound married to the attack and clout of a good quality solid state design".

Kel84 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

The Kel84 features a pair of EL84 valves per channel in push-pull configuration. They give 15 watts into an 8 ohm load. The output transformers are Ultra Linear. Up front the ECF80 input/phase splitter valve has an extremely smooth sound. The Kel84 has very low hum, for simplicity the kit is built on a printed circuit board. A strong steel chassis is fronted by a 3mm anodised front panel and attractive chromed custom made knobs. There are five line level inputs, plus one monitor input, with a tape output included, all controlled from the front panel. At the rear is a mains switch/IEC power input, earth post, phonos, and 4mm banana sockets. Simon Pope says, "The quality that can be gleaned from this amp is a fine introduction to the joys of the valve sound. The Kel84 will highlight all the intricacies and depth of detail in your favourite recordings whilst retaining a warmth and fullness that is almost exclusive to pure valve amps and is rare at this price point." Kel84 weighs 10kg. External dimensions with valves are 300mm(w) x 270mm(d) x 150mm(h).

£278



2A3 PSE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

The 2A3 PSE integrated amplifier offers a seriously hi-end sound, but without the cost usually associated with single-ended amplifiers. The stereo chassis houses, on the output, 2 x 2A3 in parallel single ended configuration and a single 6SN7 as the driver tube per channel. The valve rectified power supply consists of a 5U4 and a 10h choke. This feedbackless design provides 8.5watts into an 8 ohm load, so a good sensitivity speaker is required above 90dB. It can accept 6 line-level inputs fully controllable from the front panel. We provide the excellent Alps Blue potentiometer as standard. The amplifier is hard wired so plenty of scope for tweaking in the future. Simon Pope says, "The 2A3 PSE is extremely impressive piece of kit, good imaging, wide sound stage, nicely extended on the high frequency and tremendous bass thump. Weight - 20kg, external dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 220mm(h)

£550



DIY KITS IN THE WORLD

ALL NEW SERIES II MODULAR PRE-AMP KIT

The PRE-II is a valve pre-amplifier with six inputs, tape monitor and two sets of output sockets. It utilises a high quality line driver transformer and x5 gain. The PHONO-II is a dedicated valve phono stage that incorporates a step-up transformer for MC users. Finally, PSU-II is a power supply unit that feeds both the PRE-II and PHONO-II.

Power Supply Unit (PSU-II)	£195.00
Pre-amplifier (PRE-II)	£195.00
Phono Stage (PHONO-II)	£110.00
Moving coil step-up transformer	£77.00
Passive pre-amplifier (PAS-II)	£215.00



KAT34 VALVE POWER AMPLIFIER KIT & KIT34 VALVE INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER KIT

£480



**KAT34
upgrade kit now
available £120**

KIT34 is a 32 watt stereo valve integrated amplifier, featuring a pair of EL34s, in push-pull mode, per channel, plus an ECF80 pentode/triode as input/phase splitter. The power supply is valve rectified (2 x 5U4), using a heavy duty choke to achieve exceptional smoothing. The output transformers are 14% Ultra Linear tapped to keep distortion down to its lowest level and the kit is totally hard wired utilising three tag boards. It has five line level inputs, plus a tape-in and tape out, all

£495



**KIT34
upgrade kit now
available £130**

controllable from the front. Simon Pope says, "This integrated bring together the best sonic virtues of our KIT88, kel34 and top of the range 300B PSE in an affordable package. The highlights of the sound are a deep and taut bass response, together with an open and highly detailed mid and high frequency response that only the best valve designs can achieve... a true valve classic." Weight 22kg, External dimensions with valves fitted - 390mm(w) x 360mm(d) x 210mm(h)

300B PSU MONOBLOC KIT

Our Parallel Single Ended amplifiers offer ultimate sound quality. Each monobloc has two of the beautifully linear 300B directly heated triode in its output stage, producing 20 watts into an 8 ohm load. At the front we have a 6AU6 pentode and an ECC82 as the driver valve. This design utilises a 5U4 rectifier valve in the power supply, in combination with a 10H choke, giving an extremely quiet supply. Both mains and output transformers we E/I pattern.

For purists, feedback is switchable and the kit is totally hard-wired. For those that require valves we provide the superb Tesla 300Bs, Russian 5U4s and European 6AU6s & ECC82. Simon Pope says, "Not to put too fine a point on it, the sound these monoblocs create is among the finest that can be encountered in hi-fi." Our 300B PSE kit bears an affordable price of £875.00 (UK price) excluding valves. Each monobloc weighs 23kgs., external dimensions with valves: 25cm(w) x 38cm(h) x 22cm(d) per monobloc.

**300B PSU
upgrade kit now
available £150**

**£875
A pair**



HD83 VALVE HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER KIT

The HD83 headphone amplifier is a beautifully simple design using Mullard ECL83 valves, a triode and power pentode housed in the same envelope. It works directly from any source, be it CD, tape, tuner etc., or from an amplifier's tape out or pre-amp out sockets. The circuit uses high specification E/I output transformers that will drive any headphone load from 16 ohms to over 300 ohms depending on how the secondaries are wired up. The HD83 is a single-ended design with the power pentode wired up in triode configuration for added sonic purity, and it is as quiet as a mouse. For sound quality Jon Marks says, "The bass is punchy and controlled without becoming artificial, while treble has the crispness of the best solid-state, with the tonal purity, delicacy and speed associated with valves." External dimensions 18cm(w) x 30cm(l) x 8cm (h) weight 4kg.

£195





NEW DEMONSTRATION ROOM NOW OPEN AT 12A SPRING GARDENS, NEWPORT PAGNELL,
MILTON KEYNES, BUCKS MK16 0EE - CALL FOR DETAILS ON 01908 218836

Kel84 Upgrade kit
1 x 100K Alps blue Potentiometer
2 x 1000uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 50V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 400V Jensen paper
in oil

£100

KIT6550 Upgrade kit
1 x 100K Alps blue Potentiometer
2 x 2200uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 100V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper
in oil

£130

KaT6550 Upgrade kit
2 x 2200uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 100V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper
in oil

£120

Kit34 Upgrade kit
1 x 100K Alps blue Potentiometer
2 x 1000uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 50V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper
in oil

£130

KaT34 Upgrade kit
2 x 1000uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 50V Black Gate
4 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper
in oil

£120

300B PSE Upgrade kit
2 x 470uF, 16V Black Gate
4 x 100uF, 100V Black Gate
2 x 0.22uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil
2 x 0.47uF, 630V Jensen paper in oil
4 x 35A Bridge Rectifier KBPC3502
4 x 4700uF, 16V

£150



"Kit34 Upgrade Kit"

BARGAIN BASEMENT

2A3 PSE chassis and base plate (without face plate), slight flaw on paint work, can hold 1 x 120 lam, 2 x 78 lam E/I transformer, 3 x octals and 4 x UX4s, hardwired. **Price - £50.00**

Kel84 chassis and base plate (Without face plate), slight flaw on paint work, can hold 1 x 78 lam, 2 x 29 lam E/I transformers and 6 x B9A. **Price - £40.00**

Audax drive unit, HM130Z0, aerogel, 5 inch mid/base unit
UK price £35.00 each

5687 valves, double triode
UK price £7.00 each

Kit34 chassis - **UK price £50.00 each**

Pls fax/tel
00 44 (0) 1908 218836
to order

Mains transformers & Chokes

KIT6550/KAT6550 mains transformers
2 inch stack, 130mm(h)x120mm(w)x125mm(l) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries 425V-0V-425V, 350mA, 0V-5V, 6A, 3.15V, 0V-3.15V, 9A. Suitable for 120V & 240Vac operation

KEL84 mains transformer
1.5 inch stack, 90mm(h)x80mm(w)x95mm(d) drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 0V-240V 300mA, 3.15V-0V-3.15V, 5.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT88/KAT88 mains toroidal transformer
120mm dia. x 60mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-95V, 450mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 9A, suitable for 120/240V operation

KIT34/KAT34/KIT6550/KAT6550 choke
1.25 inch stack, 65mm(h)x105mm(w) with fitting holes x 60mm(d), clamp fitting, 2.5 H, 350mA

300B PSE mains E/I transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries: 380V-0V-380V, 180mA/150-0V-150V, 25mA/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V, 1.2A/0V-5V/3A/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 0.4A suitable for 120/240V operation

KEL80 mains toroidal transformer (encapsulated)
130mm dia. x 65mm(h). Secondaries: 195V-0V-95V, 390mA/0V-27V, 100mA/3.15V-0V-3.15V, 7.5A, suitable for 120/240V operation

HD83 mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-165V, 75mA/3.15V, 0V-3.15V, 1A, suitable for 120/240V operation

PSU-II mains toroidal transformer
80mm dia. x 35mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-270V, 60mA/0V-10V, 2A, suitable for 120/240V operation

TRANS1 mains toroidal transformer
95mm dia. x 30mm(h). Secondaries: 0V-370V, 150mA/0V-6.3V, 3.5A 300B E/I choke 65mm(h) x 70mm(d) x 80mm(w) open frame fitting, 10H, 180mA.

KEL84 E/I choke
0.5 inch stack, 40mm(h)x35mm(d)x70mm(w) clamp fitting, 1H, 250mA

PSU-II E/I
40mm(h) x 35mm(d) x 70mm (w) clamp fitting, 15H, 20mA

KIT34/KAT34 mains transformer
2.5 inch stack, 120mm(h)x115mm(w)x95mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Secondaries 365V - 0V - 365V, 300mA/0V - 5V, 6A/3.15V - 0V - 3.15V, 7.5A, Suitable for 120/240V operation.

Output transformers

KIT6550/KAT6550 E/I 16% TAPPED UL push-pull output transformer
2 inch stack, 80mm (w) x 95mm (l) x 100mm (h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 4.5K, 16% UL tapped. Secondary 4 Or 8 ohm, pls specify on order. max output 45 watts, max current 180mA, valves, KT88, 6550 etc

KEL84 E/I Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer
1.25 inch stack, 76mm(h)x68mm(w)x76mm(d) Primary - secondary, 8K with 12.5% UL tap - 8ohms, max o/p-15watts, max current 150mA valves EL84 etc

KIT88/KAT88 E/I push-pull output transformer
80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h). Primary-secondary 10K - 8ohms, max o/p-40watts, max current-160mA valves-KT88, 6550, EL34

KIT34/KAT34 E/I 14% tapped Ultra Linear push-pull output transformer
2 inch stack, 80mm(w)x95mm(l)x100mm(h), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary-secondary 6.4K, 14% UL taps, Secondary 8ohm, max output 34watts, max current 150mA, valves EL34, 6L6, 6CA7

HD83 E/I single ended output transformer
40mm(w)x50mm(l) x55mm(h). Primary-secondary 4K - 4 x 64ohms windings, max o/p-1watts, max current-25mA valves-ECL83 etc

Pre-II E/I driver transformer
80mm(w)x60mm(l) x65mm(h), 6:1 step down transformer, max current-10mA valves-6922 etc pre-amp stage
300B PSE E/I parallel single ended output transformer
130mm(h) x 95mm(w) x 115mm(d), drop through fitting with zinc cap. Primary 1K5 Secondary 8R, output .

Printed circuit boards

Kel84 Printed Circuit Board 280mm(w) x 135mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

KIT88/KaT88 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).

Kel34 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 310mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).

Kel80 Printed Circuit Board (a pair) 120mm(w) x 215mm(l) x 2.4mm(d).

HD83 Printed Circuit Board 140mm(w) x 160mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

PSU-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

PRE-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).

PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board 105mm(w) x 130mm(l) x 1.6mm(d).



Hi-Fi World in Malaysia at Millennium Hi-Fi & Av. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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137 Jalan Pendekar 2, Taman Skudai Baru, 81300 Skudai, Johor DT
tel: 607 554 5171 fax: 607 554 7645

e-mail: info@millennium-audio.com

These are expert kits, not for the inexpert. You must be able to solder and read a circuit diagram. The valve kits contain lethal voltages. We cannot be held responsible for any errors arising from the construction of these kits.



order on our website

www.worldaudiodesign.co.uk

world audio design

amplifier kits description	order No.	qty	uk (inc vat & carriage)	overseas (exc. vat & carriage)
Kec82 valve amplifier kit (with valves)(available 01/12/02)	Kec82 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00	£170.00
2A3 PSE valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)	2A3 PSE (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£550.00	£471.00
2A3 PSE valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)	2A3 PSE (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450.00	£385.00
KaT6550 valve power amplifier kit (with valves)	KaT6550 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£580.00	£495.00
KaT6550 valve power amplifier kit (without valves)	KaT6550 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£450.00	£380.00
KaT 6550 upgrade kit	KaT 6550 upgrade	<input type="checkbox"/>	£120.00	£105.00
KiT6550 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)	KiT6550 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£595.00	£510.00
KiT6550 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)	KiT6550 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£465.00	£395.00
KIT 6550 upgrade kit	KiT 6550 upgrade	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£110.00
KAT34 valve power amplifier kit (with valves)	KAT34(with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£480.00	£410.00
KAT34 valve power amplifier kit (without valves)	KAT34(without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£415.00	£354.00
KaT34 upgrade kit	KaT34 upgrade	<input type="checkbox"/>	£120.00	£105.00
KiT34 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)	KiT34 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£495.00	£420.00
KiT34 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)	KiT34 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£430.00	£365.00
KIT 34 upgrade kit	KiT34 upgrade	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£110.00
Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (with valves)	Kel84 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£278.00	£237.00
Kel84 valve integrated amplifier kit (without valves)	Kel84 (without valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£248.00	£212.00
Kel84 upgrade kit	Kel84 upgrade	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100.00	£85.00
PSU II power supply unit module	PSU - II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00	£167.00
PRE II pre-amplifier module	PRE - II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00	£167.00
PHONO - II phono stage module (with valves)	PHONO II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00	£95.00
PAS II passive pre-amplifier module with 10K or 50K attenuator (pls specify)	PAS II	<input type="checkbox"/>	£215.00	£185.00
Moving Coil step up transformers	MC - step up (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00	£68.00
HD83 Valve Headphone amplifier kit (with valves)	HD83 (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£195.00	£167.00
300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (with valves) - a pair	300B PSE (with valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£1177.00	£1002.00
300B PSE Valve Monobloc amplifier kit (without valves) - a pair	300B PSE (no valves)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£875.00	£745.00
300B PSE Upgrade Kit - a pair	300B PSE upgrade kit	<input type="checkbox"/>	£150.00	£130.00

parts description	order No.	qty	uk (inc vat & carriage)	overseas (exc. vat & carriage)
2A3 PSE mains transformer	2A3 PSE mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£115.00	£98.00
KiT/KaT6550 mains transformer	6550 mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£120.00	£105.00
KiT34 mains transformer	KiT34 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100.00	£85.00
Kel84 E/I mains transformer	Kel84 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£60.00	£47.00
HD83 mains toroidal transformer	HD83 - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£39.00	£34.00
PSU-II mains toroidal transformer	PSU-II - mains T	<input type="checkbox"/>	£39.00	£34.00
300B PSE E/I mains transformer	300B - mains T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£115.00	£98.00
KiT34 E/I chokeKIT6550 E/I UL	KiT34 - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
Kel84 E/I choke	Kel84 - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
KiT6550 choke	KiT6550 choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
300B PSE choke	300B - choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
2A3 PSE choke	2A3 PSE choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£40.00	£34.00
PSU-II E/I choke	PSU-choke	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
KiT6550 E/I UL push pull output transformer (4 ohm? or 8ohm?)	6550 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£112.00
KiT34 E/I UL push pull output transformer (4ohm? or 8ohm?)	34 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£112.00
Kel84 E/I push-pull output transformer (4 ohm? or 8ohm?)	Kel84 - O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£90.00	£78.00
2A3 PSE parallel single ended output transformer	2A3 PSE O/P T (pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£130.00	£112.00
HD83 E/I single ended output transformer	HD83 - O/P T(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£100.00	£86.00
Pre-II E/I driver transformer	PRE-II - driver T(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00	£68.00
300B PSE E/I output transformer(4 ohm? or 8ohm?)	300B - O/P T (each)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£110.00	£94.00
Kel84 Printed Circuit board	Kel84 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£30.00	£25.50
Kel34 Printed Circuit Board	Kel34 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£12.00	£11.40
Kel80 Printed Circuit Board	Kel80 - PCB(pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	£52.00	£44.65
HD83 Printed Circuit Board	HD83 - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
PSU-II Printed Circuit Board	PSU-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
PRE-II Printed Circuit Board	PRE-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
PHONO-II Printed Circuit Board	PHONO-II - PCB	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
Tag board 2 x 16 connections (hard wiring)	TAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	£4.00	£3.00
Alps blue audio grade 50K dual log potentiometer	ALPS - 50K	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00	£12.00
Alps blue audio grade 100K dual log potentiometer	ALPS - 100K	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00	£12.00
Stepped attenuator with resistor pack 10K of 50K (pls specify)	Attenuator + resistor pack	<input type="checkbox"/>	£75.00	£65.00
LCR 22.5uF 440Vdc polypropylene capacitors	LCR - 22.5U	<input type="checkbox"/>	£10.00	£8.50
Jensen 0.47uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor	JEN - 0.47U 630V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£20.00	£17.00
Jensen 0.22uF 630Vdc paper in oil capacitor	JEN - 0.22U 630V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£16.00	£14.00
Jensen 0.22uF, 400V paper in oil capacitor	JEN - 0.22U, 400V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£12.00	£10.20
Black Gate 4700uF 16Vdc electrolytic	BG - 4700U 16V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£16.00	£13.60
Black Gate 100uF 100Vdc electrolytic	BG - 100U 100V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£10.00	£8.50
Black Gate 470uF 16Vdc electrolytic	BG - 470U 16V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£8.00	£7.00
Black Gate 1000uF, 16V electrolytic	BG - 1000U 16V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£8.00	£6.80
Black Gate 100uF, 50V electrolytic	BG - 100U 50V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£6.00	£5.20
Black Gate 2200uF, 6.3V electrolytic	BG - 2200uF, 6.3V	<input type="checkbox"/>	£12.00	£10.20
650V safety gloves (a pair)	SAFETY GLOVES	<input type="checkbox"/>	£14.00	£12.00
2A3 PSE/6550/34 cage	2A3 PSE/34/6550 cage	<input type="checkbox"/>	£80.00	£68.00

World Audio Design Amplifiers fully built from Malaysia

Title	Description	Price (exc. VAT + Carriage)	Title	Description	Price (exc. VAT + Carriage)
1A40	40W EL34 integrated	£590.00	MB80	80W EL34 monobloc	£1190.00
1A36	36W KT88 integrated	£895.00	PA11	Valve pre-amplifier	£699.00
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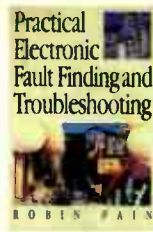
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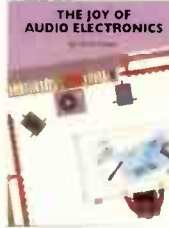
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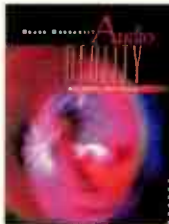
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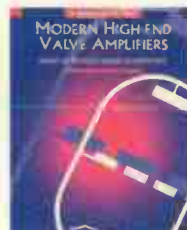
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classic cuts

The Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* was good – but *Surf's Up* was better, had far more to say and was arguably their *Sgt Pepper*, opines Andy Giles.

Let's get this straight – the Beach Boys were not Rock'n'Roll. You can't be short-haired, tanned, wear Hawaiian shirts, surf and be straight to reasonably expect qualification for a life in the same lane as Led Zeppelin or The Rolling Stones. Nor sing songs softly with high note harmonies and references to God and how He only knows what a guy would be without a swimsuit beach babe. That's how The Beach Boys started. But, by 1971, when the much-ignored Beach Boys' *Surf's Up* album hit the streets, things were a little different. Beards and kaftans, drugs and Buddhism, all had invaded the foam and sand of sun-drenched clean-cut coastline America.

The Beach Boys' 1966 *Pet Sounds* was a classic (although now hopelessly overrated) but, a year later the band got lost a little during the 'Summer of Love' and the release of The Beatles peerless *Sgt. Pepper*. The Beach Boys just couldn't compete, despite a spirited attempt with the *Smiley Smile* LP, containing the brilliant *Heroes and Villains*, that year. They then went quiet, suing record companies, doing drugs and religion and, not surprisingly, getting badly mixed up. Released in July 1971, *Surf's Up*, in which both those two

impostors played no small part, was an unwitting rebirth. Now regarded by many as The Beach Boys final album of any worth, it was never universally praised. The later (1974) *Endless Summer* was the real post *Pet Sounds* Beach Boys success. *Endless Summer* this is not, but it is a fascinating album for all that – and for me the Beach Boys' best.

They were in turmoil, as has been said. Trying to shake off the dated image of surfing good guys was not easy and the band felt unregarded and unfashionable – which they were. The title *Surf's Up* could just imply an ending of the old ways and the cover artwork speaks volumes; painted in sombre blues and greens, a Quixotic figure sprawls heavily on an emaciated horse. Look carefully – and is that a beach at night, with the steed, Rocinante, sipping at the sea?

The most appealing moments of musical grain are provided by the sporadic use of synthesisers. In terms of its message, *Surf's Up* ostensibly addresses pressing environmental, social and health issues. Very laudable. Here, the sun-kissed psychedelica that ephemerally appeared on *Smiley Smile* came to fruition. It's not a psychedelic album by any manner of means – but it goes deep, of that there's no doubt. Take the quirky old-time America references so well manifested in the track *Disney Girls*. The ironic juxtaposition of Bruce Johnston's *Disney Girls* beside Mike Love's *Student Demonstration Time* mirrored the ragged emotions of the band as much as rapidly changing American culture. Johnston's elegy to the sugary innocent neighbourhood lifestyle of the post-war US era was wistful remembrance, beautifully conveyed; Love's piercing lyrics about state violence towards radical students (Based on *Riot in Cell Block Number 9*) were in stark contrast, to say the least.

Don't Go Near the Water and Lookin' at Tomorrow (A Welfare Song) are as much expressions of the group's fortunes as they are upon the world's, but the most moving section of *Surf's Up* is Brian Wilson's three-song contribution at the album's end, obviously Beatle influenced (*Abbey Road* springs to mind). Wilson was feeling isolated and, of the trio, the first two tracks record his acquiescence to departure. *A Day in the Life of a Tree* opens with the lines, *Feel the wind burn through my skin/ The pain, the air is killing me, and on the gloomy keyboard driven *Til I Die*, he mourns being a cork on the ocean/ Floating over the raging sea.*

Which brings us to the final, title song. It's truly worth buying this album for this track alone. *Surf's Up*, the track, was recovered from the legendary discarded *Smile* sessions and was apparently intended as The Beach Boys *A Day in the Life*. Here it shines through in all its glory, from Van Dyke Parks' skewed lyricism to the celestial "child is father to the man" coda. Written in 1966 (the lyrics bear little close inspection unless you're suitably chemically-prepared) *Surf's Up*, is a tour de force of quasi-baroque psychedelia, and most compelling. Carl Wilson delivers a remarkably soulful performance (despite the surreal words), particularly at the song's most powerful central declaration of *Surf's Up/ mm.. mm*, which leads into Brian Wilson's coda - one of the most stirring moments of his career. Swathed in an abundance of contradictions, *Surf's Up* defined the Beach Boys' turbulent career better than any other album. If you only want to own one of their records – this is it.



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We all want to hear a good, solid bass line underpinning a rock track, and an orchestra takes on size and might when the timpani thunders. And now there is DVD and SACD to give us even bigger, cleaner high fidelity explosions. But is it possible to get really good bass in the home?

The subject comes up in our reader's letters this month and I've seen a few interesting discussions on the internet recently.

We all know from experience that big loudspeakers produce a lot of bass and, technically, that is a simple but true statement. The heart of the problem is that as frequency decreases increasing volumes of air must be moved to maintain constant sound pressure.

You can move a lot of air by making a small cone travel over a big distance and it has been tried, but it is difficult to make a long throw drive unit that can survive serious power input without the (small) voice coil overheating, or the cone flying apart. And if that isn't bad enough, a small, hard working drive unit suffers what's known as "bass doubling", or serious amounts of second harmonic distortion, often in excess of 10%. In a nutshell then, small bass units are not a good idea.

By way of contrast a big bass unit is a better match to the air load upon it, suffering far less distortion as a result. A big cone can move a large volume of air easily. Large outdoor PAs, like the monsters used at London's Notting Hill Carnival where 18in drivers in enormous cabinets vibrate your body as you walk past, demonstrate this effectively.

Perhaps surprisingly, as the size of a drive unit increases so does its

acoustic efficiency and so monster bass bins - and big hi-fi loudspeakers need less power than you might imagine. For example, for their 15in Professional woofers Audax quote 100dB sound pressure level (SPL) from one watt input - much better than hi-fi drivers, which manage around 90dB.

The hi-fi industry has never

“Horns and transmission lines do have a different sound and often an impressive one.

quite taken to 15in bass drivers like this because they are too humungous, although I do remember having a Saturday job in one of London's Edgware Road hi-fi stores eons past (early 1970s) and every now and then the assistants would scatter when a customer asked for a Goodmans Magister. It sported a massive 15in bass unit and weighed a ton.

In those days 12in bass drivers reigned supreme, in 'speakers like Goodmans Magnum K2 and the Leak 600 - and they could produce bass. Quite often it was soggy, but not if your name was Tannoy and you put a whopping 15in dual-concentric into a large broom cupboard and called it a Lancaster or York. Awesome!

Nowadays, with computer aided design we could produce killer bass with 12in drive units but their days are more or less over. Cost, weight (i.e. shipping and packing cost) and ugliness are the main drawbacks. Another is stereo imaging and overall cohesion. Broad fronted cabinets give rotten stereo and messy to non-existent imaging. It was all very well in the days when stereo meant drums in the left channel and vocals in the right, but

times have changed and now we need well designed, phase coherent loudspeakers to produce solid, believable images in defined locations - not just anywhere. Big bass drivers make this very difficult.

A good solution to this problem is to mount two or more 8in drivers, one above the other, in a narrow cabinet. This gets close to providing the same cone area as one 12in unit (sorry about the Imperial units - it doesn't sound right in Metric!). The cabinet remains reasonably narrow, which limits its visual impact in a room, as well as maintaining good imaging. And, finally, two drivers can handle much more amplifier power. So if you want plenty of bass, check out 'speakers like this.

I have said little about bass quality, which is a pity - it needs a book in itself. At present if you want a generally clean, well defined sound accompanied by real bass impact I strongly suggest you get a loudspeaker that can be sand filled, like a Mordant Short 914. Sand filling, using fine, dry silver sand from a builders merchant, allows an owner to add mass and damping - and it does make a very big difference.

Horns and transmission lines do have a different sound and often an impressive one, but again cost and weight act against them these days.

The days of 'good big uns' have gone (Tannoy Westminster Royal HE excepted) and modern loudspeakers don't really compare in terms of bass slam, but quality subwoofers (e.g. REL) go lower than ever, so it isn't all bad news.

And, I've found, when you tell a manufacturer that you had to sand fill their loudspeaker for review purposes they tend not to want to send a lorry and two men to collect them. So as far as I'm concerned the loudspeaker industry is definitely moving in the right direction! ●

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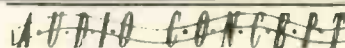


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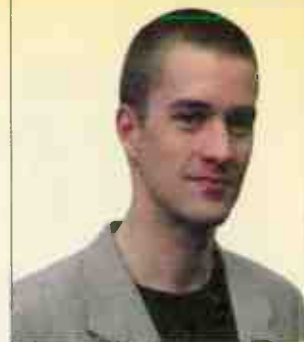
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Thanks to the twin powers of DVD-A and SACD the likes of Marantz have declared that 2-channel stereo will be dead in a matter of years.

As they would never have dared to do in Huxley's, "Brave New World", I'm going to look at the past and future here and, as ever, put a retailers perspective on events.

My own recollection of surround sound begins around the mid-late eighties with Dolby surround sound. Unlike Quadraphonic it was never really aimed at the music market and hence, never really taken all that seriously by the hi-fi trade.

This changed, however, with the introduction of Dolby Pro-Logic. This was an enhanced version that added a central 'speaker for improved dialogue. One would hardly have thought it would make it more appealing to audiophiles yet, for the first time, there was a degree of promotion this way with the prospect of Dolby Pro-Logic music discs. As it happened, these discs were few and far between, and really only of curiosity value in any case.

All the same events conspired to make the format something of a success. In the past, surround sound units tended to be of the fearsomely expensive Lexicon or Yamaha DSP1 type, or the truly low-fi, third division, Japanese brands.

In 1989 Marantz (surprise, surprise) launched the first affordable Dolby Pro-Logic processor, the £350 SP50. Whilst it may not have exactly taken the market by storm it was certainly a landmark product. Not only did it offer decent surround sound for films, at a fair price, but it's timing was perfect. It came at just the time

when Nicam stereo televisions were coming on stream, and stereo videos were finally being sold at a reasonable price. This meant that the early 1990's saw something of a boom for AV as all the aspects needed to make a decent, stereo sourced, system came together. Even Laser Disc players had fallen in price and, whilst being an enthusiasts only

“ There are still very few multi-channel amps that really do justice to DVD-A and SACD.

product, at least sold to a wider number of such enthusiasts. Yet it still wasn't a patch, musically, on traditional hi-fi, even when using the finest Laser Disc machines.

From a retailer's point of view I watched the interest in surround sound actually fall away as the nineties rolled on. At a point around the election of the present government it even looked as though the whole surround sound movement was on it's last legs. Despite Yamaha's success in constantly tweaking and improving the breed, Pro-Logic seemed very old hat, and Laser Disc had still to make an impact on the mass market. Talking from experience I will remember there coming a time when some retailers wondered whether or not it had a future and justified shelf space. Instead, many turned to Lifestyle products.

As to what happened next, I'm sure I hardly need remind you. Dolby had quietly launched their first digital system, Dolby Digital, just months before DVD came bursting onto the scene. Okay, so the first DVD players and Digital Dolby units didn't exactly rush out of the door, yet it was a double

whammy that really captured the public's imagination. Of course it was still really a film based format, but by improving the specification still further DVD-Audio finally provided a system that could even impress audiophiles.

At about the same time, Sony launched equally impressive SACD, which could also work in a multi-channel format.

Now we have decent modern sources for surround sound music. The trouble is that, at the moment, the ancillaries haven't quite caught up. Loudspeakers are generally OK in terms of dynamic range, yet the dispersion of rear 'speaker's is still a debatable issue. Should they be dipolar, bi-polar or of a conventional type when playing music in surround sound?

Even further behind are amplifiers. There are still very few multi-channel amps that really do justice to DVD-A and SACD. Of course there's the odd exception such as the Marantz PS/SM17, yet it's this area that could really see big changes in the future. Traditional audiophile hi-fi companies have been talking about multi-channel amps with no decoding built in for some time now.

Interestingly, last month saw the launch of the new £200 Alchemist ADS500 amp. This is one of the first budget amps to be marketed not as a home cinema amp, but as a decent stereo one with the potential for multi-channel thanks to it's 5.1 input and 'speaker outlets. Dolby Digital, it should be noted, is not included, and neither is DTS. It's the start of a trend that could well mean in future your typical NAD, Rotel and Arcam amp will have 5.1 inputs and 'speaker outputs. Simply attach a SACD or DVD-A player, five 'speakers and you'll have surround sound at last worthy of the high fidelity tag. The World Director of Huxley's New World would, I'm sure, be most impressed. ●

HEAVY SHIFT

David Price waxes lyrical about Sony's biggest, weightiest and most stunning turntable ever, the TTS-8000.

The period of 1977-1980 was nothing less than The Golden Age of Japanese Turntables. Marantz TT-1000, Technics SP10, Denon DP2000, Micro DDX-1000, Pioneer PL-70L, Kenwood LO-7D, Nakamichi TX-1000, Onkyo PX-100M, Diatone LT-1 – they were all stunning feats of mechanical engineering.

There's no consensus as to which machine is the crème de la crème of Japanese superdecks, but the machine you see before you is very probably it. Sony's TT-S8000 is an awesome.

The motor unit locks into the separate plinth by four Allen bolts, which is the first example of this deck's over-the-top approach to construction. The reason is that at 20kg (for the motor unit alone), gravity's pull does a very good job of anchoring it down. The plinth is made of a very inert, dead, concrete-like material and adds an additional 20kg to the total mass. Inset into the plinth is a large recess for an armboard, which – very conveniently – accepts Michell arm bases. Underneath, four rubber feet support the table-bending weight. So solid is it all that vibration doesn't

stand a chance – who needs springs and grommets when your deck is heavier than a JCB?

The 38cm platter carries stroboscope indentations around its perimeter for 33.3 and 45rpm – as far as DD decks go it again weighs a

imprinted on the platter's inner rim. The result is a Technics SP10-beating 0.015% wow and flutter figure.

The sound of this thing is amazing. Frankly, its bass completely blitzes anything to come out of the UK during that period, LP12 and its ilk included. It has a solidity, grip, power, weight and slam that has you wondering what has happened to your speakers. Further up, a very clean and open midband with a soundstage of 'architectural' precision lends the deck its reference tag. Treble is open, smooth



and utterly uncluttered. True, the Sony TT-S8000 does sound a tad 'matter of fact', lacking the LP12's superb joie de vivre, but in almost every other respect it completely pastes it.

