

## BUYING GUIDE & REVIEWS - COMPACT DISC PLAYERS

PRICES SHOWN ARE THOSE AT THE TIME OF REVIEW

1992 – 2003

UNDER £300

Compact Disc Players	£	Year	Verdict
Aiwa XP-V731 portable	£50	Aug 02	Not quite top of the sonic pile but excellent value for money.
Aiwa XP-V74 portable	£80	Aug 99	Natural rendition uncommon amongst portables but a little compressed with it.
AMC CD8	£150	Oct 97	The CD8 is free from grain but can sound too polished at times.
Cambridge CD4SE	£200	Feb 98	Natural and very life-like, the CD4SE embarrasses many pricier players.
Denon DCD-425	£150	Apr 97	Crisp, up-beat player which is inconsistent in its overall presentation.
Denon DCD-435	£130	Oct 00	A commendable all-rounder with a forward and rhythmic sound. Better suited to smooth sounding ancillaries.
Denon DCD 485	£130	Oct 01	A detailed and appealing performer, especially with classical, but although well built the sonic competition at the price is simply too good.
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.
Goodmans Delta CMD	£199	Jun 99	Well-tailored CD/MD pairing and a doddle to use. Sound quality is spot-on for the price.
Goodmans GCD90K Portable	£70	Aug 99	A secure performer thanks to its 20 second anti-shock system. Sound quality good.
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.
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.
Kenwood DPF-3030	£199	Feb 01	Like its predecessor (DP 3080) the 3030 is simply one of the best players around under £200. Highly recommended.
Kenwood DPC-395	£100	Aug 99	Portable. Has build and appearance on its side but not the greatest sonic performer in portables.
Marantz CD-63	£249	Jun 94	Upholds the Marantz tradition of lively CD players.
Marantz CD-67	£270	Nov	Fine vocal projection and treble. Bass is deep if not that tight.

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Marantz CD-5000	£150	Oct 00	Not the best built, but a great sounding player that deserves a listen.
NAD 510	£200	Oct 95	Hard to criticise at the price, with a typically smooth, fluid NAD sound.
NAD C520	£170	Oct 00	A good quality player that's well built, with a detailed and rhythmic sound. Good value.
NAD 522	£170	Jan 99	Warm and smooth, this is a cultured player. Can be over-civilised at times.
Onkyo DX-7222	£150	Oct 00	Good quality player with a sophisticated sound for the money. Worth a listen.
Panasonic SL-SX410 Portable	£100	Aug 99	Portable with limited dynamics but nonetheless musical and finely detailed.
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.
Sony CDP-XB740E	£200	Apr 01	A good player well worth audition but suits ambient instrumental music better than vocal.
Sony CDP-561E	£295	Oct 96	Well put together and confident sounding. Sony produce yet another product that's excellent value for money.
Sony D-EJ1000 portable	£165	Aug 02	Expensive but highly desirable. The best quality CD portable around if you wish to shell out.
Sony XE-670	£299	Nov 01	Plays multichannel and two channel SACDs with an impressive authority and detail. CDs sound full and involving too. At £300 its a bargain.
Teac CD-P3450SE	£200	May 93	Refuses to become flustered. Can lack emotion as a result, though.
Teac CD-P4500	£219	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-496	£180	Oct 00	A bit rough round the edges but an involving listen. Can be bettered at the price.
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.

## COMPACT DISC PLAYERS - £300 - £799

Alchemist Nexus	£599	Jul 99	Listening is 'sumptuous' but perception of fine detail a little more difficult.
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 forte.
Arcam Alpha 7	£320	Jan 97	Superbly-designed, instinctively musical player destined for success.
Arcam Alpha 7SE	£330	Nov 99	Refinement comes second to speed in the 7SE, so careful cabling is required for the best results.
Arcam Alpha 8SE	£599	Jun 98	The 8SE builds on the strengths of the standard 8 with HDCD filtering.
Arcam Alpha 9	£799	Dec 98	Apart from its tonal brightness, the Alpha 9 is a very capable machine.
Arcam CD72	£400	May 01	Fluid sounding, refined, especially with classical, the stylish CD72 sets the new standard in its price bracket.
Audio Analogue Paganini	£749	Apr 99	Effortless, wholly musical delivery. The Paganini does for CD replay what the Puccini does for amplification.
Audio Innovations Alto	£449	May 96	Grainless treble is detailed but the Alto misses that vital emotional spark.
Audio Note CDT-Zero & Audio Note DAC-One	£549 £749	Feb 02	A enjoyably musical package and beautifully presented too, but a touch too coloured to compete with the best of the rest.
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.
Creek CD43 Mk2	£599	Nov 00	Great sounding player that's just let down by its lightweight build.
Cyrus dAD 1.5	£398	May 99	Great detail and imaging. Classical and Jazz suit the 1.5 down to the ground but Rock can sound harsh.
Cyrus dAD3	£598	Dec 96	Lacklustre with Classical, dramatic and lively on Dance and Rock.
Denon DCD-1550AR	£350	Jul 98	Clean and precise, the Denon lags only in warmth and openness.
Denon DCD-1650AR	£700	Jul 99	Refined and enjoyable. Its in-built smoothness can get in the way of absolute transparency.
Exposure CD 2010	£599	Jun 02	Another great midpriced CD player with good pound for sound value. The Exposure has a very exciting and forward sound that is totally involving.
Harman/Kardon HD730	£300	Aug 96	Strong on dynamics and drive, but lifeless treble can dampen music.
Harmon/Kardon	£300	Jun	A smooth, musical and rhythmic player, but midrange best

HD740		99	suits Classical rather than Rock.
Helios 3	£700	Jul 99	It is unusual to find a player with such definite loves and hates. First class with acoustic, otherwise maybe!
Linn Mimik	£798	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-63SE	£350	May 95	Taken as a whole, the CD-63SE is one hell of a CD player. No digital nasties.
Munrio Asty	£695	Jan 00	An excellent all-rounder at the price, pure and simple.
Myryad T20	£600	Dec 98	With its brightness balanced by warm ancillaries the T20 will win friends.
NAD C540	£329	Mar 00	A very dynamic and forward player. Immediacy and speed