Unfortunately, decks of this type aren't exactly ten a penny. Should you ever find one, make sure it starts and stops properly – the only known weakness is the touch sensitive control which can fail with age. Think in terms of thousands of pounds, and start your search in Germany, which took far more than the UK simply because its audiophiles remained receptive to the joys of Japan during this very special period.

ton. The frontally mounted controls offer instant 'touch sensitive' start and stop operation (the platter spins up in fractions of a second, as per all self-respecting Japanese esoterica) and power on/off. A flap lifts to reveal switches for quartz lock on/off and +/- 6% pitch – as per all late seventies direct drives, vari-speed was de rigueur due to broadcast/transcription pretensions.

Inside lurks a brushless, slotless motor the size of which you're unlikely to see outside laundry-grade washing machines. A quartz signal is referenced against the actual speed of the platter, which is sensed by a tape head counting magnetic pulses



Twenty five years ago, fans of real hi-fi would be running radically different systems to those of today. Any self-respecting late seventies audiophile who kept up with the magazines of the day would be doubtless have a Pioneer PL12 taking pride of place in his 'music centre', tracking a Shure M75ED 'magnetic' cartridge at some infinitesimally small force. This would feed something like Trio's KA3700 amplifier - complete with matching tuner - which would huff and puff its muscular 25W per channel into the woofers, midrange drivers and tweeters of his teak veneered Wharfedale Linton 3XPs. The Pioneer CTF-4040 cassette would, as far seventies music man was concerned, be a miracle of modern science, and doubtless be engaged in recording all his friends' stereo LPs.

If this sounds a touch tame from 2003's point of view, remember that this system really wouldn't have sounded half bad.

Granted, it would lack its modern equivalent's focus, detail and neutrality, but then again it would probably be weightier, bouncier and actually more musically engaging. The interesting thing is that this classic seventies system was the last generation of all-analogue gear - a decade later, eighties man would probably have chopped the amp and speakers in for a NAD3020 and KEF Codas, and the turntable in for something like a Yamaha CDX2 CD

player. Its sound, although okay, would be nothing like that of ten years earlier. The digital source would have brought bags more detail, better imaging precision and copious amounts of treble energy, at the expense of a slightly flat,

“ In the mainstream market DAB could well catch on.

clinical sound.

By the late nineties, that Pioneer cassette deck would be ancient history - replaced in all likelihood by a Sony MDS-JE300 MiniDisc player. Connected digitally to his new Arcam Alpha 7 CD player (which he bought for its coaxial digital output), he could continue his abiding interest in 'music sharing' to his heart's desire. His new pair of Mission 752 floorstanding loudspeakers would be giving great service, offering

considerably extended bass response - even if they were not quite as 'barrel chested' as his old KEF standmounters, or even his old Wharfedales for that matter.

By the middle of this decade, it is likely that the last surviving analogue sound source in our notional audiophile's system will have gone digital. Joining his Arcam DVD-A player (bought to replace his Alpha CD spinner) and Yamaha CD-R HD1300 hard disk recorder

(superseding his now-obsolete Sony MD machine), will be a Digital Radio tuner. As Cambridge Audio's DAB300 proves, this format is now perfectly respectable for hi-fi buffs, offering a smooth, clean sound whether it's Talksport, LBC or Radio Three you're listening to. Products like this, costing a mere £150, will succeed because they really do give little away in sound quality to your average equivalently priced analogue design.

True - hook up a Leak Troughline (complete with new decoder, so that it can actually function with today's crowded airwaves) to a huge roof mounted twig and twenty yards of coax and you'll get an obviously superior sound. Fluid, warm and brilliantly beguiling, DAB pales by comparison. But that's not the point - in today's 'plug and play' world, Digital Radio works a treat. For most people, most of the time, I can see it catching on.

There will always be audiophiles deadly serious about FM sound, but in the mainstream market then

DAB could well catch on. Thanks to its superb ease of use, the process of physically

tuning up and down the wave bands, and of having to know the actual frequency of the station desired in order to find it, will soon look as anachronistic as threading quarter inch tape through the head block, capstans and pinch wheels of an open reel tape deck. We analogue addicts have to 'wake up and smell the coffee' - the digital revolution is now happening to radio too. ●



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SIGN UP

Hi-Fi World checks out the Signature, the Chord Company's long awaited 'high end' interconnect.

The Chord Company has long been known to Hi-Fi World as purveyors of 'real world' cable. By this we don't mean cheap and cheerful.

Whilst it's far more affordable than much of the competition, it delivers a superlative sound that's deeply rooted in musical involvement and a mixture of enjoyment and essential detail. And remember, this is a company whose top priced 'speaker cable in just £17.99 a metre - well below the starting price of many rivals' ranges.

Until now the company's top of the range interconnect was the excellent Anthem with its distinctive black twisted look at £275. Combine this with the superb performing Chorus, the next down at £200 and it begs the question "why do Chord need a £400 interconnect?" This is easily answered after listening to it, but more of that later.

The Signature is a product that the company had working on for some time. However, unlike the distinctive looking Anthem and Chorus models, the Signature isn't the prettiest puppy in the litter, but then again who really buys interconnect cable for the way it looks? Despite the plain looks, there's a lot going on inside. It's described as a "parallel ultra high performance design", the signal and return is, unusually, one solid core silver plated conductor measuring 0.403mm. Internal insulation is tape wrapped Teflon. Chord use this method as they say it allows the dielectric to be applied to the conductor at a lower temperature. Also a greater diameter of dielectric is applied which allows greater spacing between the conductor and screen. External insulation is again Teflon in extruded form.

The shielding system of the Signature is one of the keys to the cable's performance, and a

contributing factor to its price. The shielding is essentially three levels of high quality material which consists of a silver plated flat ribbon braid (which gives a better level of contact as opposed to the more rounded braid) which is covered by a spirally applied composite aluminium tape interliner and finally a silver plated round wire braid which all results in a quoted shielding efficiency in excess of 95dB. The termination plugs are the same low mass type as found on the Anthem made with a high content of silver solder. The crocodile clips poking out from the side of the plugs are for grounding purposes. Should you wish to experiment with grounding the option is there.

Sonic traits excluded, you're in comparison here with the upper reaches of the van den Hul and Nordost ranges here which (especially with the latter) runs into extremely serious money. With high quality audiophile standard recordings the Signature immediately showed the differences and advancements over the Anthem. There was more of a freshness to the sound (not that the Anthem is by any means tired sounding) and a faster attack with leading edges of notes and a greater sense of timing. But essentially this was married to Chord's traditional cohesion and superb tonal balance. Massive Attack's 'Inertia Creeps' was a great demonstration track in this respect. The opening tom-toms were crystal clear and wonderfully detailed, with a highly realistic involvement. Unlike other cables, though, there was no tonal uplift or shift to push forward this detail - bass was still fruity and deep.

The Signature also has splendid spatial traits. Mahler's 'Das Lied von der Erde' on Reference Recordings had air and ambience aplenty and again the tonal balance of the massive orchestra was superlative.

Upper violin registers were smooth and sweet yet fresh and the woodwind section was open and realistic sounding. But it's not just with audiophile recordings that the Signature impresses. Putting on the battered and bruised sounding eponymous Foo Fighters first album, the Signature pulled out all the drama, rhythm and phrasing in the full-on tunes and delivered a rollicking good session. Actually it excelled with everything, which again is the central to the ethos of this most unblinkered of hi-fi companies, as their lower priced products also testify - anybody, no matter how much money they have to spend, has the right to musical enjoyment.

Yes, it's expensive, but not when compared to top range cables from the competition but the sound is excellent. Once again, the Chord company have another cable that just sounds 'right' and it's refreshingly 'unaudiophile' (ie. sterile). The Signature is a high end cable alright with great detail but in the true nature of Chord products, is remarkable easy going on the ears. It doesn't grab you by the lapels with overtly projected detail or let you wallow in a sickly sweet fluidity. It merely lets you enjoy your favourite music in a way you wish it to sound as long as you're listening to it! If you're after a high end interconnect be sure to make this your first stop.

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tech+link distributes some of the best performing hi-fi and a/v accessories currently available in the U.K. These include: Puresonic, best known for its range of high performance interconnects and connectors, and cable adapters for a wide variety of hi-fi and a/v applications in its range; tech+link's own brand of high quality interconnects and connectors - digital compatible, 24k gold plated metal connectors; and hi-fi furniture - a selection of high quality speaker floor stands, surround sound stands and hi-fi racks. For more information, contact: tech+link International, Unit 8, Bat and Ball Enterprise Centre, Bat and Ball Road, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN14 5LJ. Tel: +44 (0) 1732 779400 Fax: +44 (0) 1732 449344

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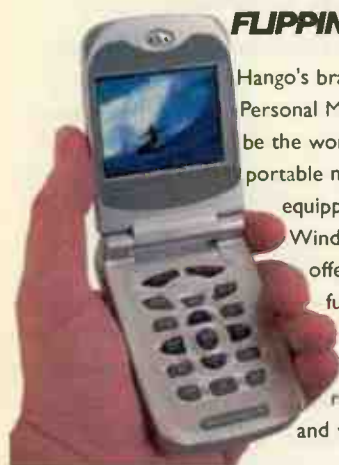
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FLIPPING HANGO!

Hango's brand new Flipster! Personal Multimedia is claimed to be the world's first dedicated portable multimedia player equipped with Microsoft® Windows Media Player. It offers CD quality audio, full motion video via the colour LC display, voice memos and live recording, the storage and viewing of high

resolution still images and more. Its folding clamshell design is similar to a mobile phone, and is powered by a rechargeable lithium ion battery. Content is transferred to and from Flipster and the desktop computer using USB and stored in its 128MB internal memory or on removable postage stamp sized MMC or SD cards. It supports MP3 and MPEG4 (WMV, ASF) as well as uncompressed WAV files. It will also store industry standard JPG/GIF/BMP formats without the need to convert or resample the files first. A unique expansion connector system permits the connection of a digital camera, TV tuner and wireless connectivity. Prices start at £419.99 - point your browsers at <http://www.pjbox.co.uk/>

AGENT OF FORTUNE?

Philips Electronics new Sound Agent 2 software is designed to play computer music files in the best quality possible. It works by analysing the file type and hardware involved, and applying intelligent digital signal processing. Initially it comes bundled with Philips' Dynamic Edge 4.1 and Sonic Edge 5.1 sound cards, although the Dutch company is considering bundling the software with consumer-electronics devices as well as with PC hardware. Dennis Johnson, a product marketing manager at Philips, says "this software works in harmony with device drivers and the (operating system) to create optimal sound. It's also very portable, so it can be bundled with other platforms...(consumer electronics) is where we are headed." www.philips.com

COPYCODING CONDEMNED

According to a computer scientist from Princeton University in New Jersey, the technology built into some CDs to stop people copying them is futile. John Halderman put the latest anti-piracy systems under the microscope and concluded that the continual software and hardware upgrades issued by computer CD drive and audio CD player manufacturers render copy protection systems pointless. He concluded that the idea of CD copy-prevention is "fundamentally misguided".

COPY CODES OF CONDUCT

Internet research company Gartner G2's new survey shows that consumers don't understand the laws regarding copying CDs and commercial downloads, and that record industry efforts to prevent illegal copying are only adding to confusion, thereby stunting the growth of online music media distribution. The

company further suggests that the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which makes it illegal to back up copy-protected music CDs, digital files, and other software, must be modified to permit consumers to back up all music content as they would any other digital media in order to save it from computer virus attacks, hard-drive crashes, and other digital disasters.

DVD-AUDIO ON THE RECORD

Minnetonka Audio Software's discWelder STEEL is a basic DVD-Audio writing program that allows anyone to deliver high-resolution audio from their PCs. The \$495 package can import all LPCM formats supported in the DVD-A specification, including non-encoded/uncompressed surround (consisting of up to 6 channels of 24-bit, 48kHz audio), and/or high-resolution stereo (two channels of 24-bit, 192kHz audio). Surround and stereo tracks may be used on the same disc, in WAV or AIFF file format, and a discWelder-burned disc will play on any DVD-A player that supports DVD-R.

The Windows-based program can burn DVD-A discs utilizing inexpensive DVD-R drives (such as Pioneer's DVR-A04). Higher-level authoring and editing features such as menu options, background images, slides, MLP import, video_ts import, DLT export are provided in a more expensive package, discWelder CHROME for \$2495. Another application, SurCode MLP adds MLP capability for \$3495. For more information, including a full list of features, point your browsers at www.discWelder.com.



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LOGICAL CHOICE

VideoLogic's ZXR-200 Speaker System is claimed to be an ideal option of those wanting a small 2.1 channel speaker system. In "stylish silver", this £49.99 package sports a subwoofer with dual flared bass ports and an integrated amplifier with a built-in low-noise power supply and individual volume, balance, bass and treble controls. The magnetically shielded satellites have sturdy speaker stands and a 35W power handling. All cables and a clear, concise user guide are also included. For more details, check out

www.videologic.com

VIRTUAL REALITY

Expect Dolby's new Virtual Speaker Technology to figure strongly in future computer audio developments. The announcement of Analogue Device's 32-bit Melody SHARC Ultra chipset means that various audio devices will be able to simulate multichannel audio from as few as two speakers. It will soon start appearing in digital televisions, stereo mini-systems, video-game consoles, in-car entertainment systems, PCs and portable DVD players. The system incorporates an advanced algorithm to reproduce the dynamics and surround-sound effects of a precisely placed 5.1-channel speaker system from a consumer electronics device or personal computer equipped with as few as two speakers. The result, says Dolby, is "a rich, encompassing, true-to-life, and involving multichannel entertainment experience" www.dolbylabs.com

OBITUARY

Stereolab's singer and guitarist Mary Hansen died last month in a tragic car accident in London. She was thirty six years old.

BACK TO THE AARK

Aardvark's new 24bit Multitrack PC Recording System offers a 10 In/10 Out PC audio interface with S/PDIF, MIDI & ADAT. The Aark 24 boasts premium 24 bit outboard A/D converters, eight analogue inputs, eight analogue outputs, S/PDIF digital I/O and MIDI I/O, plus ultra low latency multichannel drivers. Described as "the ideal solution for delivering the best from your software of choice including Cubase, Logic, Cakewalk, GigaSampler/Studio and Cool Edit Pro", this serious soundcard costs £649.00 from Etcetera Distribution. Click on www.etcetera.co.uk/ for more information.

LIFE'S A RIOT

SONICblue Inc's brand new RioRiot is the company's entrant into the hard disk based MP3 jukebox fray. Its 20 GB drive stores over 400 complete albums of music, while its intuitive Rio LogiTrack interface is claimed to make accessing it easy via the large backlit LC display. A built-in FM Tuner with custom presets adds radio functionality. Custom mixing, Apple iTunes compatibility and a 10 hour battery life from the supplied rechargeable Lithium Ion battery complete this attractive package. Currently only available in the US, the RioRiot costs \$349. For more information, click on www.sonicblue.com.



CHANGING VROOMS



Despite the demise of Napster, MP3 is still in rude health and now it's making inroads into car audio, attempting a frontal assault on CD changers. David Price takes Denon's DMP3 for a spin.

Compact Disc was never designed for the car. Anyone who's fumbled with a disc whilst attempting a lane change manoeuvre, dropped a jewel case approaching a mini-roundabout or jammed a CD inside their player while swerving to avoid a Kamikaze cyclist will know this all too well. To its credit, CD has partially crossed over to the car, but it's always been a marriage of (in)convenience. If it had been a bespoke automotive music carrier, it would have been smaller and hidden in a hard shell - just like MiniDisc - or better still have no physical presence whatsoever - like MP3.

To wit, the past couple of years has seen the aforementioned computer audio format cross over to car use. One great compromise has been MP3 CDs, which contain up to ten times as much music as an uncompressed audio CD and are cheaply burned from any home computer. Players such as JVC's KD-

SH99RB reviewed last month give genuinely excellent sound from (high bitrate) MP3 discs, making them a really practical proposition. Still, while one MP3 CD can replace a glovebox full of CDs (in terms of playing time), you'd need a glovebox full of MP3 CDs to make a boot-mounted CD changer redundant.

Enter Denon's DMP3, an 80GB hard disk-based music player, purpose-designed to be used in car and then easily moved to a home PC for file transferring. In its purest form, it comes without a hard drive for £299.99, whereas £399.99 buys you one with an 80GB HDD. It is connected to your existing car 'head unit' via the supplied FM modulator which effectively broadcasts the DMP3's audio signal to your car tuner, or by a direct connection via your head unit's auxiliary input (if fitted - not common on older units but largely universal on new ones now). It's also compatible with Sony (Unilink), Alpine MBUS (TDM/CDM), Blaupunkt and Grundig car head

units, when it acts as a 'virtual' CD-changer, using the head unit's own controls. There's also an OE adapter (see box) for an extra £40, and a fast USB 2.0 connection for PCs for £49.99.

As well as car mounting, it's perfectly happy being plugged directly into a home hi-fi and powered by the supplied mains adapter, just as you would MP3 jukeboxes from Creative Labs, Archos and Apple. The package is completed by a satellite remote controller, CarHost car docking bay and PCHost internal IDE docking bay. You also get a CD-ROM of software, including the basic version of MusicMatch for MP3 ripping and Denon's DMP Manager which handles file transfer and playlisting.

It's mounted into the car via the CarHost frame, which is essentially a sleeve into which the DMP3 slides. It also has RCA phono line outs for the CarPort connector with audio and power wiring, and jacks for the satellite display and FM transmitter. The satellite display is essentially an

additional, identical, fascia control panel that can be mounted anywhere on the car dash to give full control of the DMP3's functions. The FM Modulator hooks up between your car aerial and head unit, giving easy, direct connection for minimal signal loss.

The recently added CD Changer emulator lets head units designed to work a CD changer have full control of the DMP3, obviating the need for the satellite display and providing a neat, 'original equipment' feel. Out of the car, the DMP3 can either hook up to your PC by the optional USB 2.0 connector, or the PCHost docking bay. Essentially a removable mobile rack frame (purchasable at any computer shop) mounted into a free PC bay, this lets you connect the unit directly to your computer for fast file transfer.

GETTING ON THE ROAD

The main DMP3 unit is attached to a modified mobile hard disk tray, inside which is fitted an IDE drive (in the case of the review unit, a Seagate Ultra ATA model ST320413A) which comes pre-formatted and configured as a Master drive. The package includes a mobile rack frame that is fitted to an empty 5.25" PC drive bay - Dension advises buyers to not use the uppermost bay, otherwise the ejecting arm mechanism might not work. As most PCs have a CD burner in the top bay, this shouldn't be a problem.

Fitting the docking bay is a fairly simple operation to those familiar with the insides of a PC. Just remove the sides of the computer case, push out a front drive bay cover, slide in the docking frame and secure with the 4 screws provided. Attach the appropriate IDE and power connectors to the docking rack and you're ready to fit the tray. (Section 6 of the User's Manual includes full details for installation on the PC.)

The supplied hard disk was prepared as a primary partition, formatted and the jumper set to 'Master'. In the instructions, Dension explains all the possible configurations, opting to use a default setting of 'Master'. However most PCs will have a boot disk as the Primary 'Master' and a CD burner as the Secondary 'Master', so it will be necessary to take the tray apart, remove the drive, reset the jumper

to the 'Slave' configuration and re-assemble everything before you can use the unit. If you don't do this, the BIOS either cannot recognise the drive or tries to boot from it. I'd say this is a good reason for making the default setting 'Slave'. The DMP3 can be used with any 5400rpm (or faster) hard disk as long as it is suitably prepared.

The DMP3 should be inserted into the docking rack before switching on your PC - when pushed home firmly the front protrudes by about 15mm. It can be removed by carefully lifting the lever to the right of the front panel, which unplugs the tray and allows the DMP3 to be pulled out smoothly. As Dension points out, the computer must be switched off before placing or removing the drive unit. When the PC is powered up, the DMP3 front panel is blank, with a blue backlight and the disk is recognised as drive D: in My Computer or Explorer.

Thus configured, the DMP3 is ready to squirt music to. You can send MP3s to it via Dension's DMP Manager, which is similar to other Windows Explorer-type applications. Although simply a case of dragging and dropping the files from one drive into the other, this isn't the most intuitive programs I've tried but I suppose it does the job. To aid music management, you can create virtual directories (VDIR) which let you to sort files regardless of the way they're physically laid out on the drive. Transfer speeds were pretty quick, taking about five minutes to transfer 1GB of MP3 music.

When you've got songs onto the unit, it's time to install it in your car. This can either be done by in-car audio specialists, or in the space of an afternoon outside your house. Suitably fitted, the satellite controller looks neat enough mounted atop a car dashboard, although I'd go for stealth mounting as there's always the 'security' issue to consider - perhaps a more discrete black finish would help matters here. The DMP3 itself is a relatively compact device, measuring 215x120x42mm, and reasonably light at 995g. It's very nicely made and certainly feels durable enough for music on the move.

Its large, blue 128x56 LC display has white LED background lighting, which is clearly legible inside but not

so great in bright sunlight, even on its maximum brightness setting.

Although the large knob looks like a volume control, it's actually for navigation (of the DMP3's menu system, rather than the vehicle itself!). The problem is with the 'supplementary' buttons, which are tactile enough but hard to find due to their uniform size and shape. The configuration menu has a welter of settings, including display and HDD set up, along with audio equalisation (volume, balance, bass, treble, preset EQs, loudness, DynaBass) and repeat modes.

DRIVING FORCE

People who've not heard MP3 done properly will be quite surprised by the quality of this system through a good hi-fi. Given properly encoded higher bitrate files (and the Dension gets off to a good start because its bundled MusicMatch Jukebox software uses the fine sounding Fraunhofer MP3 codec), the DMP3 is capable of very good sound. Thanks to its massive hard drive, it's possible to store vast amounts of top quality 384 kbps VBR songs, making for fine sonics. Bass is powerful and warm yet decently bouncy and tuneful, midband open and crisp and treble sweet and delicate. Compared to uncompressed CD you notice a slight flattening of stereo soundstage and a gentle curtailment of high frequencies, but the warm, 'upfront' sound this makes for is far from unpleasant and in some cases even more listenable than the CD originals.

Ultimately, there are rival systems around that feel more 'of a piece' than the Dension, but the fact is that the DMP3 does pretty much everything you could want at a low, low price. Its 80MB HDD means you can store vast quantities of MP3 files, while the sound is absolutely convincing. The various mounting and connection systems work very well and the system itself is relatively easy to use, fiddly satellite control notwithstanding. The option to fit your own hard drive and hack into the unit's programming are welcome boosts to the unit's flexibility. Excellent value.

Dension DMP3 80GB £399

www.In-CarMP3.com

GEEK CHIC

The DMP3 itself supports all standard IDE/ATA hard disk drives, meaning that a 160GB drive can be used up to the maximum addressable capacity of 137GB. Interestingly, some parts of its internal specifications are provided for computer geeks who like DIY. Playlist file format (.PLY), message (.MSG) and logo (.LCE) files are all detailed, along the serial line communication protocol which facilitates the connection of external keyboards, displays and so on.

TECH SPECS

Voltage: 12-15V DC
Standby electric power: max. 10 mA
Operating temperature: 0 - +50 C
Storing Temperature: -20 - +70 C
Compatibility: PC IDE, ATA Mobile Rack, UDMA, FAT 32 DAC: 18 bit, 0.01% THD
Signal to noise ratio: > 80 dB

THE QUIET LIFE

Given that most folk use MP3 portables outdoors in noisy environments, Sennheiser's new PXC-250 noise-cancelling headphones make good sense, says David Price.

The technology is nothing new - noise cancelling systems have been offered by Sennheiser and other manufacturers for several years now. However, as time moves on it's becoming cheaper and more effective, meaning that possibly for the first time, it's a practical proposition for those who listen to music on the move. MP3 portables are one of computer audio's most popular applications, so products like Sennheiser's PXC-250 could prove an ideal match - if, or course, it works?

NoiseGard is the name that Sennheiser gives to its take on the technology. Essentially, the system works by two little microphones set inside the earpieces relaying the noise they detect to an amplifier, which then inverts the phase of the signal and mixes it with the music source, which is also amplified. The result is that much of the steady state noise (hums, buzzes, droning, hissing), is removed. Ironically, because this load is taken off your ears (and brain), you suddenly become far more sensitive to other sounds out of the PXC-250's processing band, like very low frequency vibration and high pitched rattles.

It's easy to be cynical - the history of hi-fi wonder gadgets isn't a happy one - but I found the PXC-250 an impressive package. First, even considering its hefty £90 price tag, it is impeccably built despite weighing a mere 65g. The system comes in a soft but sturdy case which is easily big enough to accommodate an MP3 walkie and a couple of memory cards too. The phones themselves fold neatly into a small, flat bundle for storage, and then unfold easily for use. They're also very comfortable to

wear, even for long periods. Still, because of their folding design, don't expect them to have the Herculean strength of a standard pair of Sennheiser hi-fi cans.

The processor unit is a small, wand-like affair that takes the single AA battery and has a single power on-off control and a 1.8m captive cable. Put the phones over your ears, switch on and suddenly you find the PXC-250s cutting out a good proportion of the steady-state noise around you, making listening quite an eerie sensation. They don't completely remove every bit of rattle and hum you understand, but do cut out a surprising amount of drone and general 'whoosh'. Suddenly you can actually focus on the music, and hear quite a lot of subtle treble and midband detail too. Even powered up with no sound, the phones still cut out a lot of noise - just put them on, switch them on and hear the environment disappear!

When you do listen to music, you'll notice some small artefacts from the system in some circumstances - sometimes there's a slightly wobbly midband with 'broken' piano notes, and loss of bass power and general loss of immediacy. Still, general sound quality is good - sweet and smooth, it's not far short of the excellent entry-level (passive) PX-100s. Whatever your views on signal purity, I'm in no doubt that listening to music with a slightly 'processed' feel is still far more enjoyable than listening to pure, unadulterated audio complete with high levels of constant background roar. This, frankly, is the point of NoiseGard, and why it gets a firm thumbs up.

Sennheiser PXC-250 £90

www.sennheiser.co.uk



PORTABLE PARTNERS - SENNHEISER'S OTHER MOBILE MP3 TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

MX 500 £19

Top of the company's stereo in-ear headphone range, these are the best of their type for audiophiles on the move. Extremely smooth and couth, yet very detailed and musical, they have none of the traditional nasties present in budget earbuds. Don't be fooled by the low level hough - it's easy to forget these have a tiny lead-mounted slider control which needs to be set to maximum for high volumes. Brilliant with CD, MP3 or MD portables!
Type: dynamic, ear coupling intra-aural
Weight (without cable): 6 g
Impedance: 32 Ohm
Cable length: 1m
Frequency response: 18Hz-22KHz
THD: 1 %

PX100 £30

Sennheiser's cheapest conventional headphone sounds stunningly good for its £30 retail price. Aside from excellent build quality and a nifty little carrying case, it's one of the most comfortable cans on the market, and a brilliant performer at the price. Very fast, detailed and musical, it's nevertheless very smooth and refined - embarrassing its bigger, closed back PX200 brother in this respect. True budget esoterica.
Type: dynamic, ear coupling intra-aural
Weight (without cable): 6 g
Impedance: 32 Ohm
Cable length: 3.5m
Frequency response: 15Hz-27KHz
THD: <0.1 %

DREAMS CAN COME TRUE

Computer audiophiles yearning for the arrival of affordable DVD-RW have just had their prayers answered by Archos. David Price tries out its new DEx DVD-RW external rewriter.

Computer DVD burners hit the UK in late 1998, retailing for not much under £1000, and it seems to have taken an age for them to come down to sensible prices such as the £299 of the Archos you see before you.

The DEx DVD-RW is an external burner with the ability to write to DVD-RAM and DVD-R at 2x, and DVD-RW at 1x, along with CD-R at 12x and CD-RW at 8x. It also works as a 32x CD-ROM drive, 10x DVD-ROM drive, 2x DVD-RAM drive and 8x DVD-R drive. It uses a fast USB 2.0 interface, which works at up to 480 Mbits/sec, but is backwardly compatible with all USB 1.1 connectors. Like all Archos products, it's 'hot-swappable' (it can be disconnected and reconnected without having to reboot your computer system) and compatible with both Mac and PC. Measuring 240x150x50mm, it's a pretty standard sized external design, that's pretty sturdily built for its 1.2kg mass. As per Archos's Jukebox Recorder MP3 I tested last year, it

gives the impression that it's built for many years of service, unlike several South Korean branded rivals I've tried.

The DEx comes complete with Roxio (once Adaptec) VideoWave Movie Creator DVD mastering software which lets you create and 'publish' a new disc from scratch. You can store vast amounts of music files in any number of formats (WAV, MP3, etc) or transfer digital photographs from your computer system or directly from a digital video camera. The DEx can also be used as an optical hard disk device via a DVD-RAM that can be written and rewritten up to 100,000 times, giving a storage capacity of up to 4.7GB - which is approximately eight times that of CD. This equates to around 70 hours of MP3 music, nine hours of CD albums, or 2 hours of MPEG video - or any combination thereof - on one DVD.

The package contains the DEx itself, along with a USB 2.0 cable, 12v power adapter and a disc of Roxio software for CD and DVD editing software. Drivers are supplied on a floppy disc, and there's a crisply written manual in five languages. The bundled software is excellent, and brings DVD-R's full power to the fore, but then again it would have been nice to have had something which was far more reaching in audio terms. Right now, to burn high quality



audio DVDs, either at DVD video's maximum permitted two channel 24bit, 96kHz PCM resolution or at the full 24bit, 192kHz DVD audio rate, aspiring mastering engineers will need a 24/96 soundcard, plus Syntrillium's Cool Edit Pro (or suchlike). For DVD-A discs, the additional purchase of a special authoring application like Minnetonka Audio Software's discWelder STEEL (see the News section) is needed.

The DEx worked superbly during the test period, doing exactly what it was told to do without fuss. The USB 2.0 interface is usefully quick, although some will question the lack of FireWire. Speeds are slower than those reared on 'modern' CD burners, but then again this Archos is an unashamedly 'affordable' product. Pirate DVD copiers will have to fork out substantially more for a fast internal drive, to conduct of their despicable, nefarious and dishonest activities! Overall then, thumbs firmly aloft for this polished yet practical product. Recommended.

Archos DEx DVD-RW £299

Archos (UK) Ltd
Tel: +44 (0)1793 441510
www.archos.com

SPECIFICATIONS:

WRITING TO:

CD-R/RW: Disc at Once, Track at Once, Session at Once, Packet Write;

DVD-R: Disc at Once, Incremental Recording DVD-RW: Disc at Once, Incremental Recording, Restricted Overwrite

ACCESS TIMES (READ): CD 95ms, DVD-ROM 100ms, DVD-RAM 140ms

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Microsoft Windows 98SE, 2000, ME, XP, Pentium III 500 MHz or equivalent (minimum); 800MHz or equivalent (for analogue MPEG Capture); 1.6GHz (for MPEG 2 capture from DV), 128 MB RAM, 600 MB available hard disk space (up to 800 MB with optional content), minimum monitor display resolution of 1024x768 at 16 bit colour, USB 2.0 port

welcome to world favourites

Here's a list of products that are a good buy. We've tried to cater for a range of tastes, identifying strong products in every area. We're agnostic so you'll find a wide range of products, from valve pre-amps through to MiniDisc players. Products marked * are recently out of production but make a good second-hand buy.

Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Sonic Frontiers Transport Cutting edge design and technology.

COMPACT DISC

ARCAM FMJ CD23 £1100
This British-built player is extremely versatile. Controlled and detailed with a musical insight that few match. (Jul 2000)

CAMBRIDGE CD4SE* £200
A touch soft in the treble but outstanding in every other respect. (Feb 98)

KENWOOD DP-3080/II* £180
Has great clarity and presence for the price. Not as naturally expressive as the CD4SE though. (Feb 98)

LINN KARIK III* £1775
Under rated and overlooked, the final Karik was a gem. Superb transport gives a brilliantly tight, grippy dynamic sound, albeit tonally rather dry.

MARANTZ CD-17 KI-S £1100
The Marantz excels in all areas. Without doubt this is one of the most involving CD players on the planet. Build quality is also exemplary. (Sep 97)

MARANTZ CD-63 MKII KI-S* £400
Similar to the CD-63SE but more powerful bass and an all-round smoother sound. The famous KI tweaks pay off again. Whether or not it is still pre-eminent against the vastly improved competition is a matter of opinion.

MERIDIAN 506 20-BIT* £1100
Very detailed and revealing player. More cerebral than visceral sounding, however. (May 95)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-RAY £800
Commonsense sturdy CD player of exceptional ability. Clear and detailed with high quality internal processing system. The X-Ray is inclined to show up poor recordings, but it's only doing its job! (Feb 99)

NAD S500 £1000
This dynamic top of the range Silverline spinner delights with any type of music. Exciting, sophisticated sounding and highly recommended. (Jun 2000)

ROKSAN CASPIAN £895
The Caspian has a smooth, slightly bright sound with some of the clearest treble in the business. Very engaging, dynamic character. (Aug 97)

ROTEL RCD 951 £300
HDCD capability at a midrange price. Plain Jane looks but solid construction. There is some higher than average measured distortion which may take the edge off this otherwise tempting product. (Aug 99)

COMPACT DISC TRANSPORTS

SONIC FRONTIERS TRANSPORT £6999
Cutting-edge design and technology combine to make this one very desirable product. The only problem is the fantasy hi-fi price. (Sep 98)

TEAC P-30 £2500
Cheap it isn't, but then it sounds like a million digital dollars. Nothing short of superb. (Jun 97)

TEAC VRDS-T1 £600
Excellent mid-price silver disc spinner with a powerful, expansive and warm sound. Easily beats most sub-£1000 designs. A good choice for the budget concious who want the best. (Feb 95)

DACs

CAMBRIDGE AUDIO DACMAGIC 3* £99
Superb value for money with extensive facilities and solid, detailed sonics. Upgrades any sub-£300 player.

DCS ELGAR £8500
Future-proof convertor which will handle 24/96 and 24/192. Extremely open and natural performer. (Nov 97)

DPA LITTLE BIT 3* £299
A taste of the high end on a budget. Rich, clean, punchy sound transforms budget CD players.

MIDIMAN FLYING COW £299
Excellent as a DAC and doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR. (Jun 98) Great value, as is junior version Flying Calf at £109. (Feb 99)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC* £300
A bargain for normal CDs and even better with HDCDs. (Nov 97)

SONIC FRONTIERS PROCESSOR 3 £6999
Quality never comes cheap! This DAC oozes class and when matched with the Transport 3 is certainly up with the best. (Sep 98)

TURNTABLES

LINN SONDEK LP12 BASIK £1100
Off the pace these days in many respects but still an extremely sweet and engaging listen with a quintessentially analogue sound.

MICHELL GYRODEC SE £775
Exquisitely built, infinitely upgradeable deck that gives true high end sound at mid-fi prices.

MICHELL ORBE £2000
Fantastically capable all rounder with commanding, powerful, detailed sound that gets the best from almost any arm and cartridge. Supreme build, brilliant value. (Apr 95)

ORIGIN LIVE STANDARD (KIT) £145
Good in standard form with AC motor; frighteningly good with a DC motor and battery PSU

PINK TRIANGLE TARANTELLA £680
Not only does the Tarantella have more style than a catwalk full of models, it also combines PT's usual clarity with real authority. (Oct 97)

PRO-JECT DEBUT £110
Straight out of the box and onto the shelf! Nothing short of a bargain. Vinyl's never had it so good, so cheaply!

REGA PLANAR 2 £214
Brilliant starter deck with extremely polished manner. Better built £274 Planar 3 is a great all-in-one package that eats mid-price CD players for breakfast.

ROKSAN XERXES X £1295
DSU or XPS 3.5 power supply £150/170 extra. Excellent pitch stability from a new Swiss motor and outboard power supply. Very tight bass, fine dynamics and revealing clarity. (Jan 97)

SYSTEMDEK IIX900*/RB250 £330
A fine all-rounder and easy to upgrade too. More depth and breadth than Rega Planar 3. (Sep 94)

VESTAX BDT-2000 £225
A stylish looking deck with infinitely variable speed 16-90 rpm, DC belt drive and built-in MM phono stage. Good value, with plenty of chassis room for alternative arms, if required. (Sep 99)

TONERMS

HADCOCK 242 SE £649
Latest of a long line of unipivot arms. Added mass makes the 242 suitable for both low compliance MCs and straw-in-the-wind high compliance types. Revised geometry and chromium plating completes a first-class job. (Jun 2000)

NAIM ARO* £975
Truly endearing and charismatic performer - wonderfully engaging mid-band makes up for softened frequency extremes

REGA RB300 £180
Some may prefer the simpler RB250 at £130. Detailed, tight, rhythmic sound but tonally rather grey and cold-sounding. Still excellent value, though.

NEW, Ex-dem and Used Equipment

· Our prices are 10 - 20% below market value for rapid turnover
 · All used equipment guaranteed for six months; new and ex-dem adds manufacturer guarantee.
 · New (factory) sealed boxes indicated (New), Ex-dem (Ex-D) or Used (s/h) Goods mostly shipped next day delivery by TNT. UPS premium service costs £9 per box UK next day.

VINYLI

LFD Mistral MMMC Phono Stage £ 299 £ 199
 Stainless steel (s/h)

DIGITAL

Burmester 970 DAC Eu22,900 POA
 TAS Class 1 product (Ex-D)
Gryphon Adagio CD Player (Ex-D) £4,300 £2,995
 2nd level upsampling redefines CD! One only!

AMPLIFIERS

Audio Innovations Series 500 (s/h) as new - £ 595
 Integrated valve amp with phono input
Audio Research's classic SP9 III £2,850 £1,350
 Rare and exquisite; silver; mint (s/h)
Bow Wazoo XL £2,495 £1,495
 Integrated Amplifier 75 wpc, (Ex-Dem)
 "The Wand" silver remote controller (New) £ 329 £ 249
conrad-johnson PV14L pre-amp (s/h) £2,200 £1,150
 3-hrs use. Plus 12 unused NOS valves for £100. See Hi-Fi+ review
Gryphon Sonata Allegro Legato £10,600 £6,900
 State of Heart pre-amp with phono stage
 Dual monaural, ultimate construction (Ex-D)
Gryphon Callisto 2100 Integrated amplifier £3,600 £2,750
 2 x 100 wpc, (s/h) as new; magnificent sound
Manley Labs 240/100 Monoblocks (pair) £8,450 £3,500
 Pentode/triode switchable, amazing pro gear Current list is for a revised "Neo" model (Ex-D)

Manley Labs Stingray Integrated amp £2,225 £1,250
 New, but box opened; innovative and distinguished
Mark Levinson Power Amplifiers
 No 335 (250 wpc) (New, sealed box) £8,495 £6,995
 No 436 (350 wpc into 8 ohms, doubling) (Ex-D) £12,495 £8,495
Musical Fidelity A100 (s/h) £1,495 £ 695
 Class A, integrated amp, separate PSU
PassLabs Aleph-5 (s/h) £3,350 £1,750
 60 wpc, s/e RCA and Balanced
PM Components 211SE monoblocks £2,800 £1,295
 Near Offer Considered; additional set of GE NOS valves
 Schematic included; very impressive
Selection of unused GE NOS tubes for above £ 370 £ 200
Sugden MasterClass Pre-amp (s/h) £2,300 £1,250
 Bal and s/e; remote; slimline; Class A
Tenor Audio 75 Wp (OTL tube monoblocks) \$20,900 POA
 Winner TAS Golden Ear 2002

LOUDSPEAKERS

Audio Physic Virgo 3 (New!) Reduced price £3,990 £1,990
 Unused but slight dent (Luxury Cherry)
Kharma Ceramique 1.2 Reference Monitors £14,995 £8,495
 Focal tweeter, piano black, crated, as new
ProAc Future Two (Birds Eye Maple) £11,450 £5,995
 Glorious state-of-the art. (New)
ProAc Future Point Five (Cherry) £3,500 £2,495
 Just run in, mint, boxed (Ex-D)
Revel Performa F30 Three-way monitors £2,995 £1,695
 (Cherrywood) Slight dents (Ex-D)
Wilson Audio 6.1 £20,000 £10,995
 Crated, 18 months old, piano black
 Final Price Reduction

For updated and comprehensive list of equipment and audio cables, please visit www.audiosalon.co.uk

Tel: 0141 357 5700. E-mail: info@audiosalon.co.uk

Try an £800 Interconnect working in your system for 10 days and Keep it for only £99....

IT IS no longer a secret that cables always limit the potential performance of a system. Now you can hear for yourself a top level interconnect which is sold well below market price. Buying from the maker saves substantial packaging, marketing and distribution markups. Unlike other cables, Stratos wire, and materials are unique; plugs, and soldering techniques are hand-crafted. The original specifications were designed and refined by one of the world's leading audiophile designers. By consensus of experienced customers the sonic performance equals and exceeds respected interconnects up to the £800 point; the figure is not our wild claim. Now in its third series and sixth year, AudioSource cables are a cult with worldwide sales.

Literature and product information are readily available. Home trial offers a full refund if not impressed.

One metre stereo pair using our own phosphor bronze RCA

plugs or Neutrik's balanced XLR plugs costs £125, or £99 for one half metre. For longer lengths add £35 per stereo metre per pair.

A full range of digital cords and audio mains cables from £55 up to our £150 Integra are available. AudioSource now offer a six (£349) or eight way (£389) mains conditioner outlet, hand made from non-plastic, non-ferrous materials for amazing mains purity.

Poor cables and impure mains are the most common cause of disappointment and expensive upgrading.

Invest in the connections. And here's a tip: use a £14.95 bottle of Kontak cleaner to keep them clean.



Prices shown are those at the time of the review



Pro-ject Phono Box. Provides an inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer.

SME 3009SII £309
Once state of the art, but no longer. Weak at frequency extremes and detail, but its legendary serviceability makes it a cult in Japan. Can be picked up for peanuts second-hand. (Jan 93)

SME 309 £689
A down-market version of the IV and V with aluminium armtube and detachable headshell. Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IV's pace and precision. Like the older SME 3009 series, this arm is also available in 10" and 12" versions. (Jan 93)

CARTRIDGES

AUDIO TECHNICA AT-110E £30
Great starter cartridge that's refined, detailed and musical beyond its price. Best value MM under £50

GOLDRING 1012GX £74
An accomplished MM with a solid bass, slightly forward midband and clean transients. Very reasonable price for such an able performer. (Jul 93)

DNM MICA £185
Better's Goldring's 1042 and costs only £135 on trade-in. An assured and transparent MM. (Feb 98)

DYNAVECTOR DV20X-H £299
The best modern budget MC combines deliciously sweet sound with fantastic get-up-and-go. High output version works a treat with valve phono stages too.

MUSIC MAKER £575
When mated with a good quality arm, this hand finished high-output pick-up gives an ear-boggling account of itself. Very high compliance ensures maximum information retrieval. An absolute (grain orientated) gem. (Feb 99)

ORTOFON MC 7500 £2000
Conclusive proof that there's hope for the world. It's a long time ago now but this high-priced favourite still earns its niche - CD lovers would die if they heard it. (May 94)

ORTOFON MC 15 SUPER II £140
Not quite as good as the dearer Supremes but the Super II is a splendid introduction to the joys of moving-coil cartridges.

GOLDRING 1042 £130
One of the best Moving Magnet cartridges going, with beautiful treble and muscular bass. New low price makes it a bargain.

ORTOFON ROHMANN £1000
In a way it's MC 2000 meets MC 7500 with great tonal strengths and a dynamo sound. (Apr 96)

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS

AUDIO ANALOGUE PUCCINI SE £595
This superbly-built Italian integrated has a lucidity and control which leaves others nowhere. Sound stage a wow. (Dec 97)

AUDIOLAB 8000a * £495
Well rounded integrated with smooth and detailed sound plus a huge feature count. Great build makes later versions a top used buy.

DENON PMA-250SE £160
It might not have bags of grunt but the Denon can sound exceedingly natural and open. (Feb 97)

McINTOSH MA6800* £3735
The MA6800 not so much plays music as takes control of it, with effortless bass drive. (Sep 95)

MISSION CYRUS 2 * £299
Classic eighties minimalism combines arresting styling with clean, open, lively sound. Further upgradable with PSX power supply.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-CANS2 £160
Warm, sumptuous, sweet sound h/phone amp. gives startling results with a decent set of headphones.

NAIM NAIT 3 * £575
Superb rhythms and dynamics make for great music making, but tonally monochromatic. Super optional phono stage makes it ideal for vinyl junkies.

ROKSAN CASPIAN £695
Smooth, warm integrated with remote control that works happily into most 'speakers. (Dec 97)

SONNETEER ALABASTER £995
Builds on the strengths of the Campion with ample control, colour and drive. (Oct 97)

PHONO STAGES

CREEK OBH-8 SE £180
Punchy, rhythmic character with oodles of detail makes this a great budget audiophile product.

LFD MISTRAL PHONO STAGE * £300
The Mistral has a warmth and involvement that make many pricier stages sound overpriced.

MICHELL DELPHINI MONOBLOCS £1995
Analogue tour-de-force gives supremely clean, detailed and finely resolved sound with breathtaking dynamics. Great value, even at this price.

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-LP £125
One of the famous MF X series. Full marks throughout for clarity and detail. Switchable between MM and MC. Indestructible build! (May 99)

PRO-JECT PHONO BOX £39
Not the last word in many respects but a thoroughly honest piece of work. Inexpensive introduction to all that vinyl has to offer. MM and MC provision plus choice of two impedances.

ROKSAN ARTAXERXES X £950
With the Atessa PSU the Artaxerxes X MM/MC stage still shines. Great stage depth, neutrality and tonal colour. (Oct 97)

Billy Vee
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Call 020 8318 5755 or 8852 1321 now!



Featured NAC 82 Preamp one only available Was (2500) Offer price £1795

Each year we replace our Naim demonstration stock giving you an opportunity to make a substantial saving on our normal price! All products are boxed with full two year warranty. Only one of each available Interest Free period of nine months available - please call for details.

- NAC 52 Preamp (£3850) £2690
- SuperCap Power Supply (£2450) £1795
- NAC 102 Preamp (£1210) £799
- NAP 180 Power Amplifier (£1220) £859
- NA CDX Player (£2470) £1729
- NAP 250 Power Amplifier (£1910) £1339
- NA CDS/2 Player (£4165) £3099
- NAP 500 Power Amplifier (£10995) £7995

We have a few new units available at 15% off list price - please call for details

Job Opportunity

We have a vacancy for a young enthusiastic 18 - 20 year old sales and customer service person. Experience not necessary but good communication skills. would be an advantage. Above average income potential. Please write to Ian Anderson sending your C.V to the address above.

SONNETEER SEDLEY £399
Combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability. (May 98)

PRE-AMPLIFIERS

AMC 1100 £150
Suffers from un-defeatable tone controls but an extremely good value piece of kit. Partners the similarly budget level AMC 2200 power amplifier, also at £150. Comfortable beginners' choice. (Mar 99)

AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI £475
Showcases AA's characteristic mix of clarity and musicality and blasts the competition. (Apr 98)

CHORD CPA1800 £1800
Clarity, insight and control are second to none - an addictive mixture. (Mar 98)

CROFT VITALE £350
A modestly priced valve pre-amp with exceptionally transparent performance. MM phono stage plus three line stages are standard. Volume controls are separate for each channel, thus giving balance adjustment. A remarkable item in all respects. (Feb 2000)

XTC PRE-1 * £1000
Almost valve-like in its smoothness, the line-level Pre-1 is warm and seductively clear. (Nov 96)

POWER AMPLIFIERS

ARCAM 9 * £400
With 70W on tap, the 9P will drive most loudspeakers with a spacious and detailed sound. Good bass welly too. (Dec 96)

CHORD SPM400 £1400
There's a sense of effortless power to the Chord that gives music real scale and presence. (Mar 98)

MARANTZ MODEL 9 * £8000
Authentic reproduction monoblocs still more than cut the sonic mustard. Highly expensive and highly sought after. (Mar 97)

MICHELL ALECTO £1989
Crisp, clean and beautifully controlled with gorgeous styling. Partnered with the £1650 Orca this is a superb winning combo. (Oct 98)

MUSICAL FIDELITY X-A200 £1000/pair
200W of high-end monobloc power in a grooved tube. (Aug 98)

NAIM NAPI80 £1060
Partnered with a NAC82, this has classic Naim control, and a superbly rhythmic presentation.

TUNERS

CAMBRIDGE T500 £180
An extremely engaging tuner with a performance at odds with its low price. Not exactly a Troughline, but you may not notice... (Feb 99)

CREEK T43 £399
Excellent detail, separation and dynamics. A great little tuner and unbeatable at this price. (May 98)

MARANTZ ST17 £600
A positive dreadnought of a tuner. Sweet and refined but with a heavy punch when needed. A tuner of this quality demands a decent aerial. (Jul 99)

MISSION CYRUS FM7* £300
Clear and lucid sound puts it up with the best. Superb build too. (Apr 94)

NAIM NAT03 £595
The NAT03's warm, atmospheric sound is further proof of Naim's proficiency with tuners. (Sep 93)

SONY ST-SA3ES* £250
Beguiling RDS tuner for the sonically discerning. Good ergonomics and sensitive too. (Apr 97)

CASSETTE DECKS

AIWA AD-S750* £200
Sonically a very decent machine at the price. Comes fitted with Dolby B, C and the dead handy Dolby S. (Apr 96)

AIWA AD-S950* £300
A stable transport, superb head and Dolby S make the AD-S950 an excellent all-rounder. (Feb 95)

KENWOOD KX-3080* £160
A simple deck, but excellent-quality head and transport give top quality sound. (Oct 96)

PIONEER CT-S740S £430
A great piece of engineering from Pioneer, with first-rate sound. (Jun 96)

YAMAHA KX-580SE* £250
The 'SE' tag is more than a marketing gimmick. Sound is solid and clear with Dolby S. (Sep 97)

LOUDSPEAKERS



Kef Cresta I loudspeakers
A very musical sound

CASTLE EDEN £469
Impressively vice-free 'speakers that offer great transparency and involvement. One of a select band that simply makes music regardless. (Mar 97)

EPOS ES12 * £495
Strong, punchy bass is allied to finely detailed, articulate midrange and sparkling treble. (Oct 96)

KEF CRESTA I £100
Delightfully sophisticated presentation for the price. Won't blow the roof off, but will deliver a very musical sound. (April 2000)

KLIPSCH HERESY II £1100
An outstanding high sensitivity loudspeaker with midrange and treble horns coupled with infinite baffle 12" bass driver. Effortless, fast and accurate. (May 99)

MISSION 752 * £495
Cracking mid-price mini towers combined HDA drive units and metal dome tweeters with surprisingly warm results. Benign load characteristics makes them great for valves.

MISSION 771 £170
Characteristically fast, punchy Mission sound from the Aerogel mid/bass and silk-dome tweeter. (Jul 98)

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Featured
NAC 82 Preamp
one only available

Was (2500) Offer price £1795

Job Opportunity

We have a vacancy for a young enthusiastic 18 - 20 year old sales and customer service person. Experience not necessary but good communication skills. would be an advantage. Above average income potential. Please write to Ian Anderson sending your C.V to the address above.

QUAD ESL 63 * £3450
A reference against which all other loudspeakers are judged, the '63s have superb imaging and genuine transparency.

TANNOY AMS8 * £2700
Bold sounding pro active monitor with solid bass, clear midrange and delicious treble. (Aug 96)

TANNOY MERCURY m2 * £140
A true audiophile bargain which embarrasses many more expensive boxes. Never mind the price, let your ears decide. (May 97)

MINIDISC PLAYERS

KENWOOD DM-9090 £500
One of the best MD players yet. ATRAC 4.5 gives clean and very musical recordings from this Kenwood. (Jan 98)

SONY MDS-JB930Q £250
Great mid-price machine that adds better build and facilities to the '530's already excellent sonics.

SONY MDS-JA50ES * £1300
This Sony can put the wind up Nakamichi cassette decks when used with better blank MDs. (Apr 98)

SONY MDS-JE55SES
MiniDisc recorder £520
The best sounding MD deck made so far, thanks to awesome build and heroic ATRAC-DSP Type R coding.

SONY MDS-JE510 £300
An impressive sound and unmatched convenience make this MiniDisc player an excellent buy.



Pioneer DVD-717. A well built and solid performer.

DIGITAL RECORDERS

ALESIS MASTERDISK £1400
A groundbreaking hard disc recorder with a built-in CD drive. An amazing bit of kit, and a glimpse of the future. (July 2000)

KENWOOD DMF-9020 £500
An excellent tool for home recording, combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price. (Aug 99)

MARANTZ DR-17 £1100
Probably the best sounding CD recoder on the market. Built like a brick out house with a true audiophile sound. HDCD compatible (July 2000)

PHILIPS CDR-765 £360
One of the first twin deck recorders/players that boasts high speed dub facility. Playback could be warmer, but still a bargain. (Oct 99)

PIONEER PDR-555RW £480
Excellent mid-priced CD recoder that both plays and records with equal panache. (Oct 99)

SONY TCD-8 DATMAN * £599
Super clean and detailed sound makes this an amazing portable. Not as robust as it should be though.

DVD PLAYERS

DENON DVD-5000 £1600
Monster build, as you'd expect at this price. Facilities and gadgets galore and drop-dead high end looks. A very smooth and sophisticated sound, although not as good as similarly-priced CD players. (Mar 99)

PIONEER DV-717 £700
Well built and a solid performer, with a 'true' 24/96 digital output. Facilities in abundance and a controlled, exciting way with CD replay. Shame it lacks a Dolby Digital decoder! (Sep 99)

SONY DVP-S725 £490
One of the best buys in the DVD market. Available in a dodgy white case, but the facilities and performance more than make up for this. Excellent with both music and visuals, and a whole host of up to the minute facilities to keep you occupied. (Mar 2000)

HEADPHONES

JECKLIN FLOAT MODEL TWO £99
Wonderful panel-like and open sound from these esoteric-looking headclamps. Do not wear in public unless you like being made a fool of!

SENNHEISER HD-490 £50
Good value cans with an exciting and bassy sound. Everything one should look for in headphones at a sensible price.

INTERCONNECTS



Nordost Blue Heaven
A simple and effective upgrade

CHORD COMPANY CHAMELEON 2 £90/m
One of our favourite favourites, the Chameleons are musical performers with a smooth yet open sound.

DNM RESON £40/m
Neutral and transparent, and a steal at forty quid!

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £150/m
Some of the fastest and most transparent cable around. A simple and effective upgrade.

VAN DEN HUL ULTIMATE THE FIRST £260/0.6m
Carbon interconnects that help you forget the electronics and concentrate on the music. Miraculous transparency.

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE

CHORD COMPANY RUMOUR £9.95/m
The Rumour is our reference at the price. Tight and tuneful bass mixed with air and space results in a cracking cable for the money.

DNM RESON £6.95/m
This cable has a transparency of sound that's rarely heard at the price. Excellent value for money.

NORDOST BLUE HEAVEN £375/3m pair
This isn't cheap, but it sounds absolutely fab. An open and spacious sound that simply carries music.

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Arcam DV88 DVD Player (1Yr G/tee)	(999.00)	£599.00	Lexicon MC1 Processor (2Yr G/tee)	(5500.00)	£3795.00
Arcam FMJ A22 Dave Amplifier (1Yr G/tee)	(1849.00)	£999.00	Naim CDX CD Player (2Yr G/tee)	(2470.00)	£1729.00
Arcam FMJ P25 3 Ch P/Amp (1Yr G/tee)	(999.00)	£599.00	Naim CDS/2 Player (2Yr G/tee)	(6256.00)	£4595.00
Linn Klassik K CD system (2Yr G/tee)	(999.00)	£749.00	Naim 102 Preamp (2Yr G/tee)	(1210.00)	£859.00
Linn Karik/2 CD Player/S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(new 1850.00)	£649.00	Naim 72 Preamp (2Yr G/tee)	(767.00)	£429.00
Linn Kan 4 Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(325.00)	£229.00	Naim NAP 180 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(1220.00)	£899.00
Linn Keosa Speakers (2Yr G/tee)	(495.00)	£279.00	Naim NAP 250 Power Amp S/H (1Yr G/tee) (1805.00)		£995.00
Linn Kairn Line Preamp (1Yr G/tee) 50%	(1400.00)	£799.00	Naim NAP 250 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(1805.00)	£1339.00
Linn 5103 DTS System Controller (2Yr G/tee)	(3250.00)	£2200.00	Naim Intro Spkrs - Beech (1Yr G/tee)	(790.00)	£549.00
Linn LP12/Lingo/Akito S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2250.00)	£1095.00	Naim NAP500 Power Amp (2Yr G/tee)	(10995.00)	£7995.00
Linn Keilidh Blk S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(775.00)	£385.00	Rotel RV 985 DVD Player (2Yr G/tee) 50%	(625.00)	£279.00
Linn Sizmik Sub Woofer (2Yr G/tee)	(995.00)	£749.00	TAG DV32R DVD Player (2Yr/Gtee)	(3995.00)	£2995.00
Linn Keltik Speakers Wal (2Yr G/tee) 50%	(6000.00)	£2595.00	Yamaha AX620 AV Amplifier (2Yr/Gtee)	(399.00)	£279.00

welcome to world favourites

CASSETTE

NAKAMICHI DR-2

A great machine with Nakamichi's legendary heads. The lowest cost 'true' Nakamichi at the time, retailing for £600.

NAKAMICHI CR-7

The last of the great ones, and definitely the best Nakamichi ever (yes, better than a Dragon)

YAMAHA TC-800G

Early classic in serious cassette. Its ski-slope looks got it a cult following once it had ceased to be simply ugly.

CD PLAYERS

MERIDIAN 207

Beautifully-built two-box with pre-amp stage. Very musical although not as refined as modern Bitstream gear. No digital output.

PIONEER PD-91

Built-to-last player with easy upgrade routes for modifiers. Not knockout as it stands but get one cheap and have a go!

CAMBRIDGE CD1

The first two box player with weighted mechanics and even an optional Dropout/error counter. Radical and effective at the time - a classic.

AMPLIFIERS

LEAK POINT ONE, TL12 & TL10

Ancestors of hi-fi, consequently expensive nowadays. As with all vintage valve stuff, overhauling is de rigueur before use, using original parts if possible.

LEAK PRE-AMPS

Line of 'good for their time' pre-amps. Use of EF86 pentode valve for high gain rules out ultra performance. Not the highest-fi.

LEAK STEREO 20

Excellent workaday classic valve amp. In good order the 20 will not disgrace itself. Various upgrades are available from specialist repairers.

LEAK TL12+

Plentiful monobloc equivalent of Stereo 20. Reasonably inexpensive and a tweekers' dream. Genuine valve hi-fi on a budget.

NAD 3020

You can't argue with success! NAD's budget transistor integrated gave thousands their first taste of hi-fi and remains great value.

QUAD 33/303 PRE/POWER

Great style and construction, also bullet proof. Warm and wooly sound, but easy going. A good introduction to early transistor audio classics.



Garrard 401
A legendary turntable.

QUAD 22/II PRE/POWER

One of the all-time classic valve amplifiers. Unusual circuit but it works beautifully. 22 pre-amp not up to today's standards.

SUGDEN A21

Seventies transistor integrated has an eminently likeable smoothness and musicality. Limited inputs via DIN sockets.

TECHNICS SE-A5 Mk2

Nice transformer and electronics, shame about the casework. With tweaking, this 150watter can sound sweet.

LOUDSPEAKERS

KLIPSCHORN

Not exactly plentiful or cheap but a splendid beast. For efficiency they have seldom been equalled. Space hungry!

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QUAD ESL57

Unrivalled. Properly serviced there is nothing like them. Their natural presentation may make them caviar to the general.

YAMAHA NS1000M

Hi-tech favourites of the Japanese and Americans. Viewed more warily in the UK but can give excellent results.

TANNOY GRF & AUTOGRAPH

Folded horn monsters which certainly sound good if you have the space. For Tannoy vintage see HFV November 1998.

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Ideal experimenters' driver. High sensitivity ~14,000 Gauss magnet and extended frequency range. Inexpensive too!

TANNOY YORK, LANCASTER

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ALPHASON HRI00S

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ARISTON RD11

A one-time king of turntables very similar to the Linn LP12. Now deposed but worth a look at the right price.

LINN AXIS

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GARRARD 301 & 401

Legendary turntables, once fairly plentiful. Excellent back-up available; many different custom plinths available. High quality.

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Great deck for the kitchen table enthusiast. Garrard fans won't look at 'em but cheap and capable. Servicing available.

HADCOCK 228

Recently out-classed by Hadcock's updated 228 Special Edition but a proper hi-fi arm for all that. Makers still service.

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SHURE M75

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SME 3009 IIS

Everlasting classic tone-arm. Spares permanently available from SME. No longer the last word but peanuts second-hand.

THORENSTD124

Best classic deck ever? Judging by the prices they fetch it's possible - 78rpm too!

THORENSTD150

Mid-price deck with a keen following. No real difficulty with servicing - novices may find the suspension system unnerving.

TRIO L-07D

Knockout heavyweight from 1980 with stainless bearing and 11lb platter! Not a give-away and beware! - spares scarce.

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Hi-Fi World Buying Guide

Our comprehensive new guide contains over 1000 hi-fi components, all tried and tested by Hi-Fi World's listening team. Backing up each one is our performance verdict to help you select the perfect upgrade or first purchase. Happy reading!

Contents

Accessories	95	Cassette decks	98	Headphones & Amplifiers	101
Amplifiers - Integrated	95	CD Convertors	99	Loudspeakers	101
Amplifiers - Pre	96	CD Players	99	MiniDisc	105
Amplifiers - Power & AV	97	CD Recordable	100	Phono Stages	105
Cables - Interconnects	97	CD Transports	100	Systems	105
Cables - Loudspeakers	98	Digital Audio Broadcast (DAB)	100	Tone-arms	106
Cables - Power	98	DVD Players	101	Tuners	106
Cartridges	98	Hard Disk Recording	101	Turntables	106

Prices shown are those at the time of the review

Accessories	£	Year	Verdict
AR TDS202 Sound Enhancer	£69	Jun 02	Pull the socks up on a slow, lazy dull system. For computer audio, and portables use this could be good but steer clear of it for serious hi-fi.
Clearway Mains Filter	£200	Feb 02	Excellent and highly effective. Not exactly cheap but will suit any system.
Clearlight Isolation Cones	£25	Feb 02	Best placed under your CD player, giving slightly more focus and creating a seemingly faster response. A relatively cheap upgrade tweak.
Isotek Isoplug	£30	Sep 02	Affordable and effective mains plug but not the last word in upgrades
Kemp KE-SNS Mains Plug	£75	Sep 02	Creates a subtly more focussed sound and undisturbed listening.
Ringmat Statmat Statfeet	£20 ea	Jun 02	Give best results when used on a source player, and definitely work but in a subtle way, but don't expect miracles!
Ringmat Support System	£200	Sep 02	A bit fussy and fiddly and not cheap, but good for tweakers. Makes subtle yet defining changes to your vinyl collection.
Rothwell In-Line Attenuators	£39 pr	Sep 02	Effective and affordable, but somewhat limited market.
Soundpax Cardboard Spkrs	£30	Jun 02	Surprisingly musical, but lacks the clarity, frequency extremes and dynamics of hi-fi loudspeakers
Vistek Aurios			
Isolation Bearings	£197	Mar02	The higher quality the hi-fi system, the better they work in removing a level of hash from the sound. Highly recommended
Amplifiers - Integrated Under £300	£	Year	Verdict
Alchemist Maxim	£299	Mar 96	Fluid and musical but upper bass is a little dry. Useful phono stage with but with a little silliness and ringing.
AMC 3025	£150	Nov 96	A lot for very little money - sweet sound and good build make the AMC 3025 a great starter amp.
AMC 3050A	£170	Feb 98	Offers plenty of power for the money but sound quality is not class leading.
Arcam Alpha 5 plus	£250	Oct 96	Good with efficient loudspeakers but generally needs more power and control.
Arcam Alpha One	£230	Jan 99	In a smooth system with a warmish bias the Alpha One makes a strong case for itself.
Aura VA80	£279	Apr 95	Excellent value for money and will get the best from any component. Needs a separate phono stage.
Aura VA80 SEx	£250	Mar 96	The Aura has a smooth, civilized sound with fine detail. Bass punch really rolls along. Good phono stage.
Cambridge A1 MkIII integ	£100	Jul 98	Involving and finely detailed, the Cambridge pushes forward the boundaries for inexpensive amps.
Cambridge A5	£150	Sep 02	A bargain in almost every respect. So good, you will hardly notice the lack of a remote control. Sounds more expensive than it really is.
Denon PMA 250SE	£160	Feb 97	A mix of control, delicacy and detail allows it to excel with any music.
Denon PMA 255UK	£140	Sep 02	Big, powerful sound is only slightly marred by the slightly hard sound. Excellent material value for money.
Denon PMA 350SE	£200	Apr 00	Musical and exceptionally sweet phono stage. No tone controls or remote.
Denon PMA 355UK	£230	Feb 01	An exciting sound with excellent drive and bass. A sometimes harsh treble and slight lack of cohesion stop top honours though. Good value.
Denon PMA 425R	£230	Sep 96	Good drive, punch and an open soundstage, but suffers from confusion plus a thin midrange and treble.
Denon PMA 450SE	£280	Oct 96	Big and brutish but unfortunately bland with it. Something of a blast from the 1970s-80s past!
Harmon Kardon HK610	£180	Jun 95	Thorough-going down to earth liveliness. Bright but clean which gives appealing vivacity.
Harmon Kardon HK620	£280	Oct 95	Not quite a giant killer, the Harman is nevertheless a good solid budget buy.
Harman Kardon HK670	£250	Mar 02	Great sense of power and grip but sometimes sacrifices subtlety and detail for outright attack.
Kenwood 3020SE	£200	Nov 94	Budget virtues and budget failings, too. Good with CDs but phono stage makes vinyl sound a little brutal.
Kenwood KAF-3030R	£249	Mar 01	A lot of amp for the money, with a tidy and enjoyable sound. Not the audiophile number one, but a fine real world budget product nonetheless.
Marantz PMA 4000	£130	Apr 00	Top honours in value for money. Neutral and exciting
Marantz PM610 OSE	£200	Sep 02	A rock-oriented amplifier that can sound fantastic if it is carefully mixed with well-matched CD and speakers.
Musical Fidelity E11	£299	Feb 98	A very capable integrated with a smoothness and warmth predisposed to classical rather than rock.
NAD 304	£239	Apr 95	Fine quality bass but rather lackadaisical as regards timing. Phono stage moderate. Needs careful matching.
NAD 310	£130	Jan 95	Good detail and a spacious open sound gives acoustic music and the majority of rock superb clarity.
NAD C320	£200	Apr 99	Younger sibling of the famous 3020 with many of its virtues to boot. Pre-eminently balanced and natural.
NAD C350	£300	Dec 00	The C350 has a lot going for it. A well balanced and natural sounding amplifier that's hard to better at £300.
Onkyo A-9211	£200	Sep 02	Strong, loud and up-front with a decent phono stage. Perhaps a bit too up-front.
Pioneer A103	£130	Mar 95	Luxuriant presentation doesn't compensate for the tendency to un-rhythmic effects. MM phono stage.
Pioneer A207R	£150	Apr 00	Overall detail good, bass slightly thin, good phono stage.
Pioneer A-209R	£140	Sep 02	Feature packed fast-paced amplifier that is a bit too inconsistent but plays a mean up-beat rhythm.
Pioneer A300X	£230	Apr 95	Another highly capable all-rounder although a touch sterile sounding for some tastes.
Pro-ject 7	£259	Apr 95	On a budget, the Pro-ject has strong merit, including an excellent phono stage. Not for all systems.
Rega Brio	£298	Sep 01	A fine performer for the price with a lively and precise sound, plus a decent phono stage to boot!
Rotel RA 970BX	£250	Oct 96	Fresh sound with sharp attack. A slight midrange emphasis can make certain music sound rather forward.
Rotel RA 931	£150	Dec 98	For the money there's no faulting such a gifted performer.
Rotel RA 931 Mk2	£175	Apr 00	Slightly 'flatter' than its predecessor with less depth to the sound but still good value.
Sony TAF446E	£250	Aug 95	bright clear and detailed, but needs a touch more refinement to prevail.
Teac A-E2000	£180	Sep 99	Unusual power supply and very clear treble. Mid and bass so-so hot but the Teac's not expensive considering.
Technics SU A700 mk3	£250	Jan 97	A smooth unassuming sound misses out on the subtlety which brings music to life.
Technics SU A707	£250	Sep 02	A very fine phono stage and excellent performance is somewhat marred by the less than inspired overall sound.
Amplifiers - Integrated £300-£800	£	Year	Verdict
Alchemist APD43A Nexus	£799	Dec 99	A good looker with a smooth and powerful sound, if a tad sterile. Competition is strong at the price.
Alchemist Axiom	£300	Sep 95	Musically rewarding; deserves serious audition. Great British hi-fi on a budget.
AMC 3150A	£329	Nov 98	Not the most musical amp ever but good value. The tone controls and balance adjustment will appeal to some.
Arcam Alpha 6+	£350	Jan 96	Full and smooth sound, unfortunately with loose bass.
Arcam Alpha 9	£500	Dec 96	Excellent value. A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music
Arcam A65	£380	Dec 01	A fine amp that offers good audiophile value, but it can be a bit too reserved for its own good.
Arcam A75	£450	Jul 02	Smooth as silk, tactile bass and sweet treble. A very easy and relaxing listen, if a tad laid back at times.
Arcam A85	£699	Apr 01	Exciting integrated with detail, poise and control that can compete with the best under £1000. Excellent facilities and upgrade potential.
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	£595	Dec 97	All the main ingredients like rhythm and dynamics present and correct. Natural smoothness and transparency.
Audio Analogue Puccini SE	£795	Apr 00	This is the revamped remote control model. Whether you go for plain or pukka Puccini, the results are fast enjoyable and detailed.
Audio Analogue Puccini	£595	Sep 97	Excellent sound quality outstrips the competition at up to £1000.
Audio Analogue Puccini	£575	Apr 00	This is the revamped remote control model. Whether you go for plain or pukka Puccini, the results are fast enjoyable and detailed.
Audiolab 8000A	£500	May 95	Manages the rare feat of sounding powerful and lithe at the same time. Bass taut but not the last word.
Audiolab 8000S	£700	Dec 97	Powerful hefty sound which doesn't blanch when driving awkward loads. Perspective and tonal colour ultimately limited.
Benchmark Roynon SIA 1	£680	Aug 96	Too thin and crisp which makes prolonged listening fatiguing.

Cairn Aria	£450	Oct 99	Looks great and Rocks with the best of them, but treble could be smoother.
Creek 4330 Mk2 SE	£499	Jul 02	Fast, powerful and smooth sound, a little warm but very atmospheric. Gripping stuff. Mediocre build.
Croft Troubadour	£750	Sep 00	Gives an exceptionally fast sound for valves. Good value with plenty of excitement.
Cyrus 3	£500	Oct 96	Highly refined and detailed performance with a clear well-proportioned soundstage.
Cyrus 5	£500	Jul 02	Good value and well built, with an exciting and very solid-state sound. Could be a little bright for some.
Cyrus 7	£700	Feb 00	Don't judge this amp by it's size. It combines impressive scale with delicacy in an attractive package.
Cyrus 8	£800	Jan 03	Smooth, detailed and controlled, one of the best hi-fi products on the market. With the PSX-R it offers superlative performance for a reasonable cost.
Cyrus Straight Line	£398	Nov 98	A good, honest bit of kit with a fine musical sound and no glaring vices.
Densen Beat	£650	Dec 97	If a musical adrenaline rush is what you seek, fine. Listening in bulk, rather clinical and cold sounding.
DPA Renaissance	£595	Dec 94	Rated very highly for serious listening. Richness of timbre, purity of sound and impressive concise imaging.
Edmund ESI 10	£400	Apr 99	Solid build and a big sound make the ESI 10 worthy of audition. Not perhaps the transparent at the price.
Exposure 2010 Titanium	£599	Feb 01	Audiophilia at a sensible price, with a large, generous sound that's cohesive and controlled. A rocking sound that's not for the faint hearted.
Exposure Super XV	£800	Oct 95	A stringy-sounding transistor amp for rock. Build and finish could be better and price lower.
Hofli Audis	£750	Jun 98	Powerful and refreshingly pure: a sound investment.
Kenwood KA-7090R	£400	Apr 98	Excels with sound staging but lacks subtlety and tonal colour.
Kora Explorer	£600	Jan 03	Good detail in vocals and midrange but still a mixed bag. Can be a tad harsh when pushed.
LFD Mistral	£499	Jun 97	An extremely enjoyable, lucid little amplifier that really gets to the heart of the music.
Marantz PM-66 KI-S	£400	Nov 97	An enjoyable and rhythmic sound but may be too lean for some bass-light 'speakers.
Marantz PM-8200	£599	Apr 02	Plenty of clout and projection but has a strangely soulless appeal and some odd colouration.
Marantz 6010 OSE	£400	Jun 02	Heavy, deep bass, thin lower midband and flat imaging, but incredible levels of insight and fine upper treble. Immediately impressive.
Monrio Asty RM	£500	Aug 99	Attractive integrated that offers a glimpse of real high-end performance. A touch bass light, though.
Monrio Asty	£550	Jul 02	Wonderful stage depth, imaging and coherence. Captivating sound, if lacking smoothness.
Monrio MJ	£695	Jan 97	An engaging musical performance; sweet overall sound. Doesn't cope with difficult loads so well.
Moth 30 Integrated	£320	Jul 95	A big open sound sound sets the Moth apart at this price. Low powered, though. Distinctly amateurish looks.
Musical Fidelity X-A1	£480	Dec 98	Two boxes don't form a pre and power in the X-A1 but the result is nevertheless a winning combination.
Musical Fidelity X-A200R	£699	Jul 01	Powerful, musical and incisive, the new MF's formidable blend of strengths makes it a top buy at this price.
Myryad T40	£399	Nov 98	Couple the Myryad with a warm system and enjoy. Possibly a little lightweight on the Reggae & Rap side.
Nad 317	£470	May 97	With 80 watts on tap, the NAD has power aplenty but is rather dynamically limited and ultimately uninvolving.
NAD C370	£450	Jul 02	Insightful and detailed as well as amazingly powerful, the C370 is a bargain buy for those seeking musical thrills.
Naim Nait	£500	May 95	Rather monochromatic with midband emphasis and slightly dry bass. Good imaging but smallish soundstage.
Naim Nait 3R	£799	Feb 00	A fast amplifier that sounds exciting and rhythmic. Not for the weak-hearted or laid-back though.
Naim Nait 5	£799	Feb 01	An exquisitely musical, dynamic and punchy sound, but flawed elsewhere. Superb build and ergonomics make it an accomplished all-rounder.
Nakamichi RE-10 (receiver)	£400	Jul 99	A powerful performer in a competent package that is good value for money. Bettered by good separates though.
Orelle SA 100	£449	Jul 96	Clean, open, active sound. Smooth and detailed with good punch too. One of the best at the price.
Pioneer A-300R Precision	£400	Aug 97	A bargain at £400 pure and simple. Outclasses the competition in every area.
Pioneer A400X	£300	Oct 96	Complements all sorts of music with power and confidence. Outstanding value for money.
Primare A10	£499	Aug 00	A very sweet sounding and musical amplifier. May not suit those with 'heavier' tastes though.
Quad 77	£595	Feb 95	Although classically orientated, the Quad will rock too. Precise and stable imagery and fidelity to tonal values.
Rega Mira	£498	Oct 01	Not the last word in dynamic resolution or bass clout, the Mira is nevertheless impressive when it comes to detail and timbre.
Roksan Kandy	£475	Jul 02	Big, powerful and open, with surprisingly tight bass. This amplifier blends power and grip with imaging and detail. Excellent.
Roksan Caspian	£695	Jun 97	Mixes the best of solid state and valve worlds (without valves!) to produce a seductive sound.
Rose Scion	£615	May 97	Great packaging and super sound make the Scion a winner.
Shearner Phase 2	£800	Apr 97	Even-handed performer deals confidently with music regardless of genre. Not as smooth as the best.
Sonneteer Campion	£579	Jan 96	Highly detailed and smooth sound. Worth searching out.
Sony TA-FB730R	£200	Mar 00	A sturdy workhorse with an exciting and upfront sound but not the most winning of phono stages.
Sony TA-FB920R	£300	Feb 99	Partnered correctly to counterbalance its forwardness, the Sony offers a fast, rhythmic presentation.
Tagy McLaren 60i	£499	Sep 00	The no-frills 60i offers a detailed and dynamic sound rarely found at the price. Excellent value.
Teac ABX7R	£700	Jun 96	Big and powerful sound, but a little unobtrusive with it.
Technics SE-A900 MkII	£300	Mar 99	Nominally a separate pre and power, but the pre can't work alone. Exciting but unobtrusive.
Thule Spirit IA60	£450	Nov 99	Benefits from a calm, controlled presentation. Could ideally do with more fire in its veins.
Token K50	£345	Nov 99	Well-specified low-feedback design gives punchy results, if a little unrefined. Well sustained power.
Unico	£750	Aug 02	Another stunner from Unison Research - big, beguiling, punchy sound and great build and style make it a true audio bargain!
Valve Audio Exclaim	£310	Dec 99	The Exclaim does an excellent job of being all things to the audiophile on a budget.

Amplifiers - Integrated £800+

£	Year	Verdict
Audionote Soro Se	£1999 Nov 02	Not the last word in detail perhaps, but a great valve amp for the money and one that will bring hours of listening pleasure.
Copland CSA 14	£1099 Apr 96	A sweet and subtle sound. Fine midrange; transparent and open with vocals.
Densen DM 10	£1299 Jun 95	Dual mono construction gives strong stereo separation. Brutal resolution of detail but not the clearest ever.
Gamma Rhythm	£2499 Jul 96	Partnered with sensible loudspeakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.
Mckintosh MA6800	£3735 Sep 95	A mighty confection of power, facilities and style, and it sounds good to boot.
Musical Fidelity A1001	£2499 Jun 98	Awesome power and seismic bass. A very good all-rounder with super-clean sound.
Musical Fidelity Tri-Vista 300	£3999 Jan 03	By no means cheap but undeniably impressive. A very smooth, powerful and sophisticated sound that often delights with subtlety as well as muscle.
Pathos Logos	£2499 Feb 03	Stonking looking and highly detailed sounding, the Logos is a lot of amplifier for the money. High-end at a sensible price.
Sonic Fronteers Anthem	£1295 May 98	A characteristically competent and musical integrated. Prefers fairly efficient loudspeakers though.
Sonneteer Alabaster	£900 Oct 97	Excellent high-end integrated with a real love of music and plenty of poke.
Teac AB X10	£1000 Sep 95	Very strong all round performer with excellent build and finish. Verging on the expensive though.
Unison Res. Simply 845	£2950 Mar 98	Allied to all the right 'speakers will handle all musical genres with smoothness and power.
Unison Simply 4	£1495 Oct 95	With a sweet, detailed and open sound the Simply 4 is unusually musical. Sensible facilities too.

Amplifiers - Pre Under £300

£	Year	Verdict
Creek OBH-12	£200 Jul 98	Only poor cosmetics mar the Creek. Sonically it's a gem.
Musical Fidelity X-Cans	£130 Mar 98	If you haven't yet experienced the world of quality headphone listening, the X-Cans is the way to start.
Musical Fidelity X-Pre	£200 Jan 98	A smooth, sweet and musical performer.
Project 7	£259 Feb 95	Immensely enjoyable and listenable, a rare mixture of sophistication and fun.
Technics SU-C1000MkII	£299 Apr 98	Needs slightly more taut bass and a less grainy midrange to bring it up with the best.

Amplifiers - Pre £300-£799

£	Year	Verdict
Audio Analogue Bellini	£475 Apr 98	Organic and transparent. Free from transistor hardness.
Aura CA200	£749 Mar 97	A smooth and sweet sound devoid of roughness.
Crimson C5610C	£440 Nov 98	The phono stage is the main area of weakness. Can sound a touch muddled at times.
Croft Epoch	£600 Jun 96	A fine sounding preamp, but the phono stage is weak in the bass.
Cyrus Pre	£650 Feb 96	Pre-amplifier has plenty of facilities, but sounds a little unexciting and 'conventional'.
PM Audio Lab LIS	£650 Dec 95	This valve pre-amp is very good value indeed.
Sumo Athena II	£767 May 96	More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular.
Talk Hurricane I	£500 Jun 97	Flexible with a strong controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes.
Technics 5U-C1000	£350 Feb 97	Good when mains powered, even better running on its batteries. One to consider at the price.
Thorens TTA2000	£550 Jul 95	Poor sound quality and engineering let this pre-amp down. Pricey too.
Unison Res. Feather I	£795 Aug 98	Warm but still exciting, it is only let down by a slightly recessed midrange
Heybrook Signature II	£549 May 97	Impressive smoothness and tonal colour, transparent as well.

Amplifiers - Pre £800-£499

£	Year	Verdict
Alchemist Freya	£1020 Oct 94	Quite gentle, yet controlled, the smoothness suits classical.
Etalon Preamp	£1095 Feb 98	Smooth, even and transparent. Well worth the outlay.
John Shearner Phase 6	£895 Sep 96	Matched with a smooth amp and 'speakers the Phase 6 is capable of a transparent and rewarding performance
Linn Wakonda	£900 Apr 98	In terms of musicality and involvement it falls short.
Meridian 502	£1295 Dec 96	Transparent, detailed sound with good tonal range and very natural presentation.
Musical Fid. Nu-Vista	£1200 Sep 98	A truly competent pre-amp whose high-end sound comes with a very reasonable price tag.
Naim NAC102	£999 Apr 97	This even-handed performer images well and deals confidently with music regardless of genre.
Quad 7741	£850 Jul 96	Bright and detailed, but phono stage is inadequate at this price.
Shearner Phase I	£1099 Oct 94	Very good all-rounder with clarity and a strong treble.
TAG McLaren PA10	£850 Nov 98	Justifies its price with a very musical and revealing performance.
Tube Technology Prophet	£1310 Jun 94	Beautifully built and finished, it will attract attention in any home.
XTC Pre-1	£1000 Nov 96	This pre-amp is highly detailed and spacious.

Amplifiers - Pre £1500+

Model	£	Year
Audiovalve PPP30	£1995	Mar 95
Chord CPA 1800	£1774	Mar 98
Focusrite Red 4	£2345	Feb 96
Galactron Pre	£1630	Nov 95
Linn Klimax Kontrol	£6000	Feb 03
Marantz 7	£3500	Mar 97
Michel Orca	£1650	Oct 98
Naim NAC202/NAP200	£2312	Feb 03
Unison Res. Mystery 2	£1750	May 98

Verdict

A bright and lean approach to the valve sound. Has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word excellent. Smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amps can be. Smooth, but dull balance makes it suitable for bright systems. A very expensive preamp but highly effective and superbly designed. Build and facilities are faultless. Superb, combines delicacy and power, especially with a vinyl source. With its Panasonic pot, the Orca reaches new standards of transparency and involvement. Powerful, detailed and involving like no others at the price. Naims new 'Classic' pre/power is a high-end bargain. Offers finesse, control and clarity for a very reasonable outlay.

Amplifiers - Power Under £800

Model	£	Year
Arcam 9P	£400	Dec 96
Arcam Alpha 10P	£600	Jul 98
Audio Analogue Donizetti	£575	Apr 98
Aura PA100	£749	Mar 97
Cyrus Power	£449	Feb 96
Linn LK100	£650	Apr 98
Linn LK240	£750	Aug 97
Meridian 505	£795	Aug 97
Monarchy SM-70	£595	Jan 99
Moth Stereo 60	£549	Dec 95
Musical Fidelity X-A50	£500	Jan 98
PM Audio Lab 211SE	£2750	Dec 95
Quad 77/67	£600	Jul 96
Rose RP-190	£495	Nov 93
Shearman Phase 3	£689	Apr 97
Talk Tornado I	£500	Jun 97
Technics SE-A1000	£400	Feb 97
Thorens TTP 2000	£500	Jul 95

Verdict

A detailed and open sound gives great atmosphere to all types of music. This power amp lags behind the best of the competition, and the build is flimsy. As smart as an Armani suit, they sound powerful in a natural, organic manner. A smooth, sweet powerful sound free from the rough brightness that afflicts many solid-states. The Cyrus Power is simply impressive in all respects. Well built, but judged purely on a musical basis they fall short. The LK240 plays tunes exceptionally well, tonal colour and image precision are not its fortes though. Crisp, clear images are set in a broad spread between the 'speakers but the 505 lacks stage depth and grunt. The Monarchy is a smooth, warm amp most at home with 'speakers that are easily driveable. This power amp unfortunately suffers from sharp sounding treble and poor depth. Very smooth, sweet and musical performers, not over-analytical but very involving. The MP 211A power amplifiers are detailed and open with great bass. With good punch, speed and attack its not bad at all but can be a little uninspiring. An amplification system with a wide range of facilities, easy upgrade path and a smooth and relaxing sound. The Phase 3 possesses impressive clarity, detail and dynamics. A flexible power amp with a strong, controlled sound, but won't suit all tastes. Smooth, warm sound has plenty of grunt when needed and is very enjoyable to listen to. Its best feature is the key on/off switch, otherwise its a case of poor sound quality and engineering.

Amplifiers - Power £800-£1499

Model	£	Year
Audio Innovations 800	£849	Feb 94
Audiolab 8000Q	£999	Jun 95
Chameleon Ruby	£995	Jan 96
Chord SPM 400	£1325	Mar 98
Crimson CS630C	£800	Nov 98
Croft Series V	£800	Jun 96
Delph Da Capo	£1469	May 95
DPA 200S	£1245	Jul 93
Galactron Power	£1200	Nov 95
HD Audio Duo	£1185	May 95
Heybrook Signature II	£1051	May 97
Malbarry S508	£850	Aug 92
Meridian 557	£1400	Dec 96
Musical Fidelity X-A200	£1000	Aug 98
MVL Integral A2	£895	May 99
Myryad MA120	£1000	Apr 96
Omak Jewel One	£899	Jul 95
Quad 707	£800	Jul 97
Sugden 41P	£899	Apr 93
Sumo Polaris III	£898	May 96
TAG McLaren 60P	£850	Nov 98
Unison Research Unico DM	£1250	Nov 02
VRR Adur	£1495	Jun 95

Verdict

Very worthy valve amp with a silky smooth response and plenty of grunt when called for. Highly recommended for its blend of operational sophistication, build and sound quality. Well specified and powerful, but dry and short of life. Suits Rock on bass-heavy 'speakers. This amp has it all - detail, transparency, slam and rhythm. In a word, excellent. These monoblocs have a tonal richness and bass speed rare amongst powerful amps. Fast, clear and detailed sound will win friends in both the transistor and valve camps. Quality bass and a clear midband but the treble can be harsh at high volume. Serious audiophile product at an affordable price. Well constructed, pleasant to use and fine sounding. Smooth sound but dull balance make the Galactron suitable for bright systems. Not dissimilar to the Audiolab monoblocs, the sound has a sweet top and amazing clarity. Not quite as transparent as it could be but impresses with its smoothness and tonal colour. All the makings of a budget high-end classic. Sweet and warm if slightly soft at the top end. Great control and dynamics allied to seductive smoothness. A rare combination of power and delicacy. Hugely powerful and controlled, the X-A200s are still superbly musical. An excellent performer with any music. It is hard to imagine the A2 being beaten at the price. The sound is a somewhat acquired taste and a little rough in places. A lot of amplifier for the money. Big, warm, sweet sound places it ahead of most. The 707 embodies a rare blend of grace and power in its sleek grey casework. A good balance between detail and fullness without serious compromise. More valve-like than transistor in sound; highly competent if not spectacular. Fully justifies the cost with a very musical and revealing performance. A lovely balance of valve and solid state, it would be good at twice the price. Very highly recommended. Lovers of light piano-based fare and Baroque music will appreciate this amp's delicacy.

Amplifiers - Power £1550+

Model	£	Year
Audiovalve LC8	£1995	Mar 95
Canary 301	£3055	Nov 98
Cary 300B SE	£3975	Feb 95
Etalon Ampli	£2925	Feb 98
Final Music-6	£1500	Feb 99
Focusrite Red 5	£2057	Feb 96
Gamma Aeons	£4999	Apr 97
Marantz 9	£8000	Mar 97
Marantz MA22	£2199	Apr 93
Michell Alecto	£1989	Oct 98
Naim NAC202/NAP200	£2312	Feb 03
Orchid RC750	£6600	Aug 96
Shearman Phase 1	£1999	Oct 94
Sugden Symetra	£1550	Oct 96
Tube Technology Genesis	£2599	Jun 94
Unison Res. Smart 300B	£4250	May 98
Unison Res. Power 35	£1525	Aug 98
Vadis S15	£2350	Jul 98
XTC POW-1	£2000	Nov 96

Verdict

Eschews the traditional lavish tube sound for a brighter and leaner approach. The 301 puts the 300B's traditional virtues to good use in a push-pull design that will drive most loudspeakers. Cary have a winning amplifier that is a prime example of how a 300B can sound. Very natural, substantial presentation with lots of power on tap. This battery-powered power amp has a convincing three-dimensional sound and scale. Powerful, smooth and detailed sound. Not as clinical as some professional amplifiers can be. Sound quality of these monoblocs is impressive but marred by a rather obvious hum. Build could be better. These monoblocs are superb, producing a beguiling performance of great control and verve. Sound is certainly not too hard, in fact it's rather warm. There are more dynamic outfits around however. The new Alecto is crisper, cleaner and more controlled than earlier incarnations. Powerful, detailed and involving like no others at the price. Naims new 'Classic' pre/power is a high-end bargain. A powerful grip on music, but articulate and detailed too. A rare combination. Good sound quality and an impressive tonal balance. The Symetra monoblocs impress with their grip. They run hot and sound warm. Valve monoblocs that produce explosive bass, midrange as clear as a bell and shimmering treble. Powerful, neutral sounding amps thanks to their modified 300B valves, but a little expensive for the same reason. A great compromise between delicacy, power and practicality. Very musically satisfying, too. The S15's purity and clarity are impossible to beat for the money. Bass is not brilliant, but still better than most. This power amplifier is smooth and seductive, although a little pricey.

AV Amplifiers

Model	£	Year
Cyrus AVB	£1100	Dec 02
Marantz PS17	£2000	Sep 02
Panasonic VSA-AX10	£2499	May 02
Onkyo TX-D5898	£2000	Nov 02

Verdict

A combination of excellent sound, easy set-up and brilliant packaging makes this one to have at the price. Brilliantly conceived and executed crossover product that will delight 'trad hi-fi' and multi channel fans alike. Surround Sound mode gives clear and open midband, detailed treble and thunderous bass. Stereo mode is not particularly tuneful. A brilliant package but has precious little to do with hi-end hi-fi. Fine ergonomics, slick styling, excellent facilities and pleasant sound is impressive, but don't expect fireworks from 2 channel audio.

Cables - Interconnects

Model	£	Year
AR MS230 Master	£50	Dec 02
Chord Co Anthem	£275	Jul 00
Chord Co Calypso	£30	Apr 02
Chord Co Chorus	£200.	Feb 01
Chord Co Silver Siren	£74	May 01
Ixos Gamma Encore	£70	Jul 01
Ixos 1001 Gamma Master	£69	Jul 02
John Dory Hi-Fi Silver Foil	£200	Feb 02
Linn Silver Interconnects	£185	Jul 02
Kimber Kable Tonik	£45	Feb 03
Monster Cable M1000i	£299	Feb 01
Neotech NA-12165	£425	Feb 02
Nordost Quattro Fil	£1375	Oct 01
Nordost Red Dawn	£300	Jul 00
Origin Live Advanced	£45	May 01
Origin Live Laminar		

Verdict

A very friendly cable that's well balanced and inoffensive sounding. Very good value. Strong recommendation for dull systems. For clarity with sparkle, the Anthem is a good choice. Fair detail and depth. Certain lack of focus with choral music but a giant leap up from basic 'patch cables'. Effective upgrade. Well suited to valves and smooth sounding equipment. Will calm down over-bright or harsh systems. Highly recommended. Lively and well balanced with excellent detail and staging. Highly recommended. Full and forward sound with sweet treble and very good deep bass. A good cable that works well with most hi-fi but may need livening up by brighter sounding components. Deliver a true high-end neutral, open and balanced sound. Very competent, they offer much. Superb sound quality and a great all rounder. Overall, brilliant with smooth sources but not the most neutral at the price. Superb value, with a very open and transparent sound extremely rare at this price. Good dynamics and rock-solid super tuneful bass. You get a strong and sophisticated sound for your money. Rich and powerful sounding, with good bass and smooth treble. Well constructed cables but hefty price. Full and fast with oodles of detail and presence. Will deliver a musical yet exact sound. Musicality that manifests itself in vocals and instrumental phrasing. Pricey, but excellent. System friendly with good tonal balance, neutral but not cold. Imaging good and well worth a listen.

Flow Reference	£149	Feb 02	Fuss free sound that suit's most set-ups. Picks up oodles of detail and creates space in recordings. A good buy at the price.
Origin Live Laminar			
Flow Ultra	£85	Jul 01	Fine lyrical quality, sounds fluid and musical as well as analytical. A high-end sound with a sensible price tag.
Precious Metals			
Silver Signal 100	£120	Feb 01	Good detail and presence, fine imaging, with sweet treble and excellent bass response. A super-fast and exciting performer.
SonicLink Control	£135	Feb 01	Well balanced with detail and cleanliness of sound. Will spark up a dullish system.
SonicLink First Base	£25	Jul 01	Fast and open sound for the money. A great little upgrade for the 'first time' cable buyer or second system upgrade.
SonicLink Red Earth	£300	Jul 00	Ideally used with valve equipment, may sound too bright with solid state sounding gear.
SonicLink SG Whisper	£45	May 01	Overall performance was good especially for the price of these cables. Good value for money and a worthy audition.
Supra Dual	£40	Feb 03	A good musical cables thats fluid and warm but not the last word in detail or transparency. Hard to knock at the low price though.
True Colours Cobra	£199	May 0	Full sounding cable works well with thin sounding or sterile equipment, where it will fatten up the sound. Good for the money.
van den Hul The Bay	£38	Apr 02	Rounded, balanced and full sound with high frequency detail. Well built cable that will fit in with most budget or midpriced systems.
van den Hul The First Ultimate	£219	Jul 00	Not called 'Ultimate' for nothing. Expensive it may be but the performance is absolutely knock-out
van den Hul Integration Hybrid	£199	Feb 01	Neutral with firm rhythmic grip and fluidity. Big, cohesive sound with detailed bass and smooth treble. Highly recommended.
van den Hul Storm Gold Hybrid	£30	Oct 01	Plenty of detail and excitement. Soundstage is nice and deep and treble is never harsh or rough. A great upgrade for the budget restricted.
Cables - Loudspeaker	£	Year	Verdict
Black Rhodium AST100X3	£7.50	Nov 02	Superb value, this cable is fast and exciting but can be a bit top heavy.
Chord Co Odyssey 2	£17.99	Jan 03	Excellent tonal balance and smoothness. A great buy at a real world price and a good upgrade from your entry level fare.
Ecosse Reference Cable ES2.3	£13.49	May 02	Good detail and soundstage, deep bass and treble sweet and smooth. An all round yet advanced sounding cable.
Ecosse Reference Cable MS2.15	£27	Jul 01	This is a fluid yet neutral and detailed cable that should suit most systems and last for the rest of your audiophile life. Highly recommended.
Hi Diamond Power +4	£110	Jan 03	Not cheap but impressive in transparency and open-ness. Soundstaging is wide and clarity is tip-top. A good performer.
Kimber Cable 4PR	£94	Apr 01	Cohesive and lyrical, open and well balanced sound. Bass is good and taut. An excellent all round buy.
LAT International Bi-Wire	£25	Jul 01	Smooth and musical, will open up enclosed or claustrophobic systems with its sweet treble and spacious imaging. Good stuff indeed.
Nordost SPM	£2795	Dec 00	Frighteningly realistic dynamics, jaw dropping detail, bone crunching bass. A sonic experience to savour.
Origin Live Black Laminar Flow	£30	Nov 02	Not the last word in detail but subtle and refined sounding.
SonicLink AST-150	£48	Apr 01	Fine value for money. Gives much detail, it will suit smoother or dullish systems where it will quicken the sound.
Supra Cables Quattro 4X4T	£7.99	May 02	Deep bass with good detail and a smooth sounding treble. Highly recommended for audition and a great upgrade from ultra budget wire.
van den Hul Royal Jade Hybrid	£11	Dec 00	Musical and exciting, will give a real lift to sluggish components, excellent value for money
Cables - Power	£	Year	Verdict
Ecosse Reference Big Red Powercord	£99	Aug 02	A good upgrade, but not the cheapest option. Well focussed and clear sounding.
Kemp Electronics KE lo-Power Cable	£36	Aug 02	Good value for money, the Kemp cables are clean sounding and lucid.
Kimber LoPowercord	£75	Aug 02	The first and still one of the best. Competition is now strong but the Wattgate IEC makes a big difference.
Cartridges Under £200	£	Year	Verdict
Audio Technica 120E	£52	Nov 01	A big sound with lots of treble detail make the AT120E great for Rock. Lots of fun.
Audio Technica AT440ML	£89	Aug 01	Bright, fast sounding and detailed, with fulsome bass. The AT440ML can be spitty at times.
Clearaudio Alpha	£130	Apr 99	Tends to sound quite hard at the top but imaging and detail are good. Best in a warm system.
Denon DL103M	£110	Aug 97	First manufactured in 1963, it sounds mature and sure-footed rather than over the hill.
Denon DL110	£?	Mar 94	May be a little soft-natured for some. Splendid dynamics and an even tonal balance.
Denon DL304	£199	Sep 92	The DL 304 offers superb neutrality at a comparatively low cost.
DNM Mica	£185	Feb 98	Bettors Goldring's 1042 without difficulty. MC quality from an MM.
Dynevector DV10X4 Mk2	£199	Jul 01	The most musical cartridge at or near its price, the baby Dynavector is a classic budget audiophile product.
Goldring Elektra	£30	Nov 01	Not the most exciting performer around but does the job well enough, and at £30 it's as cheap as chips.
Goldring 1006	£70	Nov 01	A tad bright but very detailed with good bass, a little expensive all the same.
Goldring 1042	£90	Jan 93	One of the best MMs at the price with strainless delivery.
Goldring 1012GX	£60	Jul 93	Great with Rock music, the 1012GX is the best value MM.
Goldring 1042	£90	Jan 93	One of the best MMs at the price with strainless delivery
Grado Prestige Silver	£119	Apr 97	Good tracking and inoffensive sound, but somehow lacks sparkle in any department.
Linn K9	£?	Sep 94	Rhythmic bite compensates for a lack of vibrancy in music (MM).
Ortofon 510 MkII	£40	Jul 99	Excellent tracker at a good price. Warm amplification is needed to tame this sure-footed budget entry.
Ortofon 520	£50	Jan 92	At the price they keep well up with the rest of the competition (MM).
Ortofon 540	£100	Jan 93	Smooth operator and very good value for money (MM).
Ortofon MC15 Super II	£110	Mar 95	In the right system, can be masterful with its dry and accurate response.
Ortofon MC25E	£170	Sep 95	A considerable achievement that adds true verve a pizzazz to the MC15 Super II
Ortofon Super OM10	£32	Nov 01	A fine detailed performer, but lacks a bit of bass grunt.
Roksan Corus Black	£120	Jan 93	Light and dry presentation with good presentation (MM).
Slate Brazen MM	£185	Sep 97	If you like the V15 you'll love the Brazen. Works well with an SME 3009.
Sumiko Blue Point	£100	Oct 92	Excellent value for money. It does its job of transcribing the information on the disc without fuss or bother.
Cartridges £200-	£	Year	Verdict
Cartridge Man Music Maker	£549	Feb 99	Good price, high output and a winning musicality make this Moving Iron cartridge the one to beat.
Clearaudio Victory Gold	£960	Aug 00	Dry, fast and forward sound, but lacks the neutrality and even-handedness you'd expect from a mid-price moving coil.
DNM Aciore MC cartridge	£255	Jul 97	Dynamism ad subtlety mix i the Aciore to prduce very enjoyable results.
DNM Lexa	£1300	Jan 99	A Goldring make-over that tracks well and sounds good. Pricey, though.
DNM Rica MM Cartridge	£255	Jun 98	This betters the Mica, has super-MM virtues.
Dynavector 17 DM Mk2	£449	Mar 00	A glorious taste of the high end at real world prices, but match carefully with top quality ancillaries.
Dynavector DV20X-H	£299	May 99	Delightfully musical sound makes the Dynavector a very strong contender in the budget MC stakes.
Dynavector DV XX-IL	£998	Nov 00	Warm, sweet, beguilingly musical cartridge with a charming personality, but not quite the class of its field.
EMT HST6	£850	Oct 96	Solid bass and smooth, musical sound make this rare MC cartridge worth the money.
Goldring Excel VX	£495	May 97	Has fine midrange clarity, but is bettered in other ares by cheaper competitors.
Linn Arkiv	£1200	Dec 97	Linn fans will love it but it's up against strong competition.
Linn Klyde	£489	Jun 95	Sumptuous sounding cartridge that borders on the bass heavy but has a good feel for music.
Lyra Lydian	£649	Jun 95	Extremely smooth, civilised MC with no obvious weaknesses.
Ortofon Jubilee	£1250	Mar 99	Detailed, musical and sure-footed, the Jubilee goes a long way towards justifying its elevated price tag.
Ortofon Kontrapunkt B	£750	Sep 01	One of Ortofon's best yet, a natural music maker with tremendous clarity. Match carefully though.
Ortofon MC25F	£225	Sep 95	Delightfully sweet, musical sound with added refinemet on FL that takes some beating.
Ortofon MC30 Supreme	£450	Jun 95	Involving yet refined presentation but some could feel it's slightly coloured.
Ortofon MC7500	£2000	May 94	Conveys the full gamut of emotion from A-Z with the fervour of a live concert. Expensive, but the business.
Ortofon Rohmann	£1000	Apr 96	A top quality MC with superb tonal quality and excellent imagery.
Shure V15VxMR	£295	Mar 97	Warm, dynamic rendition of music with great detail and impact (MM).
Transfiguration Spirit	£1000	Jul 98	A balanced all-rounder that misses out only on the last ounce of detail and bass weight.
Van Den Hul MC10	£840	Jun 95	The MC10 is very hard to fault. A honey, pure and simple.
VDH Grasshopper IV	£3750	Dec 95	Allows music to flow with superb fluidity and reveal things which were previously unheard - at a price!
Cassette Decks	£	Year	Verdict
Aiwa AD-F580	£150	Apr 98	No Dolby S, but three heads and two capstans make the Aiwa a bargain.
Aiwa AD-F810	£200	May 94	Impressive on playback, the '810 really hits its stride when recording.
Aiwa AD-S950	£300	Feb 95	Vice-free playback is mirrored by impressive recording.
Denon DRM-550	£160	May 96	Good enough for the price and no worse than the competition.
Denon DRM-555	£150	Jul 99	Its slant towards features prevent the Denon taking the audiophile honours at the price
Denon DRM-650S	£230	Aug 96	Top sound quality with ferric and chrome makes this deck a steal.
Denon DRS-810	£300	Jan 92	On the right tapes, the Denon repays with delightful sound quality.
Denon DRW-580 (twin)	£200	Feb 96	Good value and performance, but bettered by Denon's own single decks.
Grundig CF4	£250	Jan 95	Fair on pre-recordeds, OK when recording, but speed stability isn't great.

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
JVC TD-V662	£300	Sep 98	Only the lack of Dolby S conspires against the otherwise excellent JVC.
JVC TD-V1010	£400	Sep 92	Disappointing on replay but recording is another kettle of fish altogether.
Kenwood KX-5080S	£200	Jan 97	Stable transport gives fine results on metal and chrome. Rough on ferrics.
Kenwood KX-7060S	£330	Dec 94	Convincing all-rounder except for heavy-handed noise reduction.
NAD 614	£270	Sep 95	Excellent electronics are let down by a low-grade transport.
Nad 602	£200	Mar 94	Respectable on pre-recordeds but bass-light on recordings.
Nad 613	£230	Jan 96	Decent playback and good recording when used carefully.
Nakamichi 1.5	£500	Jan 92	The Cassette Deck 1.5 has no rivals in its ability to recreate a realistic performance
Nakamichi DR-1	£780	Jun 93	Not perfect but as close as you can get for the money.
Nakamichi DR-3	£300	Mar 93	Unfortunately keeping the price down keeps performance below Nak's norm.
Nakamichi DR-8	£550	Jan 00	A good product that is worthy of the Nakamichi title. It could be the cassette's last stand!
Onkyo TA250	£350	Oct 94	Top transport but the electronics aren't on a par.
Pioneer CT-95	£1000	Mar 97	On chrome and ferric, the '95 is smooth and natural. Not so good with metals.
Pioneer CT-5550S Precision	£340	Feb 99	Three heads, ease of use and high quality make the Dolby S equipped Precision a strong contender
Pioneer CT-5740S	£430	Jun 96	Complex but superb in every important area.
Rotel RD-960BX	£230	Oct 95	A solid, competent machine which is reasonable value for money.
Sony TC-K311	£150	Dec 93	Auto-tuning is mediocre and the general results are unexceptional.
Sony TC-K490	£170	Jan 93	A mix of average heads and electronics doesn't make for happy taping.
Sony TC-K611S	£330	Feb 94	Muffled on pre-recordeds but pulls out all the stops on recordings.
Sony WM-D6C Walkman Pro	£N/A	Jun 00	Sony's very best high-end hi-fi cassette transport, squeezed into a box and run from batteries. About £200 S/H for a mint, low use example.
Teac V-600	£150	Sep 94	Satisfactory for in-car recordings, but the low price shows.
Teac V-610	£100	Apr 97	The V-610's performance matches its price well, but audiophile it isn't.
Teac V-6030S	£550	Nov 97	Solid build and solid sounds. Top-notch at the price.
Teac V-8000S	£699	Jun 92	With decks like the Teac, cassette deserves to live beyond the year 2000.
Teac V-8030S	£650	Aug 95	One of the highest quality Dolby S decks available.
Technics RS-AZ7	£300	Jul 96	Excellent bass but mid and treble lack dynamics. Auto-tunes poorly on metal.
Yamaha KX-580 5E	£250	Sep 97	The '580 lives up to its 5E tag with a fine performance in all areas.
Yamaha KX-650	£260	Feb 94	The Yamaha offers a fine blend of performance and facilities.

CD Convertors

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
Alchemist T5-D-1	£300	Jan 99	Smooth, natural and relaxed on the ear, highly persuasive with acoustic material. A bit soft on Rock and Dance.
Arcam BB500	£750	Aug 97	Smooth and accurate treble and easy-going rhythm. Measured and engaging; good value too.
Audiolab 8000DAC	£900	Aug 97	Treble roll-off serves to remove some of the music's sparkle; lags behind the group leaders somewhat.
Audio Note DAC-One & Audio Note CDT-Zero	£749	Feb 02	A enjoyably musical package and beautifully presented too, but a touch too coloured to compete with the best of the rest.
Cambridge Dacmagic	£150	Jun 95	Instant upgrade for a budget player but out of its depth within a properly designed hi-fi CD player.
Cambridge Isomagic	£129	May 01	Extremely refined and sophisticated sound at a ridiculously low price make it another Cambridge cracker!
Chord D5C 900 DAC	£1700	Dec 98	The Chord combines smooth composure with musicality and transparency. Fort Knox build and priced to match.
Creek OBH-14	£239	Jun 99	Combined DAC and passive pre-amp; at the money there is no competition.
DPA Digital 5X64	£800	Aug 99	Combines lack of grain and tonal richness with typical DPA speed and lucidity.
DPA Enliten DAC	£795	Mar 95	Powerful, taut bass and remarkably solid higher frequencies. A nice touch with acoustic music especially.
DPA Enlightenment	£825	Aug 97	An engaging listen with good manners to boot. Never uninvolved or lacklustre, plays with realism
DPA Little Bit 3	£300	Nov 95	Don't be misled by the name - it's the budget convertor to have. Impossible to criticise for the money.
DPA 5X512 DAC	£8000	Jun 98	A real smoothie for high-end digital conversion. Given the right transport, an outstanding sound is on the cards.
GT Audio Star-Dac	£350	Jan 00	This DAC's extremely natural, fluid character gels with any type of music.
LFD DAC3	£2999	Aug 01	Three grand is a lot to spend, but few other digital convertors come close. Brilliantly warm, musical and engaging sound makes the most of any music.
Link DAC 2	£300	Nov 99	Bargain price, priceless performance. A DAC to take very seriously indeed.
Marston Silhouette/PSU	£895	Aug 97	If detail is high on your list of priorities, with a more forceful, hard-edged presentation, this looks like a very good bet.
Midiman Flying Calf	£109	Feb 99	A great little DAC which simply can't be beaten at the price. A bargain in all areas.
Midiman Flying Cow	£300	Jun 98	First-class as a DAC; doubles as an ADC for archiving to CDR - great value.
Monarchy Audio Delux 18	£595	Aug 97	Never offensive; its multi-bit convertor packs a mighty bass punch. Useful analogue volume control.
Monarchy Delux 18	£795	May 95	Delicate brightness does a lot to open out music and create a sense of space
Musical Fidelity X-24K	£300	Jan 99	Crisp, detailed and dynamic, the MF is a genuine music maker, if a touch hard and bright at times.
Musical Fidelity X-DAC	£300	Nov 97	Outstanding value for money. Excellent sound in the usual attractively styled package.
Musical Fidelity A3.24	£799	Mar 02	An interesting bit of audiophile kit that will put fine sparkle and depth into decent CD recordings and do its very best with bad ones.
Orelle DA188	£399	Jun 95	Nicely built with quality components, the DA-188 has a lively sound. Solid bass, tidy midrange and crisp treble.
Pink Triangle Da Capo	£1400	Feb 95	Old hand at the game. One of the first HDCC-compatible convertors still a fine piece of gear.
Pros Audio	£699	Nov 95	A fine musical performance makes this idiosyncratic CD convertor worth searching out.
RDP 980	£450	Jul 96	An affordable route into two-box players. Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure mid-range tone.
Sonic Frontiers DAC kit	£240	Jan 95	Easy and fun to build, competitively priced and delivers fine sonic results.
Sonic Frontiers Processor 3	£7000	Sep 98	An awful lot of money - use it forever. Quality which can outlive any amount of cheaper purchases.
Sonic Frontiers Transdac	£699	Jul 95	The Transdac has a smooth and focussed sound, but partnered with the Ultra Jitterbug looks expensive.
Tag McLaren DPA32R	£1695	Oct 01	Expensive, but a supremely versatile machine that's not only an excellent digital radio but a pretty good preamp and DAC too
DAB Option	£595		Partnered with the TCD 2000, produces a sound that is certainly focussed, detailed and spacious.
Thorens TDA2000	£700	Jun 96	A taste of the elegantly smooth, slightly laid-back sound the epitome of American good taste.
XTC Dac	£1200	Apr 96	

CD Players

Under £300

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
AMC CD8	£150	Oct 97	The CD8 is free from grain but can sound too polished at times.
Cambridge CD45E	£200	Feb 98	Natural and very life-like, the CD45E embarrasses many pricier players.
Denon DCD-315	£150	Jan 96	Great box of tricks which gets all of the basics right. A bargain.
Denon DCD-425	£150	Apr 97	Crisp, up-beat player which is inconsistent in its overall presentation.
Denon DCD-635	£180	Feb 98	Rhythmically slick and dynamic, the Denon errs to the cool side of neutral.
Denon DCD-835	£280	Nov 98	Warm and smooth, the 835 is laid-back rather than in-your-face.
Grundig CD3	£240	Sep 94	Great for simple Jazz and Folk, but soft bass slows things down.
JVC XL-V230	£157	Jan 99	Slightly muddled in the bass, the '230 isn't the most rhythmic of players.
JVC XL-Z574	£250	Apr 95	Light in the bass and melodically mechanical, the JVC prefers sparse tracks.
Kenwood DP-3080/II	£180	Feb 98	One of the best budget all-rounders there is. A shade treble-heavy.
Kenwood DP-5050	£250	Aug 93	Waffly bass and enthusiastic treble mean the Kenwood prefers Classical to Rock.
Kenwood DPF-3010	£180	Jan 99	A fine performer. Lacks only some of the spirit of its predecessors.
Marantz CD-63	£249	Jun 94	Upholds the Marantz tradition of lively CD players.
Marantz CD-67	£270	Nov 96	Fine vocal projection and treble. Bass is deep if not that tight.
NAD 510	£200	Oct 95	Hard to criticise at the price, with a typically smooth, fluid NAD sound.
NAD 522	£170	Jan 99	Warm and smooth, this is a cultured player. Can be over-civilised at times.
NAD C521i	£199	Nov 02	Smooth and clean sounding, the C521i is the leader in the budget CD market.
Philips CD721	£130	Feb 96	Not the most accurate machine, but holds its own at the price.
Pioneer PD-103	£140	Feb 95	Rolled-off treble limits detail. Light bass retains foot-tapping ability.
Quad 67	£?	May 93	One of the top players at the price with great speed and grip.
Rotel RCD-940BX	£230	Oct 94	Controlled and invigorating player albeit a touch sterile.
Teac CD-P3450SE	£200	May 97	Refuses to become flustered. Can lack emotion as a result, though.
Teac CD-P4500	£249	Nov 92	Like many of its contemporaries, the Teac is too smooth to shine.
Technics SL-PG490A	£100	Jan 99	In spite of a bias towards bass and treble, this machine remains a bargain.
Technics SL-PS570D	£200	Feb 98	Typical Technics' bright and bassy sound. Prefers Dance and Rock.
Yamaha CDX-480	£200	Mar 95	Mature, laid-back machine drops points for inferior timing and imaging.
Yamaha CDX-590	£230	Feb 98	Detailed, refined but not particularly engaging or exciting.
Yamaha CDX-593	£180	Jan 99	Lean and up-front, the Yamaha is involving on Rock but can sound rough.

CD Players

£300-£799

Model	Price	Year	Verdict
AMC CDM7	£340	Jun 96	Very musical outfit which gains sweetness with optional valve output stage.
AR-07	£300	Jan 92	The '07 is even-handed but has no real fortes.
Arcam Alpha 5+	£480	Sep 96	Old-style Arcam warmth mixes with fine imaging. Not the fastest sound.
Arcam Alpha 6	£600	Jan 96	Seamless most of the time, although there is a touch of coarseness.
Arcam Alpha 7	£320	Jan 97	Superbly-designed, instinctively musical player destined for success.
Arcam Alpha 85E	£599	Jun 98	The 85E builds on the strengths of the standard 8 with HDCC filtering.
Arcam Alpha 9	£799	Dec 98	Apart from its tonal brightness, the Alpha 9 is a very capable machine.

Audio Innovations Alto	£449	May 96	Grainless treble is detailed but the Alto misses that vital emotional spark.
Aura CD50	£450	Jul 93	High measured distortion mars the treble and bass is dry.
Creek CD43	£499	Oct 98	A competent player with a musicality that will seduce any music-lover.
Cyrus dAD3	£598	Dec 96	Lacklustre with Classical, dramatic and lively on Dance and Rock.
Denon DCD-1015	£350	Apr 95	Warm and slightly loose, the '1015 is a good match for bright ancillaries.
Denon DCD-1550AR	£350	Jul 98	Clean and precise, the Denon lags only in warmth and openness.
Harman/Kardon HD730	£300	Aug 96	Strong on dynamics and drive, but lifeless treble can dampen music.
Kenwood DP-7060	£398	Dec 94	With more weight, sweetness and pace, the Kenwood could be a winner.
Linn Mimik	£780	Apr 95	Tonally hard but possesses many, if not all, of the Linn rhythmic strengths.
Marantz CD-63 KI-Sig.	£500	Sep 96	This is a rare player, greater than the sum of its parts.
Marantz CD-635E	£350	May 95	Taken as a whole, the CD-635E is one hell of a CD player. No digital nasties.
Mission DADS	£499	Dec 92	Enjoyable deck with beefy bass. Not the ultimate detail retriever.
Myryad T20	£600	Dec 98	With its brightness balanced by warm ancillaries the T20 will win friends.
Onkyo DX-750	£350	Dec 94	Lean in the midrange but otherwise well-rounded and highly enjoyable.
Orelle CD100e	£650	Mar 97	Clean and tidy on electronic music. Not so good with acoustic material.
Orelle CD480	£400	Mar 94	Uneven and forward, the Orelle doesn't really cut the mustard.
Pioneer PD-5904	£400	Sep 96	Fluid midrange leads a dry bass and tonally-limited treble.
Rotel RCD-965BX Discrete	£375	Dec 94	Fast, clean sound verges on the clinical at times.
Rotel RCD-971	£350	Sep 98	Refinement is a plus point, but lack of vitality holds the Rotel back.
Rotel RCD-975	£450	Sep 96	Tuneful, pungent bass are the pros, flat sound staging and tone the cons.
Sony CDP-X3000E5	£500	Mar 98	Neutral, dynamic and stylish but not quite up with the best.
Sony CDP-XE900E	£300	Mar 97	In spite of fine sound staging and clarity, the Sony fails to involve.
Teac CD-5	£350	Jan 96	Clean and dry, the Teac is rather sterile compared to the competition.
Teac VRDS-7	£599	May 94	Honey of a transport outperforms the tonally-restricted converter section.
Technics SL-P5840	£450	Sep 95	Not the last word in bass control. Midrange is more persuasive.
Trichord Genesis	£549	Sep 96	Warm and bassy, but extremely natural. Not the most consistent player.
Trichord Revelation	£799	May 97	When it's good, it's very good indeed. Can get confused on dense mixes.
Yamaha CDX-880	£340	Dec 94	Easy-listening Yamaha is fine if you want to relax rather than Rock.

CD Players
£800-£1499

£	Year	Verdict
Audiolab 8000	£1000 Dec 96	Sweet treble and full midrange give the 8000CD a lucid sound.
Cymbal CDP12	£1279 Dec 97	Its warm, musical sound plus HDCD compatibility are a strong combination.
Cyrus dAD-7	£899 Jan 95	Up with the best at the money, the Cyrus simply sounds 'right'.
DPA Renaissance	£895 Jun 95	Breathtaking imagery and dynamics. Not strictly accurate, but who cares?
Exposure XXII	£1175 Jan 01	A better player than the fairly ordinary build suggest. Great rhythmic grip and excitement with good detail but also subtle and refined control
Harman/Kardon HD7725	£800 Jan 94	Construction is price-correct, but not the excessively relaxed sound.
Heybrook Signature	£989 Oct 97	The Heybrook loses out because of its rough treble and lack of clarity.
Hofli Xara	£950 May 98	It's not cheap but the Xara scores for firm bass and exciting presentation.
LFD Mistral	£999 Nov 97	The Mistral is outclassed in areas like pace and bass depth.
Marantz CD-17	£800 Mar 96	The CD-17 has a presentation which excels in musicality and lucidity.
Marantz CD-17 KI-5	£1300 Sep 97	The KI-5 has a valve-like smoothness and clarity.
Meridian 506	£875 May 95	Characteristically dry Meridian balance which could do with more emotion.
NAD 5500i	£1195	Holds its own amongst the strong competition with refinement and great transparency. Bass isn't 'big' but overall sound is high quality
Pink Triangle Numeral	£1099 Apr 98	This very natural one-box fully justifies its £1000 price tag.
Quad 77	£850 Nov 95	Competent, entertaining machine with neat styling and remote.
Quad 7712	£850 May 96	The 7712 takes a mellow view of tunes marred only by loose bass.
Roksan Caspian	£895 Aug 97	The Caspian is a gifted player well worth its asking price.
Sugden SDT-1	£850 Mar 93	A superb all-rounder with particularly convincing rhythms.
Teac VRDS-105E	£850 Apr 96	Draws you into the music. Soundstaging fine but treble is a little bright.
Teac VRDS-25	£1300 Aug 96	Solid build doesn't make up for sound which lags in integration and detail.
XTC CDP-1	£1250 Dec 97	Rhythmically satisfying, but can sound hard in the wrong system.

CD Players
£1500-

£	Year	Verdict
Anthem CD1	£1600 Mar 98	Sweet sound and numerous features make the Anthem fine value for money.
Burmester 937	£5460 Sep 94	Amongst the best with its belt-drive transport.
McIntosh CDM-7009	£2635 Dec 95	Unmatched quality from CD at a high but fair price.
Meridian 508.24	£1995 Jul 98	The 508.24 is one of the top performers at its price.
Naim CD2	£1998 Apr 97	CD2 excites at the expense of subtlety. More at home in a Naim system.
Pink Triangle Litaural	£2099 Feb 98	One-box player with sound capable of mixing it with the best.
Teac CD-X1	£2300 Jun 92	You'll either love or hate this machine's great flair and confidence.

CD Recordable

£	Year	Verdict
Denon CDR-1000	£399 Dec 00	Accomplished all rounder, but faces stiff competition in an increasingly competitive market.
Denon CDR-VW1500	£450 May 01	Relatively easy to use and crammed full of functions and facilities. Playback for a twin deck machine is better than the norm. Recommended.
Harman Kardon CDR-30	£589 Jan 02	A truly versatile machine with little in the way of competition. Great for a recording session but lets the side down a little when it comes to playback.
LG ADR-620	£350 Aug 00	A good attempt at hi-fi from a major player in electronics. Not the best sounding machine available though.
LG ADR-620	£350 May 02	Updated review of the LG ADR-620. A fine, no-nonsense CD copier which offers useful high speed operation, decent sonics and a practical array of features
Marantz DR-17	£1500 Jul 00	If you want a CD Recorder that will also double as a high quality front-end player, look no further!
Marantz DR700	£600 Oct 99	A very solid all-rounder with impressive playback sound quality. Dearer than many though.
Marantz DR6000	£500 Jan 01	Great all rounder with no serious flaws. Makes great recordings and plays back well. Fine value for money.
NAD C660	£349 Mar 02	Probably the best sounding double-deck CD recorder around right now. Factor in great flexibility and useful real-world facilities, and its a bargain.
Philips CDR-765	£360 Oct 99	Big value package. Whether the 'free' CD player function will earn its keep is a moot point.
Philips CDR 775	£330 Aug 00	Philips lead the way yet again with a good value option that can't be bettered at the price.
Philips CDR 802	£300 Apr 02	Brimming with facilities, this deck offers great sound per pound, but isn't really the audiophile's choice.
Philips CD-R 880	£500 Oct 99	Spot on with digital sources and impressive with analogue; playback a touch cold sounding.
Philips CD-R 951	£380 Sep 00	Still not the easiest machine to use, but does its job very well. Good recording and playback quality.
Pioneer PDR-555RW	£500 Oct 99	Worthy of consideration but a bit of a mixed bag all round. Plenty of drive.
Pioneer PDR-W739	£300 Jul 00	Good recording and capable playback. Slightly flimsy build but overall good value.
Teac RV-800	£350 Aug 00	Offers excellent build and looks with equally impressive recording capability. Playback could be a little better.
Traxdata Traxaudio 900	£500 Oct 99	Not the cheapest on the market but has an obliging way with playback which may turn the scale.

CD Transports

£	Year	Verdict
Audiolab 8000 CDM	£1249 Aug 94	Distinguished by a wide array of facilities. Thoughtfully designed and high quality.
Cyrus Disc Master	£1800 Jul 94	Smooth and cohesive. The Disc Master looks good and comes with the Dac Master within the price.
DPA Enlightenment	£695 Mar 95	Solid and lifelike sound with Rock music and full bodied on Classical.
Kenwood DP-X9010	£530 Feb 92	Superb build for the money and a very musical sound. Benefits greatly from clocking.
Micromega Duo	£3435 Apr 93	Excellent build quality and a sound quality to match.
Monarchy DT-40A	£1595 Jun 94	Isn't cheap but has a solid dependable sound with a big, powerful presentation.
Parasound C/BD-2000	£1695 Jun 97	The belt drive is an interesting idea but the Parasound is bettered by cheaper transports.
PT Cardinal	£1440 Feb 95	Hear-stopping speed and impact contribute to what is an exceptionally good machine.
Roksan Atessa	£1295 Apr 94	Fascinating player but a little flawed when compared with the competition.
Rotel RDD-980	£450 Jul 96	Good, clean dynamic sound with a neutral and pure midrange tone.
Sonic Frontiers 3	£6999 Sep 98	A handsome machine both sonically and aesthetically. We love the camera aperture-style loading system.
Sonic Frontiers SFT-1	£2295 Aug 96	Top flight machine with an easy, musical and enjoyable sound, for those that can afford it.
Teac P-30	£2500 Jun 97	Costs a lot of money and sounds nothing short of superb.
Teac VRDS T1	£499 Feb 95	Enjoyable player with good insight. Good finish and keen pricing make it a thoroughly good buy.
Thorens TCD 2000	£900 Jun 96	A soft and warm sound will please vinyl lovers, but it's not the last word in detail.
XTC CDT1	£1200 Apr 96	A warm and musical sound with a taste of high-end refinement and detail.

Digital Audio Broadcast (DAB)

£	Year	Verdict
Acoustic Solutions SPI 10	£129 Nov 02	Superb value, easy to use and a bargain if you want digital radio for virtually nothing. If ultimate sound quality matters though, you could be in trouble.
Arcam FMJ DT23	£1000 Aug 00	A stylish and well built tuner, very user friendly with a detailed sound.
Cymbal C-DABI	£1000 Aug 00	A competent sounding tuner that shows the best that DAB sound quality can offer. Delivers the goods at a price.
Pson Infomedia Wavefinder	£299 Jan 01	Runs on a PC and limited reception capabilities notwithstanding, this is a cracking product that will enrich the life of any radio head!
Pure DRX-701E5	£249 Nov 02	The best pound for pound value Digital Radio you can buy, but even this won't convince many analogue addicts to make the switch.

TAG McLaren DPA32R	£1695	Oct 01
DAB Option	£595	
Technics ST-GT 1000	£500	Aug 00
Videologic DRX-601E	£299	Feb 01
Videologic DRX-601ES	£349	Feb 02
Videologic DRX-601EX	£499	Aug 02

DVD Players	£	Year
Arcam DV88	£899	Jul 01
Cyrus DVD7	£1000	Oct 01
Cyrus DVD7+	£1000	Jan 03
Denon DV-939A	£1200	Jul 01
Denon DVD-900	£249	Jan 03
Denon DVD-1600	£499	May 02
Denon DVD-2500	£495	Mar 00
Denon DVD-3000	£700	Aug 98
Denon DVD-3300	£1000	Jun 01
Denon DVD 3800	£999	Nov 02
Denon DVD-5000	£1500	Mar 99
Denon DVD-A1	£2499	Sep 02
Hitachi DVP-505E	£300	Nov 00
JVC XV-D701	£500	Mar 00
JVC XV-SA72	£400	Sep 02
Kenwood DVF-R9030	£899	May 01
Marantz DC-12	£2500	Dec 02
Marantz DV8300	£1400	Feb 03
Meridian 800V3	£10,295	Dec 02
Meridian 861 Controllor	£7,635	
NAD TS31	£330	Feb 02
NAD T550	£499	Oct 00
Onkyo DV-S939	£1800	Nov 01
Onkyo DV-SF800	£1200	Feb 03
Panasonic DMR-E20	£999	Jan 02
Panasonic DVD-A350	£700	Jul 98
Panasonic DVD-L10	£1000	Nov 98
Panasonic DVD-RA61	£400	Aug 02
Philips DVD 7635A	£249	Dec 02
Philips DVD 960	£550	Nov 00
Philips DVD 9625A	£399	Jul 02
Philips DVD R985	£900	Sep 02
Philips DVD R1000	£1299	Dec 01
Pioneer PDV-LC10	£1000	Jun 00
Pioneer DV-6260	£450	Mar 00
Pioneer DV-656	£399	Jan 03
Pioneer DV-747A	£1000	Apr 02
Pioneer DV-757Ai	£799	Feb 03
Pioneer DV-939A	£1200	Nov 01
Rotel RDV 995	£700	Sep 01
Sony DVP-S715	£700	Aug 98
Sony DVP S725D	£550	Mar 00
Sony DVP-S7700	£700	Oct 99
Sony PBD-V30 (portable)	£700	Jun 99
T+A DVD 1210R	£1500	Feb 01
TAG McLaren DVD 32FLD	£2999	Aug 02
Toshiba SD-5005E	£500	Nov 01
Toshiba SD-S10	£400	Aug 02
Toshiba SD-900E	£1200	Jun 01
Yamaha DVD S795	£530	Mar 00

Hard Disk Recording	£	Year
Alesis Masterlink ML 9600	£1400	Jul 00
Imerge S1000-80	£599	May 02
Linn Knekt Kivor	£12,000	Dec 01
Onkyo MB-S1	£1200	Jul 02
Yamaha CDR-HD1300	£599	Jan 03

Headphones	£	Year
Beyerdynamic DT931	£150	Jul 01
Grado Reference Series RS2	£750	Sep 02
Ergo Model 2	£140	Mar 99
Jecklin Float 2	£100	Mar 99
Sennheiser HD-433	£20	Mar 97
Sennheiser HD-455	£50	Nov 95
Sennheiser HD 497	£50	Sep 02
Sennheiser HD-S80	£200	Nov 98
Sennheiser HE60/V70	£1000	Feb 95
Sennheiser HD600	£250	Jul 01
Sennheiser Orpheus	£10000	Jul 01

Vivanco FMH-6800	£80	May 98
Vivanco SR850	£50	Nov 95

Headphone Amplifiers	£	Year
Creek OBH-11SE	£230	Jun 02
Sugden Headmaster	£530	Jun 02

Loudspeakers Under £300	£	Year
Acoustic Energy AE100	£200	Jan 96
Acoustic Energy Aegis One	£150	Sep 99
Acoustic Energy Aegis Two	£250	Mar 00
Acoustic Energy Aspirit 300c	£300	Jan 03
Acoustic Energy Evo 1	£180	Sep 02
Acoustic Research Status 10	£140	Aug 00
Acoustic Research Status 30	£249	Feb 00
Audio Gem Opals	£240	Dec 97
ALR/Jordan Entry S	£180	Jan 00
Aura LSB-627M	£230	Aug 98
Aura LST-627	£299	Oct 98
B&W 601	£200	Jan 96
B&W DM302	£130	Apr 96
B&W DM602	£250	Nov 96
Boston CR6	£150	Sep 98
Castle Isis	£230	Jan 96
Castle Richmond	£249	Apr 00

Expensive, but a supremely versatile machine that's not only an excellent digital radio but a pretty good preamp DAC too.

A versatile tuner. Sound quality is very good with both FM and digital broadcasts. Excellent value compared to the digital competition. Loss of stations, easy to use and fine sound quality, but bright deep bass absent.

Upgraded version of the DRX-601E. An excellent tuner offering good value and a fine sound.

A fine bit of kit with a genuine hi-fi appeal! The only thing against it is the heavy price tag.

Verdict
 Pricey but well engineered. The DV88 is one of the few DVD players which doubles up as a very fine hi-fi product.
 One of the best sounding players around, the DVD7 is the player of choice for the discerning audiophile. PSX-R upgrade improves quality to super status.
 Tremendously grippy, musical sound plus extensive upgrade options make this a true 'audiophile DVD player'.
 A great 'universal' player that excels with CD as well as DVD video and audio formats. Pricey but extremely versatile, plus format and user friendly.
 A fine DVD video player but, unsurprisingly perhaps, its audio capabilities are well behind purpose built CD players at this price.
 Offering a tantalising taste of the new digital dream, this machine represents superb value for money.
 Good sonic compromise between murderously bright and hopelessly dull. No surround sound
 The Denon is a fine performer with CD and better still with 24/96.
 A good CD player and even better with DVD-A. Detailed and neutral sounding, its a tad dry. Not the best build for the money.
 Powerful, punchy DVD-Audio playback, but lack of SACD compatibility and uninspiring CD sound it down. Superb value nonetheless.
 Build is second to none. Sound is very solid convincing, but not as musical as the 3000.
 Tremendously big, powerful sound, allied to supreme sophistication makes it the best DVD-A player around - at the moment!
 Fine value DVD player with good if rather forward CD replay
 Exhibits versatility but lack lustre when playing plain audio CD's.
 A good sounding and affordable player. Smooth and spacious sounding but lacks drive and excitement.
 A great all-rounder that's good with CD's and excellent with DVD-A's. Bulky and fiddly to use, but still excellent value.
 This does so much so well - probably the best DVD-A player at the price right now.
 Fine audio and video quality plus 'universal' compatibility make this an excellent machine, but one which faces fierce competition nonetheless.
 Takes audio to another level, if you can afford it. Without doubt the finest optical disc playing system we've encountered. Smooth and cohesive, it plays anything you chuck at it with ultimate finesse.
 Brilliant value DVD/CD hybrid with loads of useful features and a warm, smooth and musical sound.
 Great sound quality from CD and plays DVD video well. Lack of true 24bit/96kHz audio was disappointing.
 Not cheap but the most accomplished audio and video player around at the moment. Superb technical ability and build.
 Multi-format capability is most welcome, middling sonics, ergonomics and build aren't.
 High quality player and recorder, the DMR-E20 is a fine breakthrough machine that offers excellent value when all is considered.
 The A350 wipes out the CD-only competition at the price and threatens players up to £2000.
 Isn't cheap, but it's an outstanding portable and a capable domestic device.
 Warm sounding DVD player that is good with DVD-audio too but a mediocre CD performance.
 Brilliant value if you want a do-it-all machine for next to nothing, but audiophiles will find its decent SACD performance offset by poor CD sound.
 Works well and gives good CD sound but awkward to use and does not play 24/96 properly
 Vivid dynamics and superb subjective 'bandwidth' make this a great audiophile player. Superb value.
 Brilliant for its video capabilities, but don't expect it to make your existing audio system obsolete.
 A remarkably versatile machine that not only plays and records video but sounds good too.
 One of those 'must have' executive toys. Great if you can afford it.
 Pleasingly musical and lively. dts and Dolby decoders are a plus.
 Not the last word in super quality audio (especially with CD) but as a machine that plays anything you chuck at it, for £400 it's simply a bargain.
 Plays DVD-A, DVD-Video, Multichannel SACD, CD-R, CD-RW, MP3, DVD-R and DVD-RW. Phew! Superb all rounder, pricey but top value.
 An indeniably impressive and important product. This universal player makes good work of everything. Highly recommended.
 This isn't now the best value option on the market but it has good performance with DVD-A discs. Ordinary CD is good but not tip top.
 Not the best video player but easily one of the best sounding DVD players on the market. The one for the movie watching audiophile.
 The Sony is warm and smooth but lacks clarity and precision.
 Bright sound with good detail. Surround sound, 24/96 converter & full range of video outputs.
 Looks good, sounds better. Deserves very serious consideration.
 The Sony is an engrossing performer in a sturdy and attractive design.
 At last, a DVD player that's also a great sounding high-end CD player. It certainly makes music its priority.
 An excellent digital transport without doubt, but faces stiff competition at the price.
 Not the best of the bunch when it comes to music but good picture quality. Lacks focus and control with CD.
 Detailed DVD player which is one of the few that works well as a CD. Decent performance from all sources, but it's still not time to ditch that CD player yet!
 Its not the most neutral player around but it has a very involving, exciting and controlled sound. Equally adept with any format and very well built.
 Exhibits versatility but lack lustre when playing plain audio CD's.

Verdict
 Combining awesome technology with user-friendliness, this quite outstanding gadget deserves an audition.
 Superb mix of features and convenience, and the sound isn't half bad either. Fine build and ergonomics
 Innovative stuff from Linn. Superb sound and user interface allied to broad range of capabilities make it good value even at this price.
 Great value for money. Right now this is the best hard drive-based digital recorder you'll get without paying studio prices.
 Fine sound, excellent build quality, clean ergonomics and some interesting features, but still not quite perfect!

Verdict
 Deliver a detailed and clear sound. Good bass extension although treble can be a tad harsh sometimes. Deal for long listening periods.
 Expensive, but superb sounding. The RS2s are superbly transparent detailed and sophisticated.
 Wonderfully lucid and transparent panel-like sound.
 Clarity and openness are their traits, rather than slamming bass, but still good value.
 Whatever genre tickles your fancy, these will reproduce it with an ability which belies their price tag.
 The HD-455s offer a civilized and refined performance and are easy on the pocket.
 Good value and affordable but not quite the best at the price.
 In the company of a smooth, warm system the 580s can shine.
 Electrostatic design that set a class standard and can put a case for chucking out your power amp and speakers.
 A valve like headphone, they're sophisticated, making many others sound brittle. Not for hard house DJ's but more for the marathon session audiophile.
 Creates a sound that's quite unique in neutrality, transparency and detail. One of the best sonic experiences around, like strapping a pair of Quads to your head! Without doubt the ultimate headphone!
 Have a lot of potential but basic operating problems have to be cleaned up first.
 Excitement that is rarely heard in headphones, but have a little trouble with heavy orchestral loads.

Verdict
 Will drive 2 headphones at the same time using a Class A amp with zero feedback. Good ambience and space with a high level of detail. A very finely crafted little gem from the house of Creek!
 Also doubles as a basic but high quality preamp with 3 line inputs. Smooth, full and rich sound married with a good sense of detail. An unusual and highly recommended bit of kit.

Verdict
 Reasonably neutral but ultimately lacklustre. Control of treble and mid-range poor.
 Weighty, powerful performers with plenty of character. Exceptional value for money.
 A highly engaging sound that grabs the attention to great effect. They can suffer from a slightly thin sound with some recordings.
 Smooth and warm, with great insight but a certain amount of cabinet coloration effects the overall sound. Good looking and well built.
 Well built and engineered, the Evo's are detailed and enjoyable, if a tad heavy handed in the bass at times.
 The S10's are smooth and exciting, a well defined bass and good control is present with any music.
 Good value. The 30's have a warm, generous sound, but they can lack bite with upbeat music.
 Partner the Opals with warm ancillaries and you get an involving sound. Avoid bright amps and sources.
 ALR/Jordans have a lot to boast about (also reviewed Sep 01)
 Energetic, bold and highly detailed, the Aura is one to consider for the budget-conscious.
 Like Aura's matching stand mounters, the 627Ms are lucid and controlled. Treble is brightish.
 Unrestricted and clean sound with satisfying musicality. An engaging subtlety not common at the price.
 Clear open and detailed sound but balance too forward and weak bass.
 Excel with taut hard-hitting bass with dynamic and uncoloured midrange. Metal dome tweeter bleaches out the treble.
 With simple music, the CR6s work well, but not quite as well as the best of the competition.
 A lively little animal, well worth the money.
 Fundamentally accurate, but sound staging could be more spacious.

Tannoy TD8	£4500	Nov 01	Fine 'speakers, with great build and true reference sound. Not the lowest bass but the midrange is well detailed and open and treble superb.
Technics SB-M1000	£1500	Nov 96	Materially excellent value. Sound clean and extended but can lack involvement.
Th. Transducers Accelerando	£6600	Sep 96	Very sensitive, easy load. Convey great dynamics, but uneven sound and rather uninviting feel make them look expensive.
Thomas Transducers Brio	£4750	Feb 95	Capable of producing a captivating performance of lifelike proportions with a great air of naturalness.
Thomas Virtuoso Gold	£3395	May 98	Impressive horns that combine lightness of touch with power and clarity.
Velodyne HGS-12	£2125	Apr 02	Supertight, well damped and gusey sound makes it a top performer, but you'll have to pay for the privilege.
Vandersteen 2Ce Signature	£1999	Aug 02	Highly enjoyable sounding with deep bass and a fast neutral sound. May not be everyone's cup of tea but highly recommended for audition.
Velodyne HGS-12	£2125	Apr 02	Supertight, well damped and gusey sound makes it a top performer, but you'll have to pay for the privilege.
Vienna Acoustics Schonberg	£1500	Feb 03	Well engineered, exciting and stylish but can sound brash if partnered with the wrong equipment or recordings.
Wilson Benesch Arc	£2000	May 02	Superbly designed and super clean sounding, the Arcs are a fine 'speaker but need to be carefully matched to avoid sonic sterility.
Wilson Benesch Discovery	£5500	Jun 01	Amazingly detailed and open with a deep and tight bass, sweet treble and wonderful integration. One of the best 'speakers currently available.
Zingali Overture 3	£1395	Jul 00	Something of an oddity but very entertaining, with beautiful looks. They are recording-fussy - stick to orchestral and well-recorded rock.

MiniDiscs	£	Year	Verdict
Aiwa AM-F70	£250	Oct 99	Solid all-rounder that doubles as a superb dictaphone. Not No.1 as regards MD portables though.
Denon DMD-1000	£300	Nov 99	Sound quality up with the rest, wears its years well. Beginning to look expensive.
Goodmans GMD 920	£160	Nov 99	Very good value; build quality a touch plastic-y but stylish with it. Sonically very worthy.
JVC XM-228	£230	Sep 99	Well-built recorder. Good but not exceptional as Minidisc improves generally.
Kenwood DMF 9020	£500	Aug 99	An excellent tool for home recording; combines convenience, superb sound and a fair price.
Panasonic SJMR200	£199	Oct 01	Great build and a wide range of facilities, but the sound is a little bland.
Panasonic SV-SD75	£300	Oct 01	MP3 & AAC player on a wristwatch. A glimpse of the future, brilliant but pricey.
Pioneer MJ-D508	£200	Nov 99	Sensible and well featured MD. Excellent transcriber of digital, shows up on analogue a little.
Sharp MD-MT88H	£150	Oct 01	Great sound, useful facilities and a modest price make it a winner.
Sharp 722 portable	£230	Aug 99	Flash looks with solid build. First-class portable with domestic potential, but it isn't cheap.
Sony MDS-JA333ES	£480	Jul 01	Fine all rounder, with a great sound, exquisite build and myriad facilities.
Sony MDS JA555ES	£550	Jul 00	A dreamboat for MD fans, but not quite the best sound per pound at the price
Sony MDS-JB930	£300	Nov 99	UK Special Edition, so it sounds alright! Keyboard compatible with no difficulties in operation.
Sony MDS-JB940	£249	Jan 01	Superb value for money thanks to its heady combination of great sound, top feature count and impressive build.
Sony MDS-JE770	£229	Jan 02	Great value budget blockbuster from Sony, with all you could possibly want, except superb sound.
Sony MX-N1 portable	£240	Aug 02	Smart compact bit of kit, but just fails to excite when it comes to sonics.
Sony MZ-R55	£250	Jun 00	Stylish and small, yet feature packed. Highly recommended.
Sony MZ-R900	£229	Oct 01	A well balanced all rounder with lots of facilities and good sound too.
Technics SJ-MD100	£230	Nov 99	Solid, obviously meant for serious use. Excellent editing features. Sound up with the rest.

Phono Stages Under £300	£	Year	Verdict
Creek OBH-8SE/OBH-2	£160	Nov 97	The best MC phono stage on the market at the price
Creek OBH-9/OBH-1	£110	Nov 97	Smooth and truly musical, exceedingly worthy entry-level phono stage.
Densen DP Drive/DP-02	£350	Sep 97	A beautifully made, fine sounding device that looks great too
Lehmann Black Cube	£395	Oct 98	Capable of involvement, neutrality and insight usually the preserve of stages three or four times the price.
LFD Mistral	£299	Sep 97	The most lucid and musical budget phono stage around - a true audiophile bargain.
Musical Fidelity X-LP	£130	May 99	First-class inexpensive phono. MM and MC inputs catered for. Low on distortion, high on clarity.
Musical Fidelity X-LP2	£499	Feb 00	MM and variable-impedance MC monobloc phono amps with absolute clarity and limitless drive. In a class of their own for quality and value.
NAD PPI	£40	Sep 98	At this price the NAD is an accomplished all-rounder. Slowish bass will suit leaner systems though.
Project Phono Box	£40	Dec 99	Very competent little MM & MC stage at an astonishing price. First-rate starter package (also reviewed Oct 01)
QED Discsaver	£35	Jan 97	A bargain. Beguilingly musical presentation, with more than enough detail and power for a mere £35.
Rotel RQ-970BX	£130	Nov 94	Combine with a good cheap line level integrated and it will show you how good vinyl can be.
Sonneteer Sedley MC/MM	£399	May 98	The Sedley combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability.
Trichord Dino	£299	Jul 01	Punchy yet polished sound make this the best starter phono stage around right now. (also reviewed Oct 01)

Phono Stages £300-£799	£	Year	Verdict
Audio Innovations P2	£749	Feb 96	Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around.
Densen DP Drive/DP-02	£350	Sep 97	A beautifully made, fine sounding device that looks great too.
DPA DSP 200SD	£495	Oct 94	Could be too forceful for some, but with excellent detail and extremely powerful bass.
EAR 834P	£340	Oct 94	Very fine phono stage with precise imagery and a bargain at the price.
Henley HMC100	£450	Jul 97	Clear, powerful sound makes it a strong contender. Bright cartridges should be avoided.
Kinshaw Perception	£525	Oct 94	Extremely impressive results, especially with MM cartridges.
Lehmann Black Cube	£395	Oct 98	Capable of involvement, neutrality and insight usually the preserve of stages three or four times the price.
Michell Iso	£528	Oct 94	Gives a thoroughly cohesive picture of a recording with a very tight and rhythmical bass.
Sonneteer Sedley MC/MM	£399	May 98	The Sedley combines transparency and fine dynamics with excellent rhythmic ability.
Unison Simply Phono	£495	Mar 96	Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little hissy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.

Phono Stages £800-	£	Year	Verdict
Anthem Pre IP	£899	Aug 98	Despite a sizeable price tag the Anthem offers a smooth, lucid sound and superb build quality.
Audio Innovations P2	£749	Feb 96	Fantastic bass and super insight make this one of the best phono stages around.
Audiolab 8000PPA	£800	Oct 94	Instruments can have a somewhat flat perspective, but excellent clarity
Clearaudio Symphonio	£740	Sep 00	Well specified MC phono stage with automatic load compensation. Sounds fresh and clean. Expensive.
DPA DSP 200SD	£495	Oct 94	Could be too forceful for some, but with excellent detail and extremely powerful bass.
Graaf GM70	£2500	Aug 02	Not cheap, but sonically as sweet as a nut. Open, warm and highly detailed.
Kinshaw Perception	£525	Oct 94	Extremely impressive results, especially with MM cartridges.
Linn Linto	£850	Oct 97	Marries beautifully into the Linn family, but not too hot with other components.
Michell Iso	£528	Oct 94	Gives a thoroughly cohesive picture of a recording with a very tight and rhythmical bass
Michell Iso HR	£850	May 93	Perhaps too good for some record collections. Extremely revealing.
Michell Delphini	£1895	Mar 00	The best phono stage at or anywhere near the price, bar none.
Plinius Jarrah	£600	Feb 02	Musical, even handed and well built, this has much to offer. Only the highish price and stiff competition detract from this package.
Roksan Artaxerxes/DSS	£945	Oct 97	Doesn't worry about genre, it just gets on with the job of making music in an enjoyable way.
Sonic Frontiers Phono 1	£2000	Apr 98	Expensive, yes, overpriced, no. The Phono 1 is a superb all-round phono stage.
Unison Simply Phono	£495	Mar 96	Liquid sound with great dynamics, but a little hissy and muddled too. Beguiling, but not perfect.

Systems	£	Year	Verdict
Arcam Alpha	£900	Nov 00	Perhaps the best system available for under £1000. A great sounding bargain
Audio Analogue System	£2275	Mar 02	Plenty of power and dynamics. Good results with all music but favours classical or jazz. Will give many years of musical satisfaction.
Audio Note Zero Series	£2295	Dec 99	A complete valve system for this kind of money and with as much quality is pretty rare.
Audio Note Zero System	£2749	Mar 02	Produces a fine open sound that's hard to better at the price. A system for the real discerning listener who loves classical music.
Cyrus 7 System	£1850	Mar 02	Best all rounder, will give a good account of itself whatever music you play. Bass depth and control, transparent and open sound. Highly recommended.
Cyrus Quattro	£850	Nov 01	Combined CD/tuner/preamp. Beautifully packaged, the Quattro performs its role superbly. Taut and rhythmic sound and brilliant ergonomics
Denon DF100	£600	Dec 99	As an introduction to hi-fi we reserve judgment, but as a willing domestic workhorse and a tall step up from a 'mini' it all seems excellent value.
Denon DF101	£349	Feb 03	Knocks the competition sideways. A clean, focussed and neutral sound that belies the concept of the 'mini' system.
Denon UD-M30	£300	Feb 02	Combined CD/tuner. Detailed and open sound. Won't pound out bass or grab you by the throat but great value nonetheless.
Kenwood Avino VH-600	£399	Mar 00	Great little system that's both stylish and a good performer.
Linn Klassik	£995	Nov 00	Combining CD player, amplifier and tuner this is another landmark product from Linn. Superb convenience with great sound.
Linn Klassik Movie System	£1995	Jun 02	Another great crossover product from Linn, the CMS offers tremendously satisfying sound and vision
Linn Genki/Kolektor/LK140/Ninka spkrs	£3250	Jan 01	A great open, warm sound with plenty of drive and power. Could be a little too coloured for some though.
Musical Fidelity X-Series	£1897	Nov 00	Not the cheapest system around or the most user-friendly, but it sounds superb
Myriad Cameo	£1500	Nov 00	A bold attempt at separates to penetrate the 'lifestyle' market but the sound could be a little too thin for some.
Naim CDX/JAC82/HiCap/NAP250	£7260	Aug 00	A beautifully built and charismatic package with a totally unique sound. Rhythmically and dynamically it's peerless but it's far from tonally neutral.
Naim Series 5 System	£2500	Mar 02	Sophisticated performer with fantastic build quality. Rock and pop are played with magnificent attack and speed. Bass tuneful and fast. Recommended.
Naim AV2/NAP150/NAPV175	£4190	Aug 02	A great way to enjoy multi-channel audio or video, and two channel too. Expensive, but many will feel this is their ultimate home cinema system.
Nakamichi CD-45	£450	Apr 01	Combined car CD/tuner with sound quality that wouldn't disgrace a decent domestic hi-fi, plus superb build and ergonomics, this is one of the most desirable car CD tuners around. Expensive, but superb value nonetheless.
Nakamichi SoundSpace 8	£1100	Dec 99	Probably isn't hi-fi as we know it and lacks a bit of smoothness, but looks good!
Red Rose Spirit	£2000	Dec 02	High-end sound without the high-end price tag or the struggle of selecting all those components. Just add a good CD for beautiful music making.

Roksan Kandy	£1325	Nov 00	Good sound and excellent build from Roksan. Exciting and up-front sound which could become tiring after a while.
Teac CR-H100	£229	Mar 01	Combined CD player, tuner and amplifier. Easy to use, and great to the ear. Partner with high quality 'speakers and you'll be pleasantly surprised.
TAG McLaren Aphrodite	£3999	Nov 02	Not cheap but awesome style appeal and great build. It also sounds like real high-end hi-fi, with a clean and natural sound.

Tone-arms

£	Year	Verdict	
Hadcock GH 228 SE	£595	Dec 98	Construction won't worry SME but its sound quality will unsettle a lot of the competition.
Hadcock GH 242 SE	£689	Jun 00	Utterly musical high-end performance, with a tempting price tag. Very little serious competition at the price.
Linn Ekos	£1500	Mar 01	Powerful, rhythmic and engaging like few others, the Ekos is not the best all rounder, but what it does like no other.
Naim Aro	£N/A	Aug 00	Designed expressly for the Sondek, the ARO (Analogue Rules Okay!) works in a number of modern decks. A fine secondhand buy for £500.
Origin Live Illustrious	£1570	Feb 03	Brilliantly detailed yet utterly musical, this arm is set to join the ranks of the all time greats. Wholeheartedly recommended!
Origin Live RB250/RB300	varies	Nov 97	These modified arms are a considerable improvement on the originals
Origin Live Rega Arm			
Re-Wiring	varies	Nov 00	An essential mod for all Rega users, but only after you've had the counterweight done first.
Origin Live Silver 250	£599	Mar 02	Words can't express how good this is - for vinyl junkies, this is one of the designs of the decade.
Rega RB600	£358	Aug 01	Sweeter and more musical sound with greater transparency and better sound staging makes this a superb step up from the RB300.
SME 309	£689	Jan 93	Tight, neutral sound with good tonality, but lacks the IVs pace and precision.
SME IV	£828	Mar 92	Sexy chassis and staggering engineering along with potent performance earn it a place in audio history.

Tuners

Under £300

£	Year	Verdict	
AMC T7	£130	Jul 97	Although it has a tempting price, its sound quality is poor compared with its rivals.
Arcam Alpha 7	£230	Mar 97	An attractive, smooth sounding tuner that won't break the bank.
Arcam T61	£250	Jan 03	A superb tuner for the money with a pleasant and full sound, plus great build and looks - a bargain.
Cambridge T500	£180	Feb 99	The T500 is one of the most gifted tuners under £200
Harman/Kardon TU 950	£200	Jul 96	Sound quality is generally impressive. Let down by a rather constricted sound stage, but still good value.
Kenwood KT-2080	£130	Feb 97	Smooth, even balance allows the KT-2080 to convince with whatever it's receiving. £130 well spent.
Marantz ST-57	£150	Oct 97	The ST-57 is a smooth, warm tuner but lacks a little clarity and transparency.
Mission Cyrus FM7	£299	Apr 94	Musical, communicative and extremely detailed and a steal at the price.
NAD 412	£190	Jun 96	A remarkably musical and natural sounding tuner. Unbeatable at the price, or even twice the price for that matter.
Onkyo T401	£160	May 94	A competent machine, but time has taken its toll on the sound quality.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£300	Dec 98	One sole mark against the class-leading transparency is its slightly dry character.
Rega Radio	£230	Jan 95	Sounds on the whole more than its price, but in other respects it isn't especially competitive.
Rotel RT-930AX	£175	Aug 94	The RT-930AX is a glowing little bargain, real quality at a very realistic price.
Sony ST-SA3ES	£250	Apr 97	The Sony is worth every penny of its asking price. If you're a fan of radio this is one to go for.
Sony ST-SE700	£180	Aug 97	The ST-SE700 is one of the best at this price. LW reception is a welcome bonus.
Technics ST-GT-350L	£140	Jun 95	Not a bad buy at all and a very good fit for budget and mid-price systems.
Yamaha TX580 RDS	£200	Feb 95	If you want something for casual listening with superior aesthetics, this might be the one for you.

Tuners

£300+

£	Year	Verdict	
Audio Analogue Cherubini	£595	Nov 02	Hard to fault, a very fluid and warm sounding tuner that whilst not the last word in intricate detail, still captivates.
Adcom GFT 555 2	£399	May 93	Quite musical but does not rejuvenate the waves! Good solid performance but less than luxurious.
Creek T43	£399	May 98	A great little tuner. This is the one in the price bracket.
Denon TU-S10	£400	Mar 98	A stylish, well-built tuner which has a detailed sound but needs careful partnering
Kenwood KT-6050L	£300	Oct 95	A good value, excellent sounding rds tuner, but lacks full EON facilities
Magnum Dynalab FT101A	£749	Apr 92	Worth auditioning but bass rather dry and light.
Meridian 504	£660	Mar 96	A clear, natural sound with good punch. Has strong rivals at the price, but acquires itself well.
Micromega Tuner	£700	Jul 95	An unusual design from Micromega that's well built but sonically unrewarding and expensive.
NAD 702	£330	Jul 94	Well worth auditioning, even if you've never previously considered a receiver.
Naim NAT 03	£499	Sep 93	Soft and pure, especially across the midband. Speech very well reproduced plus solid weighty bass.
Nakamichi ST35	£350	Dec 94	Looks good, but the sound quality isn't really worth the asking price.
Pioneer F-504RDS	£350	Nov 95	Well engineered and competent tuner, but a little uninspiring.
Rotel RT-990BX	£500	Apr 95	The price of twenty concert tickets, and for that you can listen as if you were there. A bargain.
Thorens TRT-2000	£500	Dec 97	An otherwise competent tuner is let down by a rather processed character.
Burmester 931	£4347	Nov 94	This is not a cheap tuner, but its cheaper than buying a radio station, which is the only possible alternative.
Fanfare FT 1	£1350	Mar 95	Whether it's sweaty disco or symphony hall, the Fanfare comes up to scratch.
Linn Kremlin	£1645	Mar 92	Commendable basic performance but, considering the price there are limitations.
Rotel Michi RHT10	£895	Mar 94	This classy looking tuner can hold its head up high amongst the best tuners at the price.
TAG McLaren T20	£1100	Mar 99	Extremely well built with a lucid if slightly dry sound. The only set back here is the price.

Turntables

£	Year	Verdict	
Alphason Symphony	£1860	Nov 92	The Symphony has to be one of the best the British can offer. It's expensive, but a true sophisticate.
Basis 2001	£2995	Jun 99	It's not cheap, but the 2001 shows just why vinyl is still a sonically viable format.
Clearaudio Champion	£930	Jan 02	Attractive and well built, the Champion is an accomplished turntable in its neutrality and detail. Some could find it too sterile.
Clearaudio Evolution	£1095	May 00	Expensive but gorgeous looks and excellent sound somehow make the price more acceptable.
Clearaudio Solution	£750	Feb 99	If you seek a powerful presentation where musicality takes precedence over absolute finesse, this could be the answer
Linn Basik	£400	Sep 94	Definitely a turntable for devotees of attack and strong bass lines. Not strong on imaging.
Linn Lingo LPI2 PSU	£850	Jul 02	A cracking upgrade to any LPI2. The new Lingo delivers a full and spacious sound that's totally addictive.
Linn LPI2	£2400	Sep 01	Includes the Valhalla power supply, Trampoline baseboard, Akito arm and Klyde MC.
Michel Gyrodec SE	£775	Apr 99	Great sound, superb build and excellent upgradability make the 'spider' a wonder at the price. (also reviewed in Sep 01)
Michell Mycro	£539	Jan 94	Silent and beautifully made, with transparent reproduction.
Michell Orbe	£1950	Apr 95	Fast and detailed with crisp sheer treble and clean, deep bass.
Michell Orbe VC DC PSU	£750	Dec 01	Absolutely fabulous, this mod invests the Orbe with previously unheard power, poise, focus and punch.
NAD 533	£200	Nov 94	Based on a Rega Planar 2. Both pleasant to use and look at with a mature sound, all for £200.
Opus 3 Continuo/Cantus	£900	Oct 95	Solid as a rock and almost as heavy, it's a satisfying performer, but not quite the best.
Origin Live Oasis-A	£950	Dec 98	Nice looks and a good sound, but can be bettered on price.
Origin Live Oasis-S	£2250	Dec 01	Updated and brilliantly judged package with tremendous strength in depth. Not as characterful sounding as its more established rivals, but certainly none the worse for it. An essential audition.
Origin Live Turntable Kit	£539	Mar 02	Simply, the cheapest way to get high-end vinyl sound. Component quality is superb and the build process is a doddle for your average DIY'er.
Pink Triangle Tarantella	£575	Oct 97	Simply the best at the money. Combines PT's customary transparency with real authority.
Pro-ject Perspective	£900	Aug 98	Aesthetically, the Perspective is a winner, but better sound can be had from cheaper decks.
Project 1.2	£200	Jun 97	A bargain at £200 with its substantial and involving sound.
Project 6	£350	Dec 93	Involvement and rhythm are priorities. Highly recommended.
Project 6.1	£435	Sep 94	The 6.1 gives a very full, strong sound. A very exciting deck.
Project Classic Cherry	£450	Jul 99	Eminently capable player that can be upgraded with superior cartridges.
Project Debut	£109	Dec 99	Produces an enjoyable and confident sound on a budget. There are better turntables around, but not at this price!
Project RPM 4	£300	Aug 01	Easy to set up and great looking, with a stable and smooth sound. The RPM 4 is an audiophile bargain.
Project RPM6	£500	Nov 02	Cool looks and excellent sound make this a superb deck for those after high-end performance without high-end cash. Partner with a good cartridge though.
Project RPM9	£1562	May 02	Absolutely fantastic value for money. Here's a deliciously sweet sounding turntable with a fine arm and superb cartridge at a bargain price.
PT Anniversary	£2390	Oct 96	With its battery supply and ultra-quiet DC motor, the Pink displays great accuracy and neutrality. A top-flight deck.
Rega P9	£2248	Apr 02	Beautifully detailed and involving, yet completely self effacing, the P9 is one of the best vinyl spinners around. Superb design and ergonomics completes a fantastic value package.

Roksan Xerxes X	£1295	Jan 97	An undoubted bargain and class leader in all areas with a precise, confident and well-balanced sound.
SME Model 20	£2500	Oct 92	This is a deck for those with a substantial record collection who demand the best. Exemplary sound.
Systemdek 2X2	£500	Aug 96	Clear and precise sound through midrange and treble puts it up with more expensive rivals.
Systemdek IIX900	£415	Sep 94	Detailed sound stage and broad imaging with a good, even range of tonal colour.
Systemdek IIXE	£450	Jan 93	Combined with an SME 309 it achieves great results, with a massive sound stage.
Technics SL-1200 LTD	£1000	Apr 97	Looks expensive at £1000, but don't let that put you off the capable standard version.
Thorens TD166 Mk6	£405	Sep 94	Tonally smooth with a warm midrange, but a little too laid back.
Thorens TD180	£180	Feb 95	A good, basic budget bargain.
Thorens TD280 Mk4	£199	Jun 93	Superbly lucid and clear midrange, but lower reaches are a little lightweight.
Townshend Rock 3	£799	Feb 94	Capable of deep, solid bass and precise imaging. The unusual trough makes cartridges track like trains.
Vestax BDT-2000	£225	Sep 99	Price includes cartridge and phono stage. A fit-and-forget solution to LP replay, of exceptional versatility
Virtual Reality Reson rs1	£600	Nov 95	With fine detail resolution, transparency and a neutral balance the Reson rs1 represents super value.
VPI Junior	£500	Oct 97	The Junior is a very good deck indeed, with an assured and involving sound.
Wilson Benesch	£1775	Jul 96	Gives a technically excellent rendition but fails to really communicate the emotion in music.
Wilson Benesch Full Circle	£2000	Mar 98	Offers clarity in abundance with a natural ease. Looks gorgeous too.

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AUDIO PRISM Montisso (Red Rose)	£3000	£1800
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AUDIONOTE AZ TWO LOUDSPEAKERS 93 DB MINT	599	500	STAX SRS 2020 MK2 EARSPEAKERS MINT	449 375
LAT S5800 SPEAKER CABLE 5MTR NEW	206	175	AUDIONOTE MS LINE LEVEL PRE AMP MINT	4650 4100
LAT AC2 6 WAY DISTRIBUTION BLOCK 3 FT NEW	232	199	TRICORD RESEARCH DELPHINI MK2 PHONO+	
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*BLACK RHODIUM SUPER MAINS 8 DISTRIBUTION			SUMIKO BLUE POINT SPECIAL MC NEW	279 249
BLOCK NEW	299	250	AUDIONOTE ANVX 1 METRE PAIR NEVER USED	574 495
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ATC A7 Tower loudspeakers. Rosewood veneer, no marks other than some minor chips to the (black painted) bases. 5/H, boxed. Originally £1200. £495



Jamo Concert centre loudspeaker in maple veneer (over £500) 5/H, good condition (some slight marks), no original box therefore only £225



Musical Fidelity A3CR stereo power amplifiers (2) Boxed, 5/H perfect, £999 £650 each



NAD C270 stereo power amplifier. 5/H, boxed, excellent condition. (£400) £250



Primare V10 DVD player. Ex demo, boxed, excellent (£699). A slightly revised new model is now out, time for a new demo unit. £475



Primare A10 amplifier. Ex demo, boxed, unmarked (£499). Remote control. A very good little amplifier. £285



Primare T20 RDS FM tuner. Ex demo, boxed, unmarked (£499). Remote control. A lovely tuner, visual match for the 10, 20 and 30 series components. £285

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Sugden 'Bijou' components.



AmpMaster power amplifier (£629) £470



CDMaster cd player (£1269) £950

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used cables

Nordost

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1 x 1m pair Valhalla phono interconnect (£2195) £1600
1 x 1m pair Valhalla balanced interconnect (£2225) £1620

Other

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AUDUSA - OOM Silverlink Mono Crystal balanced speaker cable - conductor of 3mm diameter (approx 8 gauge), stranded silver on OFHC, plus three strands of Mono Crystal Copper for improved bass performance. Mylar infill and with designed in protection against RF and EMI! Cable OD 14.72 mm Priced at £12.95 per meter



AUDUSA EUPEN CSA 2.5 MAINS CABLE - HI FI CHOICE SEPT 2001 BEST BUY

GNLM 05/04 and GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) Cable with FERRITE TECHNOLOGY - A polymer material mixed with a considerable quantity of homogeneously fine high quality ferrite powder is extruded around the copper conductors. As a ferromagnetic material, it will go through hysteresis loops whenever it is under influence of an alternating magnetic field. Consecutively magnetizing and demagnetizing the material will cause considerable losses of high frequency energy. This energy is absorbed in the ferrite grains and converted into heat. This effect is more or less proportional to the field frequency; high frequencies will be strongly attenuated, because their energy will be absorbed by the ferrite powder. The GNLM cables which in addition to the above described ferrite technology is further protected with a foil shield and a drain wire and specifically manufactured for High End audio use. **Said by some to be the most neutral sounding mains cable on the market**



AUDUSA - Eupen GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) shown with Maringo IEC 320

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AUDUSA EUPEN GNLM 05/04

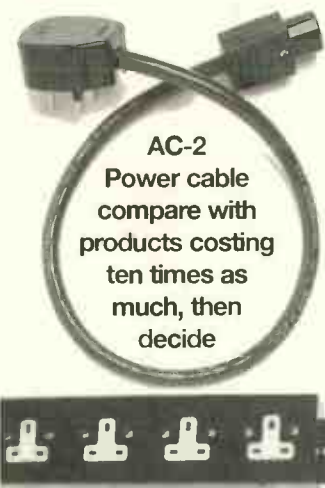
GNLM 05/2.5 (CSA 2.5) £48 for 1.0m, £58 for 1.5m, £68 for 2.0m, Off the reel £30 for 1st meter, £20 per m thereafter. GNLM 05/04 £58 for 1m, £68 for 1.5m, £78 for 2.0m Also off the reel. Both GNLM cables available for export

AUDUSA Eupen and LAT AC-2 mains cable available with 16 amp IEC for certain models of amps by Krell, MF Levis, etc), Maringo 320 IEC, Figure of eight, Bulgin, USA Hubble, European Schuko, Australian, Swiss, Danish, and Neutrik plugs.

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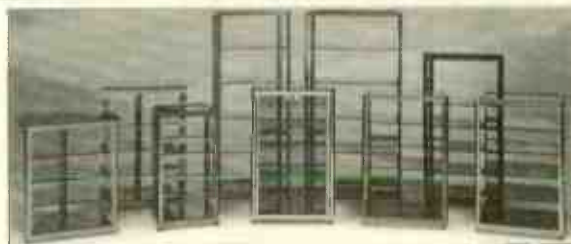
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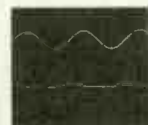
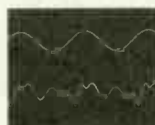
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Micromega Junior CD Player Stage 3 £175
Pink Tnange De Capo DAC with 1307 Filter £595
Pioneer PDS 703 CD Player £165
Quad 77 CD Player £395
Rotel RCD 965BX CD Player (Fitted with Black Gate Caps as standard) £175
Rotel RCD 991 (Heavy Weight CD Player) -£900 new £475
Teac VRDS10 £450

Tuners, Reel to Reel, Cassette Deck, misc

Quad FM3 Tuner (Boxed Mint) £145
Rotel RT930 AX Tuner £95
Revox G36 Open Reel Mint £395
Tascam 22/2 Open Reel £395
Leak Troughline Tuner 3 various ...from £50

Due In

Focal Audio M13VX Drive Units as used in Wilson Speakers
Rogers LS3/5 Speakers 15 Ohm

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE NEW BEAUHORN B2 HORN LOUDSPEAKERS IDEAL FOR LOW POWERED SINGLE ENDED VALVE AMPS

ALSO DEMONSTRATING THE NEW GRAHAM SLEE PROJECTS RANGE OF AFFORDABLE PHONOSTAGES

Now stocking Sonneteer's new Bronte product range including digital amp from £800 and matching CD player



Ear 869 single ended triode integrated amplifier
Improved version of the classic 859 with revised output transformers, modified input stage with the addition of an extra signal valve which has allowed an increase to 15watt of single ended power, also the 869 can be used as a power amp. Don't be fooled by its modest power output this amp drives real world speakers. price £2298.00

Ultimate Ear Phone Stage

This is the ultimate esoteric Phono Stage as used in the world wide acclaimed Ear 312 Control Centre - Pre Amp. This has to be the ultimate Vinyl Replay purchase.

** FOR A LIMITED PERIOD ONLY **

Full value Trade in on Ear Phono Stages and other selected models.

NOW DEMONSTRATING

HARMONIC TECHNOLOGY SINGLE ENDER STAL
CABLE
NOW IN STOCK AT LAST I HAVE A CABLE TO DO ALL THE THINGS THE MANUFACTURE CLAIMS AND AT A RIDICULOUS LOW PRICE* PHONE FOR MORE DETAILS



There are now four models in the EAR lineup:
The classic 834P uses the same circuit architecture as its more expensive brothers, and shares the same high quality sound through MM type cartridges, it is enclosed in a tough, rigid metal case and is fully "CE" type approved price £395.00

The signature builds on the Classic 834P specification by adding a superb moving coil (MC) input stage, as well as the no-extra-price option of a high quality volume control. price £550.00

Top to the range, the Deluxe 834P comes in stunning chrome and gold cabinet, and has extra attention and quality control. With different moving coil input options, this unit will fit the most demanding of audiophile systems. For the true vinyl enthusiast, price £900.00

MC3 - The ultimate stage for MC matching with fixed transformer taps to cover all types of moving coil cartridges, and separate left/right grounding. MC3 is used in the new £10,000 312 pre. price £630.00

Selected products from: ATC, Audio Physic, EAR Yoshino,
Nottingham Analogue, Dynavector.

THE EMPORIUM

Willow House, Rectory Road, Brome, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 8AH 3 miles from our old location
Tel/Fax 01379 870873 email: emporium@despammed.com www.emporium.dircon.co.uk

CD & DACD & DACS

	COST	PRICE
ARCAM ALPHA cd player, cheap and cheerful		100
ARCAM ALPHA 7 cd player - detailed-		200
ARCAM BLACK BOX 5		150
ARCAM DELTA 703/BLACK BOX/MLI (this used to be state of the art if you can remember that for back 12 years)		300
AUDIO NOTE DAC 2		1200
AUDIO RESEARCH DAC 1 upgraded to 20 bit - stereoophile class A recommended component		2500
AUDIO SYNTHESIS DAC next decade but decent none the less		3000
AUDION VALVE CD PLAYER - new laser fitted, valid valve looks		4000
AM 20 bit dac, boxed		1000
CDC TEL BELT 5000 CD TRANSPORT, black		5000
CONTEMPORARY CD 10 transport (boxed)		2000
DEKCH CD PLAYER beat 100 with games system remote		1500
HIFI SOUND of transport - chinese made, no frills good sound		400
KRELL 16201 transport		800
KRELL REFERENCE 64 DAC, two box the best ever		14000
LINN KARIB (not 3) recently serviced		1000
LINN KARIB 3 exabyte		800
MARANTZ CD6050E black boxed		250
MARANTZ CD7 lid edition		3500 in SOON
MHWAVE CD60E		150
MARANTZ CD111E rare lid edition, effectively a one box version of the cd12, boxed		2500
MERIDIAN 200 transport		380
MERIDIAN 207 CD PLAYER/LINE PRE		1250
MERIDIAN 206B delta signa version		375
MERIDIAN 203 DAC, boxed		150
MERIDIAN 508 20 BIT WITH REMOTE		950
MERIDIAN 208 209 board of playstye		1500
MICROMEGA DRIVE TWO transport		350
MISSION POP 7000 ancient cd player		70
MUSICAL FIDELITY X-DAC (not 24 bit)		100
MUSICAL FIDELITY E624 24 BIT, BOXED		650
NARAKIHI DRAGON CD AND DAC, boxed another awesome set		850
PINK TRIANGLE ORIGINAL dac 18 bit lite		350
QUAD 66 CD		300
RESOLUTION AUDIO CD50 4x 20 bit dac twin toroid transformers computer controlled stepped attenuation volume control 1 year old boxed		1500
SHANLING T100 crazy valde of player, rare USA reviews, this has up sampling (to 24/96kHz) and a volume control		300
SONY S55ES old high end player		800
STAR TALENT DAC		140
TEAC VAS210 cd player excellent		800
TEAC T17-D1 transport (redwood dock 2 and fancy mains cable) and matching dac		2400
TECHNICS SLP1200 asc version		300
TECHNICS SLP270 cd player quite snob		350
THEIA PRO BOX 34 dac		350
TRICHORD TRANSPORT AND PULSAR ONE DAC with you and upgraded with oscars		2800
TUBE TECHNOLOGY FUSION valve of player		1200
WADIA 64.4 DAC		1250
WADIA 8 transport and 64.4 dac very serious		10000

VALVE AMPS

AIR TIGHT ATM2 80 watt power amp, mint boxed, new valves		300
ART AUDIO CONCERTO in soon		750
AUDIBLE ILLUSIONS MODULUS 3 with john curl gold mc boards		250
AUDIO RESEARCH LS8 mkII line pre		800 in SOON
AUDIO RESEARCH LS8 mk2 remote line pre		1100 in soon
AUDIO RESEARCH YT 140 monoblocks boxed		9000
AUDIO RESEARCH REF PHONO another one black front, mint boxed		7000
AUDIO RESEARCH SP9 pre with mc phono stage, very good		3000
AUDIO RESEARCH LS7 boxed		300
AUDIO RESEARCH LS2 line level pre		300
AUDION SILVER NIGHTS one of the last pairs made with new valve art carbon audio 300ds		2250
AUDION STILLING phono stage		700
AUDION SILVER NIGHTS early pair		3000
AUDION APOLLON, single ended top of the range lid edition jobs		800
BEARD BB401 line integrated, faulty, 50 watts per channel good buy		1500
BEARD P35 power disc remote line card		450
BEARD P50 power amp excellent sound		450
BENDER PATROL 300B arm		250
CART 300B SE SIGNATURE MONOBLOCKS, boxed		500
CONCORDANT EXCELSION pre with phono and valve pre		1950
CONRAD JOHNSON PVB preamp. With phono board		2000
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 2 pre amp with phono, very wide rch sound		3000
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 10 line pre, hot stuff, this weights as much as most power amps, very light bass		3900
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 11a power amp 85 watts, 18 months superb based		3500
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 78 with phono, 2 box reference quality preamp		8500
CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 6 mc step up with nutators		480
CR DEVELOPMENTS CALYPSO, great little valve integrated 12 watts per channel, ex demo boxed		350
CROFT SUPERHOUND old beige colour, excellent line and phono valve preamp		275
CROFT SUPER MICRO OLD STYLE UPGRADED 10 push		375
CROFT SUPER MICRO A mk2		350
CROFT SERIES 3 OTL power amp beautiful midrange, with new set of output valves, prefers high impedance speakers		750
CROFT SERIES 15 power amp		600
CROFT EPOCH DELINE pre mtology front, with phono stage and paper in oil coupling caps, boxed		1000
CROFT APPARTITION OTL power amp, mtology front, boxed		120
EDISON HEA 12 power amp, 12 watts per channel 884s, great line amp		720
GAMMA SPACE REFERENCE, 300B, WITH NEW 300B		5000
HBC BEASTIE 211 single ended amp, great sound the last one		1500
LEAK STEREO 20, great vintage low powered amp, if you can afford a bit but want to try valves start here		300
LIMLEY LVI valve preamp line level, chrome, very late BAC SOUND		2000
LUDMAN amp much modified, carbon fibre chassis, hiwara resistors, fancy caps etc 6550 output		2000+
MATOSSE PRE with phono		350
MELOS 333 two box pre line great dynamics, boxed		3000
PARTNOCGE 8771 c-core single ended output transformers, upgrade that se 300B amp, satisfaction guaranteed		3200 pair as well as the three being long, I'll sell you now postage to HK & 65 GBP
QUAD IS excellent reworked set with kelds VALBS		700
QUAD IS special anniversary edition gold plated set with certificate orig boxes etc		600
RELOGI 901 preamp with phono		95
UNISON RESEARCH SIMPLY TWO line integrated, (rose wood) boxed		600
UNISON RESEARCH SIMPLY FOUR, great midrange, Italian style with wooden bits boxed		885
UNISON RESEARCH FEATHER ONE/POWER 35 pre/pos, fives wood on these too! boxed		1300
VALERONNE LARS APOLLO 2 20 watt single ended w/2513 output valves beautiful musical instruments, ask to see phono factory upgraded with black gates, etc 20 watts single ended w/2513 2 sets of different output valves		3000

LOUDSPEAKERS

AND SONSTICE, piano black with custom silk stands, open baffle design, easy drive superb		3000
ALUANTE LINEA, great little tube labor look alike, would make a great upgrade from minima arrays		2500
ARCADAYS speakers rosewood, neat little floorstanders, w/le tidy!		400
ATC ACTIVE 50, older version, rosewood, boxed		6000
AUDIO PHYSICS TEMPO on version, black, with Essex digital correction unit that fits between transport and dac and gives impressive bass		2500

AUDIOVECTOR type 5 rosewood floorstanders, good with valve amps		2800
ATLANT AVATAR mkII in maple speakers, some damage to top		6000
CASTLE HARLECHS, neat floorstanders with top firing mid range, like Howard but smaller		960
CELLO SERAPHIMS active speakers, piano black pair just fitted with 700 pounds worth of brand new Dynaco/Esocar tweeters, with some cables		15000
DAU GRAND COUPE, rosewood, great speaker with dynaco drive units		2500
HALES CONCEPT 5 based, cherry 3 way sealed box 100kg each, these have low bass		4000
HEYBROOK SKETTETS mkII upgraded with mk2 spec bass unit, ribbon tweeters, boxed		1150
IMPULSE MK2 lets horn loaded floor standers REDUCED		1500
LINN HEOSA cherry boxed		1600
LINN RABERS black passive with ku-stone stands		375
LUMLEY 3.5 floorstanders, nice and efficient, used to be recommended by croft, boxed		2000
MERIDIAN M3 active speakers		800
MISSION 754 freedom board (premium) spruce veneer oak finish, last version boxed		1500
MAPHINTONS, usual crisp sound from name, would probably sound quite good with a pair of Quad IS		780
OPERA CALLAS GOLD		850
PMC stand mounters, mint a new		400
PROAK RESPONSE 2, black, I've had some good sounds out of these		1400
QUAD ES 57 bronze pair, SERVICED, rebuilt by us, audio transformers/crossovers		600 pair
QUAD ES 57 bronze pair sound exabyte SD		2250
REFERENCE 3A mm Dia Capo glass black 92dB/watt sensitivity		150
ROGERS A81 ebony subwoofers, latest type		4000
ROGERS LS36 no grille cloths, early bbc monitor form factor of the bcl		200
RUARK CHASADERS walnut boxed, work nicely in room corners		1500
SONUS FABER CONCERTOS, walnut boxed		650
TANNY T225 with glass tops, dual concentric with sbr		250
TANNY GABRIELI cabs negro pair in walnut with matched pair 15" recd 5000 or golds		4000
Tannoy chevro, HILL, YERY Good pair with reconed drive units		450
TOTEM MODEL 1, mint boxed rosewood/min monitors		1350
UK CALLAS GOLD		800
YENNA AUDIOSTICS BACH very smart small floorstanders finished in beech boxed a new		1200

TUNERS, CASSETTE DECKS, REEL-TO-REEL

AKAI GMS2 cassette deck		300
AUDIO REFINEMENTS complete tuner silver		600
CYRUS TUNER MATCHES CYRUS TWO, boxed		150
LEAR TROUGHLINE III STEREO legendary tuner checked over by us/see		120
LEAR TROUGHLINE 3 with whiteley valve decode, superb		280
LUDMAN T80B		150
MARANTZ spectrum analyser/graphic		200
MARANTZ SX72 scratch noise suppressor, poor cosmetic condition		700
MRO 4155 tuner		100
NARAKIHI BUI75e cassette deck		125
NARAKIHI B82 cassette deck, just serviced		125
NARAKIHI ZK480 cassette deck, just serviced		150
NARAKIHI S80 dual capstan 3 head size machine		250
NARAKIHI TRITONER 1000 serious beastie serviced with service manual		2000
PANASONIC ST 2700H silver analogue tuner ltr/w/wh		15
PIONEER 191 tuner excellent		280
PIONEER F-406L black mk2 tuner		100
PIONEER F301 RED tuner		180
PIONEER DYNAMIC PROCESSOR (repairs) ICP		60
QUAD PH2 valve serial		110
QUAD PH3 exabyte		130
QUAD AM3 exabyte		200
REVOX C66 2 track high speed		300
SCW EL CASSETTE 5 with 10 caps		150
STUDIO 12 DECODERS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR TROUGHLINE TUNER		45
TEAC 6020S cassette deck EXCELLENT		350
TEAC 95000 cassette deck, 3 head, dual capstan		40
TECHNICS ELKASSETTE 7500 rare carbon item with 10 cassettes		825
TECHNICS R05465 cassette deck, good budget deck recommended		200
TECHNICS ST 511 silver analogue tuner LUDMAN		80
WHITELEY valve stereo decoder for your troughline, utilises same output stage as in mono troughline II but in stereo and compact enough to fit in your troughline 200 fitted or DNY slotted		200

TRANSISTOR AMPS

ALCHEMIST GENESIS monoblocks		2000
ALCHEMIST THE ALCHEMIST serious stereo power amp, as designed by Tim de Paravacini		800
ALCHEMIST THE ALCHEMIST serious stereo power amp, as designed by Tim de Paravacini		2000
ARCAM ALPHA 10 integrated amp remote, boxed		400
ARCAM ALPHA 9 integrated		425
ARCAM ALPHA 9 preamp		300
AUDIO ANALOGUE BELLINI/DONIZETTI pre amp, NOT REMOTE, boxed		600
AUDIO platinum hybrid, valve input stage, modest output, remote controlled integrated amp		1500
BAATOLOPHO s140 Italian power amp, very clean and punchy recommended		1500
BOW 202 pre amp and mc stage		100
BOW TECHNOLOGY Wazoo XL stylish integrated amp, laser 75 watt version, boxed		2500
BARTON OLS preamp, about halfway through the usual 20 year game		500
CAMPBELL AUDIO AI MK2 B		70
CHORD SP4 1000 black boxed		2785
CINUSON 620 stereo power amp		200
CYRUS ONE scrouly, boxed		800
DNI preamp, metal case but with series 3 boards line only		300
DPA DSP2005P pre AND POWER amp, new little detailed sounding		500
EC AUDIO FINESTRA preamp, TOM EVANS designed excellent sound		1300
ELECTROCOMPANET 4.5 line pre, balanced and remote, boxed		1200
EXPOSURE 20W pre with phono, laser large leads		1000
GAYPHON HEAD AMP, dual mono with 2 power supplies, amplifies from mc to mm level		1500
gold finish, with impedance matching plugs and owners manual		1500
HAHER DML110/220 pre, POWER with tone controls, 200 WATTS		300
HARMON HARMON CITATION II 11 pre 12 DELUXE power amp, with wooden sleeves, from the lory days		350
KEVIN LYN 2 x 20 watt phono		700
KEWWOOD MK2 200watt power amp (with valve control)		300
KEWWOOD RAFT 1030 integrated amp		800
KRELL KNC3 pre latest version, boxed		3500
KRELL MKC-R		7000
KRELL MPB 250MC mini monoblocks		14000
KRELL HAS 2 KRELL AUDIO STANDARD, ex boxed, just serviced by abs sounds		20,000
LFD L31 line preamp		1000
LFD PAR		1800
LFD PAD		800
LINN LK100 boxed		325
LINN BAHN (upgraded with brilliant) includes phono stage		1770
LINN KLEUTU power amp		1000
LINN WEGA 75 watts per channel power amp 2 available		200 each
LUDMAN L 80-Y integrated amp and L 88-Y TUNER		300 pair
LUDMAN L100 110watts per channel cast over 500 panels in 1979, easy		250
LUDMAN L120 power amp silver fitted 120 watts per channel		250
LUDMAN CL350 pre boxed		100
LUDMAN 308 integrated amp nice with wooden case/wk		120
MARANTZ M424 monoblocks,		1200
MERIDIAN 201 pre/605 monoblocks boxed		2200
MEITNER MUSIKTEXT STR-55 class A 50 watt /analog, like maple syrup, recommended		1500

METAKS CHARMASA PREAMP		155
MICHEL ALECTO MK2 monoblocks boxed		1350
MICHEL ANGO III line pre		500
MOUTH 100 WATT MONOBLOCKS		1300
MUSICAL FIDELITY A1001 amp		3000
MUSICAL FIDELITY A1172 200 OHMly MADE		1000
MUSICAL FIDELITY A1313 pre, decent phono stage and tone controls		400
MUSICAL FIDELITY THE FREEMYP DR THOMAS		350
NAIP 62/90 new style boxed		450
NAIP NAF415 4m style		225
NAIP 32/40 old style		800
NAIP 42 pre with mc phono stage		500
NAIP NAC22/NAIP 116 mint boxed old style		600
NAIP phono boards 373 mc available		20 pounds/pair
NAIP 140 new style		425
NAIP new 32.5, home made pair 6NAP 250 old style		900
N.E.W. A2011 power amp 20 watts class A Nelson Pass design		500
ONELLE P1400 prototype monoblocks 200 watts per channel		700 pair
PASS LABS 0 monoblocks class A single ended 75 watts, valve like midrange and top allied with some bass grunt, with crates		800
PINK TRIANGLE PIP pre amp boxed		3750
PINK TRIANGLE PIP TWO preamp, mm and mc, one box version, boxed/black		750
PUNLUS 8200 integrated amp with phono stage boxed		2250
PUNLUS 8100 integrated amp line level		1500
QUAD 33/303 good condition		150
QUAD 33/FR3/AP3 in wooden sleeve with 303 power amp, quad serviced		500
QUAD 405 PH 1100 watts of power		250
QUAD 306 GREY VERY GOOD WITH PHONOS		225
ROTEL R2995 pre with phono board		70
ROTEL MICR RMC 10 passive pre, scratch on front panel boxed		375
SHI AUDIO CELESTE integrated amp, with phono		1500
SONY TA F240 black integrated amp		800
SONY ESPRIT TAH 88 preamp, mint boxed line		400
TALK ELECTRONICS HURUKANE 3P/TORNAO 3P pre/power boxed with remote		2000
THRESHOLD CAS 2 100 watt per channel modest power amp		900
UNISON RESEARCH UNCD integrated amp 750 WATT BOXED AS NEW		500
TAMARA F2200 professional series power amp 200 watt per channel, big and heavy		350
with grab handles and nu meters		350
YBA 2 pre/power 3 years old, with mm phono stage very clean and last detailed, and treble retains good quality		4000

TURNTABLES, ARMS, CARTRIDGES

ALPHACON H1100S ARM		300
APHELION plinth "Belmont" NEW DESIGN solid mahogany or teak		450
APHELION PLINTHS IN STOCK		400
AUDIO INNOVATIONS 1000 mc step up transformer		200
GARBARO 401 in behrens hardwood plinth with origin line silver arm		1000
GARBARO 401 in APHELION PLINTH cherry with snc 30R2 arm		450
GOLDRING 1000 range moving magnets available		50-120
GOLDRING EBELE moving coil rebuilt by Hahul		250
GRYPHON HEAD AMP, dual mono with 2 power supplies, amplifies from mc to mm level		1500
gold finish, with impedance matching plugs and owners manual		1500
HELIUS ORION analogue wired board		110
KIMBER PBJ ARM LEAD TO FIT LINDSAY - suitable mc cartridges		1000
LDF MC 1		450
LINN AKITO arm with upgraded arm lead		150
LINN FITTON LVI silver		300
LINN LP12 black with 2 speed hydrovac post, basalt arm		400
LINN LP12 black with valkulla, cortex, FITTON LVI		800
LINN LP12 aluminium with large, cortex, teak LVI		1050
LINN TRONIA DECENT CONDITION		300
LUDMAN PD300 /snc 3 classic deck with vacuum suctiondown		225
MICHEL 80 mc phono stage		3000
MICRO SEIKI mS5000 thread drive with two arms, 12" Fiddly research and top SMC arm		175
MOTH (mega-She) with top old 6100 arm and dc cartridge		900
NOTTINGHAM ANALOGUE TRACER 2 & TRACER 3 mm cartridges now available for home dem		310 and 475
strongly recommended they out perform some expensive moving coil		

HEATHCOTE AUDIO

TEL: 01992 653999 MOBILE: 07860 511111 E-MAIL ADDRESS: HeathcoteAudio@aol.com

VALVE AMPS

UNISON RESEARCH SMART 845 MONOBLOCKS
 GAMMA AEON 211 MONOBLOCKS (NEW VALVES/SERVICED WERE £7000)
 AUDION GOLDEN KNIGHTS 300B MONOBLOCKS (WERE £4000+)
 AUDIONOTE KIT-1 SIG.FULL OF BLACK GATES HOVLAND MUSICAPS ETC.
 ART AUDIO QUINTET POWER AMP
 COUNTERPOINT SA-200
 NESTAROVICH LABS 150 WATT MONOBLOCKS (VERY RARE/ FANTASTIC)
 LUMLEY REFERENCE LR-120 MONOBLOCKS (TRIODE SWITCHABLE) REVALVED
 UNISON RESEARCH MYSTERY ONE PRE AMP
 CONRAD JOHNSON PREMIER 14 REMOTE PRE AMP
 AUDIO RESEARCH LS-2 PRE AMP
 ROGUE AUDIO TEMPEST REMOTE INTEGRATED
 LUMLEY REFERENCE PP-40 PRE & ST-40 POWER AMPS (CHROME)

SOLID STATE

MICHELL ARGO/HERA & ALECTO MONOBLOCKS
 PINK TRIANGLE INTEGRAL (1 MONTHS USE NEW PRICE £3995)
 CAIRN FACE NORD INTEGRATED & SILVER REMOTE
 PIONEER A91-D HUGE INTEGRATED DIGITAL & ANALOGUE INPUTS (RARE)
 ELECTROCOMPANET AW-60 CLASS A POWER AMP (STEREOPHILE MAG REC.)
 CONRAD JOHNSON PF-2 PRE AMP (INC PHONO STAGE)
 DNM 6 PRE AMP & PSU (SMOKED ACRYLIC CASES)
 GAMUT C2 PRE AMP BALANCED/SINGLE ENDED
 DENSEN DM-20 PRE AMP
 MICHI RHA-10 REMOTE PRE AMP (RARE)
 ECA VISTA PRE AMP(SUPERB!)

CD

SONY SCD-1
 KRELL DSP MK11 TOPLOADER HEAVY PERSPEX LID (NEW LASER MECH)
 PIONEER PD 93 INCREDIBLY RARE FLAGSHIP MODEL
 MICROMEGA STAGE-6
 SONY CDP R-1 TRANSPORT/DAS R-1 DAC GOLD & WALNUT SIDE CHEEKED CLASSIC
 THETA PEARL TRANSPORT/DS PRO BASIC-11 DAC.
 AUDIO SYNTHESIS TRANCEND TRANSPORT & DAX-2 DAC.
 PINK TRIANGLE CARDINAL/ORDINAL 24 BIT/RELOCKING CABLES ETC. (BE QUICK!!)
 PROCEED PDT-3/PDP-3 TRANSPORT & DAC. (AT&T.AES/EBU.COAX.OPTICAL IN)
 MARANTZ CD-94 MK11 TRANSPORT (AT&T/COAX) & CDA-94 DAC
 THETA PEARL TRANSPORT
 THETA DS PRO GEN III (AT&T, COAX, ETC.)
 AUDIO SYNTHESIS DAX-2 HOCD COAX/AES-EBU/AT&T/TOSLINK
 MICROMEGA STAGE DAC (WAS £750)
 AUDIONOTE DAC 1X SIGNATURE

VINYL

REVOX B-795 TURNTABLE/LINEAR ARM
 TECHNICS SL-1500 TURNTABLE & ARM
 ROKSAN RADIUS-3/TABRIZ ZI/ DS4 PSU/ARTAXERXES-X PHONO STAGE
 ROKSAN XERXES/REGA RB300/LINN K-9
 PINK TRIANGLE PT-TOO
 LEHMAN BLACK CUBE SE
 CYRUSAE0-7 PHONO STAGE
 AUDIO ALCHEMY VAC IN THE BOX MM/MC PHONO STAGE
 PAUL HAYNES VALVE PHONO STAGE & PSU (£1500 NEW)

LOUDSPEAKERS

WILSON SYSTEM 5.1 PIANO BLACK
 DYNAUDIO AUDIENCE 80 (CHERRYWOOD FINISH)
 IMF PROFESSIONAL MONITOR VII
 AMPHION XENON EX DIS.
 AMPHION XENON (CHERRYWOOD FINISH) EX DEM.
 AMPHION ATHENE MK1 EX.DEMO
 AMPHION HELIUM 1
 B&W CDM 1NT (CHERRYWOOD) & DEDICATED STANDS
 MIRAGE M-10901 FLOORSTANDERS (WERE APPROX £2000) UPGRADED X-OVER
 AMPHION HELIUM 1/BOXED
 B&W CM 2 (MAPLE)
 UKD OPERA CALLAS GOLD
 SONUS FABER CONCERTINO HOME PIANO BLACK (FEW HOURS USE ONLY)
 CELESTION A-3 FABULOUS FLOORESTANDERS SUPERB VALUE
 CELESTION A-2 HUGELY CAPABLE (ROSEWOOD VENEER)

MINT/BOXED £2350
 MINT £2250
 MINT £1750
 MINT/BOXED PHONE £1150
 MINT £1150
 MINT £1150
 MINT/BOXED £2495
 MINT/BOXED £1650
 MINT/BOXED £995
 MINT £1995
 MINT/BOXED £1295
 AS NEW/BOXED £1495
 MINT/BOXED £995

MINT £1495
 AS NEW/BOXED £2995
 MINT/BOXED £695
 MINT/BOXED £650
 EX DIS./BOXED £750
 MINT/BOXED £995
 MINT £995
 MINT/BOXED £795
 VGC. £495
 BOXED £575
 AS NEW/BOXED £495

MINT/BOXED £2350
 MINT/BOXED £1795
 MINT/BOXED £895
 MINT BOXED £450
 MINT £2250
 MINT/BOXED £2250
 MINT/BOXED £1895
 MINT/BOXED £1175
 MINT/BOXED £1750
 MINT/BOXED £995
 MINT/BOXED £795
 MINT/BOXED £2395
 AS NEW/BOXED £1150
 MINT/BOXED £375
 AS NEW/BOXED £650

MINT/BOXED £350
 MINT £175
 MINT/BOXED RES
 MINT £650
 BOXED £375
 BRAND NEW/BOXED £450
 MINT/BOXED £295
 MINT/BOXED £195
 MINT £650

MINT/CRATED £7500
 AS/NEW £1000
 RING RING
 AS NEW/BOXED £1450
 BOXED £1450
 MINT/BOXED £695
 BOXED £325
 MINT/BOXED £550
 RING FOR DETAILS £350
 AS/NEW/BOXED £395
 AS NEW/BOXED £750
 AS NEW/BOXED £495
 BRAND NEW/BOXED £1695
 BRAND NEW/BOXED £1250

AUDIONOTE ANE/D (ROSEWOOD) EX DEM £795
 AUDIONOTE ANK/SPX MINT/BOXED £675
 ACOUSTIC PRECISION FR-1 LOUDSPEAKERS £375
 TANNY ARUNDEL 15"3839 HIGH POWER DRIVERS 95 DB SENSITIVE VERY RARE MINT £1500
 SD OBS FLOORSTANDERS (OPEN BAFFLE) SMALLER BROTHER TO SD1 BOXED £475
 PROAC TABLETTE 2000 SIGNATURE (BIRDS EYE MAPLE) NEW/BOXED £750
 PROAC-3 STUDIO MONITORS (ATC DRIVERS) WALNUT MINT £795
 PROAC RESPONSE-2 (WERE £1700 NEW) MINT £695
 PROAC-2 (VOLT DRIVERS) MINT £350
 CASTLE HOWARD-2 PREMIUM BEECH FINISH MINT £895
 CASTLE AVON FLOORSTANDERS MINT £450

TUNERS /TAPE

LINWOOD MAINS CONDITIONER 3 WAY £250
 DPA 'THE POWER' MAINS FILTER (4 OFF) (EACH) £75
 MARANTZ 2000 LEARNING REMOTE MINT/BOXED £75
 SONY STD-777ES REMOTE DAB/AM/FM TUNER (CHAMPAYNE GOLD) MINT £395
 SONY JA-30ES MINIDISC (CHAMPAYNE GOLD) MINT £375

RACKS/STANDS

SOUNDSTYLE XS 105 5 SHELF BLACK OR SILVER (£320) EX DIS. £195
 SOUNDSTYLY XS 100 4 SHELF EX-DIS £185
 SOUNDSTYLE XS 310 AV TABLE (£320) EX-DIS £195
 ATTACAMA R724/ATTABITE (FEW WEEKS OLD WAS £250) MINT £175
 MISSION LOUDSPEAKER STANDS SILVER MINT £75
 TARGET R-1 MINT/BOXED £200
 TOWNSEND MEDIUM SEISMIC SINK £150

CABLES

LOUDSPEAKER CABLE
 MIT MH-750 12 FT PAIR £850
 MIT MH-750 8 FT. PAIR £650
 NIRVANA AUDIO SL-SERIES 3 METRE PAIR EX DEM. FACTORY TERMINATED £575
 TRANSPARENT MUSICWAVE PLUS 2 METRE PAIR £350
 KIMBER 4TC 4.5 METRE PAIR TERMINATED (PACKAGED AS NEW) £150
 CARDAS HEXLINK 2 METRE PAIR (FACTORY TERMINATED) £275
 AUDIONOTE AN-L 5 METRE PAIR £225
 AUDIONOTE AN-L 2 METRE BI-WIRE PAIR (TERMINATED) £175
 VAN DEN HUL 'THE TEATRACK' HYBRID BI-WIRE 5 METRE PAIR £150
 VANDEN HUL MC CS 122 2 X 3 METRE PAIR (EACH) £90
 AUDIOQUEST INDIGO 3 METRE PAIR £50

INTERCONNECT

HARMONIC TECHNOLOGY MAGICLINK ONE (WAS £1000) AS NEW/PACKED £550
 LINDSAY AUDIOPHILE SATIN GRAY 2 METRE (AMERICAN NEW/PACKED WAS £480) £200
 LINDSAY AUDIOPHILE GRAY 2 METRE (NEW) £175
 AUDIONOTE AN-V SILVER INTERCONNECT 6.2 METRE PAIR £995
 DPA BLACK SLINK 5 METRE BALANCED PAIR £550
 DPA BLACK SLINK 2 X 0.5 METRE PAIRS (BALANCED) £125 EACH
 TRANSPARENT MUSICLINK PLUS 2 X 1 METRE PAIRS £200 EACH
 KIMBER HERO 1 METRE £75
 CLEARAUDIO TRIOENT 1 METRE INTERCONNECT TBA
 SUPRA EFF-ISL 2.5 FT PAIR NEW/PACKAGED £65
 AUDIOQUEST LAPIS 5 METRE PAIR £650
 AUDIOQUEST EMERALD 1 METRE PAIR £195
 AUDIOQUEST TURQUOISE/JADE/RUBY/TOPAZ (VARIETY PLEASE PHONE)
 AUDIOQUEST DIAMOND 2 X 2 METRE PAIRS (MINT) £495 EACH

DIGITAL

CHORD CO.PRODAC SILVER PLUS (6NC) £60
 REGA DIGITAL INTERCONNECT 1 METRE (NEUTRIK PHONO S) £30
 VAN DEN HUL AES/EBU £40
 KIMBER ILLUMINATI AES EBU 1.5 METR £150
 AUDIOQUEST VSD-4 SOLID PSS SILVER (WAS £265) £150
 NIRVANA DIGITAL COAX LEAD 4 FT. £200
 AUDIOQUEST OPTILINK X TOSLINK £50
 BELDEN-M DATATWISTER AES/EBU 1 METRE £65
 XLO PRO AES EBU TBA

MOST EQUIPMENT STOCKED IS ONE OWNER MINT/BOXED, SIMILAR QUALITY VINTAGE AND MODERN EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR IMMEDIATE CASH PURCHASE. THIS IS A SELECTION OF STOCK FOR A FULL CURRENT LIST PLEASE PHONE/E-MAIL GEORGE. MAIL ORDER A SPECIALITY

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Special Internet offer see page 130 for details

WANTED: STAX SR-Lambda professional headphones (year 1982) must be in excellent/mint condition (unmarked and not damaged). Will pay £400 for mint condition headphones. Tel: 01865 378578 (evenings) or Email: fiskalan@hotmail.com (Mar/I)

KRELL KMA 200 Monoblocks. Excellent condition, few in the UK. Massive heavy amps difficult to lift one. Very clear and transparent without being clinical. Drive any load. Tel: 01803 214 200 (Mar/I)

MARK LEVINSON 334 as new £3950 (£6000). Sonus Faber Guarneris, as new, £3500 (£5300). Sensible offers considered. With crates, documents. Tel: 01273 464449 or Email: sales@sprays.co.uk (Mar/I)

WANTED: STAX SR-Lambda professional headphones (year 1982) must be in excellent/mint condition (unmarked and not damaged). Will pay £400 for mint condition headphones. Tel: 01865 378578 (evenings) or Email: fiskalan@hotmail.com (Mar/I)

APPROXIMATELY 400 hi-fi magazines £60. Tel: 01494 762574 or 020 7284 2393 (Mar/I)

BRITISH HI-FI wanted. The older the better, but must work and be in good order. Books and literature and accessories also wanted. Cash paid and collection arranged. Tel: 01235 512729 (Mar/I)

ARCAM A85 amp black, 12 months old, remote, headphone socket, bass & treble, boxed, mint (£750) £499. Arcam FMJ22 amp, silver, 2 months old, boxed, mint, balance of 2 years warranty (£1000) £749. Mission 754P floorstanding speakers, oak, bi-wire, boxed (£1400) £499. Tel: 0115 960 3934 (Nottm). (Mar/I)

QUAD 1 pair 606 boards £90 per pair. 405 II 'look a like' with split power supply £150 plus P & P. Tel: Mike 01509 230 089 (Mar/I)

CYRUS PRE £300 Cyrus power £250. Micromega Stage 6 CD £400. All 1996 mint boxed. Jamo Concert 8 cherry new £1300 now £550. Tel: 07890 655752 (Apr/I)

SYSTEM FOR sale. £150 CD Arcam Alpha 8 amplifier, Pioneer A-300 precision tuned (Tom Evans) speakers Rega Ela floor standing all coloured black, very good condition. Tel: 01438 227 910 (Stevenage) (Mar/I)

FERROGRAPH LOGIC 7 open reel tape recorder model 7622H. Logic Controls (plus remote), integral amplifiers & speakers, 3 3/4, 7 1/2, 15 I.P.S. 10 1/2" reels, walnut case, excellent condition, serviced, many tapes, very rare £895 ono. Tel: 01625 861 728 (Mar/I)

AUDIO NOTE 10. Retipped £300 Matisse Reference 2 box valve pre-amp cost £3000 accept £800. Golida 202A valve integrated amp boxed £300. Old Sugden tuner excellent. Offers. Tel: 07729 620621 (Mar/I)

AUDIO INNOVATIONS 2nd Audio monoblocks Golden Dragon 2A3 valves excellent condition (£3000) will accept £950. Rehdeko RK25 speakers, two drivers, super sensitive and incredibly detailed including cradle stands £600. Tel: 01208 872316 (Apr/I)

DNM 3 box PPre £695. 2 box £595. Revox 710 £450. Sugden AU51 £795. E/Comp EC13 £695. Sony 5CD555ES £895. Teac VRDS25 £750. Copland CSA28 £795. Trichord Pulsemaster £125. Nu Vista M3 £2150. Tel: 07966 267404 or 01277 211685 (Mar/I)

ION SYSTEMS m/blocks £495. Audio Note Zero pre £250. Counterpoint SA12 £595. Exposure IV £595. Ojan 3X £595. Talismans II £295. Unison Simply 4 £695. Lecson Quattra £175. Curser pre £295. Croft pre £295. Tel: 01277 211685 or 07966 267404 (Mar/I)

RADFORD AUDITORIUM loudspeakers complete with stands rosewood furniture finish sensible offers invited Tel: 01865 735244 (Oxford) (Mar/I)

LINN LP12 Naim Aro arm, Troika cartridge, external Armageddon power supply. Immaculate sound/condition. Complete £1550. Linn Sara's black ash, stands, excellent condition, £250 Tel: 01275 373449 evenings/weekends or Email: green@tjmlgreen.freeserve.co.uk (Mar/I)

KLIPSH HERESY horns £580. Audio Analogue Puccini £275. Rega 2 £50. Quad ESL 57 £350. Quad 303/33 £150. Quad FM II tuner valve £100. Thorens 160 turntable £100. Tel: 01827 261082 (Tamworth) (Mar/I)

GONE VALVE! Therefore: Cyrus 3i + PSX + XPA brilliant for bi-amping £450. Cyrus FM7.5 tuner £200. All boxed and excellent. Tel: Nick 0116 224 9282 (Leicester) evenings (Mar/I)

BAT VK3i mint/boxed £950. Z System upsampler 16/44 to 24/96 £800. Quad FM3 mint/boxed £100. Tel: 020 8856 1047 (Mar)

NAKAMICHI RX50SE cassette deck £325. NAD 3155 amplifier £50. Mission 737R speakers £50. ARCD04 £25. AR turntable £25. Acoustic Reference BS300 speakers £25. Details: 07860 358689, Email: nick.bunting@virgin.net. Good home wanted (Mar/I)

WANTED: SONY CDP 339 ES CD player. Tel: Martin Ronaldson 01837 840438 (Mar/I)

CHICAGO IMPORT 1966 Ditchburn Clairetone stereogram. Oiled walnut cabinet 6ft x 18inches. Lab 80 auto deck, original condition, collectors item, superb piece of furniture. Tel: 01253 812640 or 07808 162531 (Mar/I)

SONY 555ES SACD £795. Teac URDS25 £695. PMC FBI plinths, cherrywood £1050. Cyrus CD7/PSX-R £845. Crimson 610/630D £795. Castle Eden (yew) £350. Mission 753 £495. Tannoy System 8 £595. Tel: 07966 267404 Email: coom@btinternet.com (Mar/I)

AUDIO SYNTHESIS ultimate Passion pre amp £500. Stax SRM-TIS energiser with Gamma pro headphones £500. Tel: 01233 740629 (Mar/I)

TDL STUDIO 3 speakers, walnut veneer finish. Excellent condition. TDL spiked stands included, also original boxes £330. Tel: 01635 676620 anytime (Mar/I)

MISSION 770F loudspeakers ten years old, on stands with spikes, black £75. Tel: 01702 353033 daytime or Email: michael.hall@pishey.com (Mar/I)

ARCAM ALPHA 8 CD £225. Alpha 8 amp £180. Castle Tays (walnut) £150. Little used second system. Tel: 01728 747735 or Email: tonynelson@btconnect.com (Mar/I)

RADFORD STA25/III, Woodside updated circuit boards (originals included), Tesla EL34s (old Mullards included), Audio Note valve bases, replated, re-enamelled (blue!) £450. JPW AP2 speakers, Hi-Fi Choice recommended £60 ono. Tel: 01503 250176 (Mar/I)

Upgrade Your Turntable



"It's value is nothing short of tremendous"
Listener Magazine

"The single most important upgrade you can ever make to any record deck concerns the motor drive....Nothing can compare you for the shock of going DC, in a word, Gobsmacking"
Common Ground Magazine

"...if you are thinking of upgrading your system.....the Origin Live DC-motor kit should be high on your list for consideration" TNT Audio

Whatever your current turntable, the results in upgrading to the Origin Live DC motor and power supply are simply astounding. Designed as a drop in replacement for almost all turntables, the Origin Live upgrade kit offers vast improvements to all versions of Linn turntables, as well as Ariston, Rega, Systemdeck, Roksan, Rock, Oracle, Thorens, Well Tempered etc. With only a 12 Volt power supply and a full set of illustrated instructions our upgrade is both easy and safe to install. The upgrade is also offered with a full money back guarantee if you are not satisfied. The kit consisting of a high grade dc motor, soldered regulator board and power supply is only £262. This provides an extremely cost effective route to truly high end audio and is significantly superior in performance to other power supply upgrades costing 4 times the price. A larger purpose built transformer is also available as an optional extra at £175.

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"Nothing less than total dynamite" Hi-Fi World



If you are the proud owner of any Rega tonearm, you are now in the enviable position to transform its performance into the league of super arms with modifications offered by Origin Live - the Origin live structural modification at £75 will enable your Rega to perform at a level exceeding that of arms costing over £1200. High performance rewiring with high grade litz cable is also offered at an additional £70 and external rewiring is £70 this further increases the performance.

"I have to say the Rega modifications turn this humble arm into a real Giant killer. Gone is the rather grey, sterile sound of the cooking Rega. Instead, tonal colour is fresh, dynamics have great speed and impact, and the sound stage is huge."
Hi-Fi World, Nov 97 (structural modification on RB250)

What Hi-Fi? gave this modification 5/5

Structural Modification - £75

Internal Rewiring - £70

External Rewiring - £70

For arm modifications we normally return your arm in 2 - 3 days.

Origin Live Ultra Turntables Build & setup in an hour



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Classic

"...this Vinyl front end had my jaw heading towards the floor with the solidity and transparency of the music it was making....with all these goodies in place the Standard would give turntables at the £1200 -1400 mark a hard time..."

"...Overall a deeply impressive deck.....brilliant value for money ...component quality is superb and the build process is a doddle."
Hi-Fi World

"the best sounding deck here (group comparison test of 8 leading turntables)...sounds fantastic."
What Hi-Fi?

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Audiophile

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2. The complete standard kit offered with a non-suspended pre-drilled & finished plinth at **£349**
3. The complete ultra kit comes in two options. The Ultra Kit Classic offering a truly high end suspended sub-chassis turntable with beautifully finished solid wood plinth. The Ultra Kit modern offers the performance of the Ultra Kit Classic combined with the modern day skeletal styling of our sensational resolution turntable. Both options available at **£538.00**

All kits are supplied with well illustrated instructions and are easier to assemble than many of today's pre-built turntables.

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<http://www.originlive.com>

ROTEL RB 985 5 channel THX power amplifier in mint condition with box (£700) £295. Also various speaker cable available, please enquire. Tel: 0116 271 5439 (Mar/I)

CHORD DAC 64, one year old, five year transferable warranty £1100 ono. Audio Synthesis passion ultimate R/C passive pre amp, 6 months old, £650 ono Tel: Bob 01892 683367 (Mar/I)

STAX LAMBDA Nova Signature headphones and SRM-TIS valve energiser, boxes, manuals, £650. Monarchy 22BLE DAC, upgraded by Audiocom, dynamic, smooth, detailed, £795. Soundstyle rack, burgundy, £90. Tel: Andy 01452 612640 or Email: andy@admckenzie.fsnet.co.uk (Mar/I)

COPLAND CSA28 hybrid integrated amplifier excellent condition £600. Ruark Icons mint condition with Atacama Nexus stands £250. Tel: 01592 265096 (Scotland) (Mar/I)

MARANTZ CD7 Limited Edition CD player, boxed with remote and manual cost £3500 accept £1995. Gryphon phono stage and MC headamp four power supplies, line input (£3400) accept £1295 Tel: 01634 268660 (Mar/I)

REGA P3 Bias £200. NAD phono £20. Audiolab 8000A £50. Soundstyle rack glass shelves silver £50. 10 metres Exposure biwire cable £50. Teac tape deck £30. All excellent condition. Tel: 0121 422 8138 (Mar/I)

COPLAND CSA 28 integrated amp (valve hybrid) £990. Earmax Pro headphone amp w/psu £300. MF Nu-Vista interconnects (silver) £90. Kimber 2m Powerkord w/wattgate 350 £180. All mint, boxed, near offers considered. Tel: 020 8543 5531 Chris (eve) (Mar/I)

LINAEUM PRO-LX5 £95. Mission 775SM/774 LC £225. Krell KRS-1 four box preamplifier £1995. KMA-100 monoblocks £2250. Nakamichi 480 £95. Dragon £1250. Castle Howard S2 yew mint £695. Offers considered. Tel: 01455 613489 (Mar I)

WANTED: ALL kinds of interesting turntables from Michell to Sondeks and vinyl related accessories. Brochures all preferably tidy. Also LS3/5a. Would Ariston/AC05 gent please call and leave number! Tel: 01455 613489 (Mar/I)

NAIM NAIT 2 amp £200. Epos ES 11 speakers £200. Krell KPS20i CD player £4500. Sansui T-80 tuner £75. Target H4 stands only £175. Tel: 01636 830944 or 07979 536753 (Mar/I)

LFD PA1/LS1 pwr/pre £650. Teac Z5000 tape deck £130. Yamaha A100 pwr £80. Cyrus 1 Mk2 £80. Rogers LS4A/2 £60. Technics SEA7 power £120. Pioneer A300R amp £65. Technics SU-CO1 ST-CO1 SE-CO1 pre/pwr/tuner £100. Arcam Delta 70/CD £50. Tel: 020 7394 0870 (Mar/I)

FOR SALE Quad 34 control unit £150. Quad 33 303 FM3 £200. Wanted: Denon DL103 cartridge. Tel: Mike 01758 613790 (Mar/I)

KLIPSCH 4.5 floorstanders 95dB superb £525. Acousticzen Hologram speaker cable 3m £720. Heart Audio control pre amp and beat monoblocs with superb TJ 300Bs all pristine £1895. Tel: 0161 428 1539 (Mar/I)

APOGEE CALIPER Signature £1100. Orbe DC/VC RB300 brand new £1600. Grace 707-MkII unused £275. Thorens TD124 Mk2 exceptional condition £500. Garrard 401 SME 3009 spotless £375. Pro-ac Response One SC new £825. Tel: 0117 955 6555, Mobile: 07979 514450 (Mar/I)

SNELL TYPE E Mk3 floorstanders 89dB valve friendly ex/con £795 (£2300). Epos ES11 walnut mint/boxed £240 inc. stands. Nytech CTA 252 XD classic receiver nr. mint £145. Marantz CD73 classic mint £110. Technics RS 263 AUS toploading cassette £45. Tel: 01923 224404 (h) or 020 8908 4633 (w) (Mar/I)

NAIM SYSTEM CDI £800. 102 £775. 180 £750 (or £2200 the lot). All boxed c/w manuals, leads, remote. Also NAP 250 (new style) £950. Could deliver. Call Mark 07770 667037 (Mar/I)

LINN HI-FI: Kaber speakers, Kairn pre amp, two LK100 power amps, Karic CD and Numeric DA. Nearest offer to £2000. Tel: 01908 671471 (Milton Keynes) (Mar/I)

THE BEST 300B's Unison Research Smart 300B monoblocs 25 x 25 watt's new boxed £2750, (new £4500). Nikko Gamma-40 FM tuner slim-line black £40 ono. Tel: 01562 827710 N-T-W please (Mar/I)

LOWTHER ACOUSTA PM6 horn speakers £400 (Hi-Fi News January 1998). Thorens TD124 deck on oak plinth, complete with SME pick-up arm, good condition £275. Tel: Malcolm 07802 843637 (Mar/I)

ROGUE AUDIO 88 Magnum power amplifier. 60wpc Ultralinear 40wpc Triode switchable, KT88 black boxed excellent £1250. AVI preamplifier stereo power £700. Wanted: Lecson AP3. Tel: 01226 710605 Mobile: 07779 274655 (Mar/I)

AUDION GOLDEN Knights 300B amplifiers, monoblocks, (new £4000), £1500 ono. Horning Agathon speakers, 98dB Silver specification, (£3850), £1450 ono. High End American Hi-Fi. Faroudja DV1000 High Resolution DVD/CD player (£5000) £2250 ono. Parrasound HCA 2003A high current power amplifier (£1500) £900 ono. Chiro C800 dual zone tuner pre-amp processor (£1400) £750 ono. Chiro C5.1 multi-channel Decoder (£750) £450 ono. Mirage LFX 1 centre, 2 rear, 1 subwoofer (£1250) £750 ono. Motorized screen, Platinum 10 feet x 8 feet (£2000) £750 ono. Offers wanted. Tel: Bill 07711 428 195 (Mar/I)

LINN KLIMAX twin stereo power amplifier mint boxed £4500 ono. Tel: Barrie 01323 487781 Mobile: 07767 458374 (Apr/I)

ATC SCM 50 Actives, rosewood £3000. AVI S2000 pre-amp £350. Linn Lingo Cirkus Ittok £1000. Also DPA PDM III 2 box DAC and transport £750. All mint. No offers. Tel: 01489 880 561 or Email: m.henning@financial-training.com.(Mar/I)

UNUSED - EXPORT Audio Innovations Series 300 with Border Patrol Supply, Living Voice Auditorium, not yet run in, plus amp stand, £1500 ovno. Tel: 07736 781 544 (West Sussex) (Mar/I)

PMC BB5P LOUDSPEAKERS, cost £11,250, sell for £9,000. PMC BB5 centre speaker, cost £5250, sell for £3800. PMC LBI rear speakers, cost £1150, sell for £780. Stewart Firehawk 51x86 screen, cost £1800, sell for £1200. Meridian 568 Processor, cost £3600, sell for £2800. Bryson 14BST and 7B amps - ring for details. Tel: Ruth 0151 421 1468, Mobile: 0781 805 1690 (Mar/I)

LINN PEKIN tuner AM/FM boxed vgc £350 ono. Tel: 020 8842 3653 evenings (Mar/I)

UHER RECORDER 4200 Stereo with battery charger and mains unit Z124A, excellent condition, hardly used. Original receipt available. £100. Contact: X. Powell on 01252 793 884 (Mar/I)

KEF 105.4 speakers, need driving, good with valves, moderate use, good condition. Tel: 01556 680 314 (Dumfries area) (Apr/I)

KEF REFERENCE Series 104aB loudspeakers. Classic design, ideal partners for CD and solid state. Vgc, includes original manual, £175. Mission 731LE loudspeakers plus matching Micrometer stands, £135. Tel: 0161 445 0325 or email: tomferg22@hotmail.com (Mar/I)

TANNOY RECTANGULAR York speakers, pre 1973, 15ins Gold driver, £1700. HMV 78 record player 1927-8, £130. Both in excellent condition. Tel: 01672 851 800 or 07779 167 663 (Mar/I)

FOR SALE: Impulse LALI speakers, ideal with valve amps, 5 years old, cost £1600, sell £650. Epos ES14 speakers and stands, black ash £290. Tel: 02392 257 338 (Mar/I)

WANTED: LINN bass driver for Isoborik speakers and mid as well B139/B110 Karff or will take pair of loudspeakers and a Meridian 502 per amp. Please help. Tel: Alistair 0172 868 8309 (Suffolk) (Mar/I)

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Arcam Alpha 10 DR Tuner	£350.00	LFD Zero Int. Amp	£275.00
B&W Silver Signatures, Inc. HNE		Manley Purist Pre. Valve	£795.00
Granite Stands	£2500.00	Marantz DR700 CD Recorder	£150.00
B&W ASW 2500 Sub	£465.00	Marantz SR5200 AV Surround Receiver Amp	£325.00
B & W CC6 S'2 Centre Black	£125.00	Meridian 506 20 bit CD	£645.00
Bryston BP25 Pre. Remote, Silver	£1200.00	Musical Fidelity Nu Vista Speaker	
Bryston 4B ST Power Silver	£1585.00	Cables 3m Pair	£250.00
Chord Chameleon I /Connects From	£60.00	Naim 102 Pre With M.C. Boards	£995.00
Chord Chorus I/Connects From	£125.00	Naim 180 Power	£695.00
Chord Siren I/Connects From	£55.00	PMC FB1 Floorstanders, Oak	£995.00
Chord Solid 1m I/Connect	£105.00	PMC DB1 Standmounts, Oak	£475.00
Copland CDA 266 CD Mint	£895.00	PMC TB2 Centre, Oak	£315.00
Cyrus Quattro & Cyrus Stereo Power Amp & CLS 50's Cherry	£900.00	Pink Triangle Cardinal & DaCapo with 1307& 24 Bit Filters, Serviced	£1500.00
Cyrus daD 3 with QDAC fitted, Remote	£550.00	Quadraspire A.V. Rack 3 shelf, Cherry	£250.00
Cyrus 2 Int. & PSX, Serviced, Inc QED Silver		Quad 33 / 303 's, 2 available, all three items for	£135.00
Spiral I/Connect	£300.00	Rega Planet CD Black Inc. Remote	£325.00
Cyrus A.V. Master Processor	£80.00	Sugden CD21 Latest Spec	£595.00
Denon AVR 3802 Surround Receiver Amp, Black	£500.00	Totem Model 1's Cherry Inc.	
Denon TU425RD Tuner, Black	£100.00	Dedicated Stands	£1050.00
Cyrus A.V. Maestro 0.8m	£120.00	Townshend Isolda I/Connects 0.75m	£185.00
Ecosse Ref MS2.3 S/Cable Bi-Wire		Veritas 7's Oak	£400.00
3m Pair	£200.00	vdH The Wind Speaker Cable 3m Pair	£125.00
Ecosse Ref I/Connects MS2	£135.00	vdH D102iii HIB I / Connects 0.8m	£35.00
Electrocompaniet EC 4.6 Pre	£795.00	Wacha 6i	£1600.00
Electrocompaniet AW 250R Power	£2800.00		

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Buy-Sell-Exchange. Vintage wireless and classical audio. Repairs, spares, restoration, modification to all valve equipment. Quad II, Leaks etc, shipped worldwide, best prices, call us at 17 Bell Street, London, NW1 5BY. Tel: 020 7258 3448 Fax 020 7258 3449 Email: vwirelesslondon@aol.com (Oct/1)

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EX DEMONSTRATION Klipsch speaker systems, KSB 2.1 £200, KG 3.5 £350, KG 4.5 £450, KG 5.5 £550. Heresy £650, all tested. Tel: Midland Radio Supplies on 0121 430 7817 or Email: guyholdsworth@onetel.net.uk (Mar/1)

GARRARD? THORENS? Answer Aphelion! Solid hardwood or laminated MDF plinth's. Three models for all motor units. From £200. Also our vinyl storage system format. Prices from £26. All on permanent demonstration. Call 01604 409 300 (Apr/1)

NAGRA E-MONO £400, Uher SG560R £300, Telefunken MISA £700, EMT 950 £1200, 948 £550, Studer A80VU £950, B67 VU £750, A807 VU £1200, A710 £400, Technics SP10 MkII £280, Revox PR99 MkII £1200. Tel: 01246 275479 (Mar/1)

PROAC RESPONSE ONE SC, cherry wood, 14 mths old, mint, c/w four pillar Target R4 speaker stands, £875 Kimber Select Digital KS 2020 high performance 0.75 metre interconnect (£546.00) £390. Telephone Jules 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Mar/1)

AUDIONOTE AN-E SE loud speakers, Level 4, brand new, Alder finish, silver wired. (£6000) £3500. Quad II L's Original Maple finish, sealed box, cancelled order (£380) £340. Krell KAV 300i Amp, absolutely mint condition, as new. (£2300) £1300 Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Mar/1)

AUDIO RESEARCH Classic 150 Mono Blocks, black, excellent condition, new valves, boxed, (£12000) £3600. Bose 901 Ltd Edition, light oak, boxed, mint, inc active x over and stands, £1800 £750. Audio Technica OC9 cartridge brand new £270. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Mar/1)

KRELL KRC-3 pre-amp, as new £1750. Meridian 500 transport, immaculate, 2 years old, boxed, manual, everything as new, (£1400) £750. Infinity Renaissance 80 floorstander's, oak, £550. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: sales@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Mar/1)

NAIM NAC 32.5 pre, with phono stage, mint condition £275. Linn Mimick £450. Rotel RT 830 AL tuner £60. Telephone Jules on 01792 280061, Email: info@sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk Web: www.sounddrjuleshifi.co.uk (Mar/1)

HERTFORDSHIRE/NORTH LONDON Audio/Record Fair. Sunday 13th April 2003. 11.00 to 4.00. At Cuffley Hall, Maynard Place, Cuffley, Herts. 5 minutes from M25 Junction 25. Tel: 07944 909 209 for details (Mar/1)

MUSICAL FIDELITY A308CR pre/power £2750, A308 CD £1400, A308CR integrated £1400, A3CR/A300CR pre/power £1650. JM Labs Electra 905 + stands (£1500) £800. Naim Credo (beech) £550. Tel: 01952 502 097 (Telford) (Mar/1)

WOODLAND ELECTRONICS. Website: www.woodlandelectronics.co.uk Tel/Fax: 020 7349 9675 - 0795860 7613. High-End audio equipments, home cinema, electrical components, cables, Swiss phono connectors, BNC, XLR, Tools etc. Lighting, surveillance equipments. Replacement speaker units. Mega more items. (Mar/1)

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KORA VALVE Amplifiers on permanent dem. Also Silver Arrow 4N-Pire flat silver foil air interconnects and speaker cables with Bucchino phono plugs. H-CAT P12 Zero distortion pre amplifier from America on permanent dem. Tel: Worthing Audio 01903 212 133 or 07900 918 882 (Mar/1)

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AUDIO COMPUTER valve output or Midiman Audiophile soundcard, rack sized, black, silver, looks like Hi-Fi also PC. Replay/Record, CD, LP, MP3, Wav., Radio. P4, AMDxp from £999. Tel: 01460 65988 or Email: info@silentaudio.co.uk (Mar/1)

NAIM SPECIALISTS have the following items for sale: CDS 2 + X PS, CDX, CD 3.5, NAC 52 + PS, NAC 82, NAC 72, PAIR NAP 135'S, NAP 250, NAP 180, NAT 02, Hi Cap, pair Credo's Cherry, pair Credo's Oak. All top condition with a no quibble 12 month guarantee. Call Tom Tom Audio 0n 07971 202742 or Email: tunes@tomtomaudio.com Wanted - Good condition Naim gear. Cash waiting. Will collect. (Mar/1)

KRELL KAV - 300i integrated amp, Krell Kav 300CD CD player, Martin Logan Aeries i speakers, transparent musicwave plus speaker cable -£4995 or call for individual component prices. Demo available plus full 12 month money back guarantee. Call Tom Tom Audio on 07971 202742 or Email: tunes@tomtomaudio.com (Mar/1)

GARRARD? THORENS? Answer Aphelion! Solid hardwood or laminated MDF plinth's. Three models for all motor units. From £200. Also our vinyl storage system format. Prices from £26. All on permanent demonstration. Call 01604 409 300 (Apr/1)

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ADVERTISERS INDEX

Affordable Valve	46
Apex Acoustics	111
Audio Illusion	92
Audio Salon	88
Audio T	14
Audusa	113
AV Lounge	52
Billy Vee	89,90,91
Campaign Audio Design	22
Central Audio	114
Choice HiFi	94
Classique Sounds	119
Custom Cable	115
Cyrus	16
Definitive Audio (Brighton)	122
Definitive Audio (Nottingham)	22
Diverse Vinyl	121
Emporium (The)	120
Going On Ltd	121
Heathcote Audio	124
Heatherdale	115
Henley Designs	8,93
HFW Bristol Show	26
Hi-Fi Trading Company	108,109
Hicam	112
Ian Harrison	121
Jem Distribution	115
KJ WestOne	20
Leema Acoustics	46
Mana	128
Mantra	93
Marantz	IFC
Matrix	118
Midland Audio Exchange	110
Mission	BC
Musical Fidelity	36
Musical Images	111
Musonic	107
Origin Live	60,126
Oxford Audio Consultants	114
QTA	107
Real Hi-Fi	76
Retro Reproduction	122
Sevenoaks	27,28,29,30,31,32,33
Signals	112
Sonic Design	117
Sound of Music (Crewe)	119
Soundcraft	115
Sounds Expensive	124
Sounds Perfection	52
Soundstage	118
Stowsounds	118
Supra Direct	117
The Chord Company	22
The Listening Rooms	117
The RightNote	52
Tube Shop	76
WAD	58
Walrus Systems	60
Williams Hart	111
X-Electrical	119

PRIVATE & TRADE CLASSIFIED ADVERTS COPY DEADLINES

APRIL 2003 ISSUE - TUESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2003

MAY 2003 ISSUE - WEDNESDAY 5TH MARCH 2003

World Radio History



UNISON RESEARCH UNICO

The new Unico integrated amplifier from Unison Research has an impeccable pedigree. Triode valves give natural purity of sound and effortless listening pleasure. With styling of understated elegance and 80 watts of power, Unico offers an unbeatable package. As top reviewer Ken Kessler put it (Hi Fi News, July 2002): "No integrated I've used in recent memory delivers so much at this price". Unico has the look, build quality and sound of pure luxury - at a real world price. Supplied complete with radiowave remote control. The matching Unico CD-Player is now available, with 24-bit/192k upsampling, valve output stage and a sound which will convince you that CD replay has finally come of age.

*Unico Remote (line) £775, (line + phono) £825. Unico CD-player £1095

TRIANGLE *Loudspeakers that love music*

Five stars for sound and five stars for value. Triangle are regular winners of top accolades from the world's most prestigious reviewers. As What Hi Fi recently put it "Rarely have we come across loudspeakers that are so lively and communicative...they turn in a sparkling performance that makes others seem bland in comparison". Listen for yourself. You'll be amazed.



Zerius 202

*£705/pair

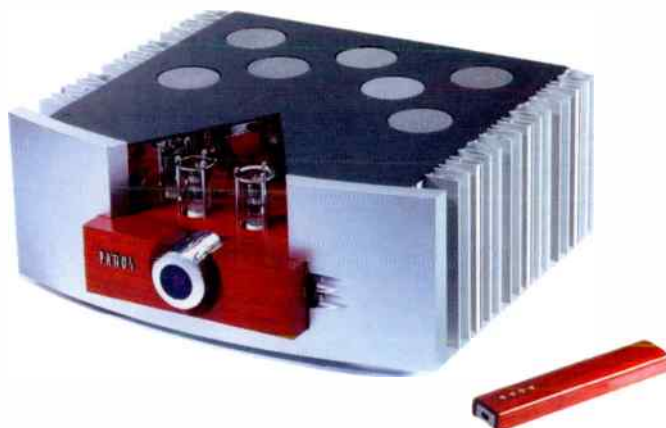
OPERA SP2

Beautiful to behold and a delight to listen to, Opera loudspeakers are the genuine article. The solid hardwood 'boat-tailed' cabinet allows the SP2's top quality drive units to produce a lovely, natural sound. Italian craftsmanship, advanced acoustic technology and the very finest materials make SP2 the perfect choice for the discerning music lover.



*Opera SP2 (mahogany). £1350/pair. Other solid hardwood finishes available.

PATHOS ACOUSTICS *The Unorthodox Approach*



After almost two years of design and perfection, the stunning new Logos integrated amplifier is finally here. For the lucky few who will own one, it has been worth the wait. Logos is an object of rare *bellezza* - a swan in a world of ugly ducklings. A future classic. Hi Fi News were deeply impressed and summed up their review thus: "If you're considering an integrated amp up to £4000, listen to the Logos after everything else. Then spend the £1500 you saved on a decent wristwatch worthy of a Logos owner".

*Pathos Acoustics Logos. 110 Watts/channel. £2495

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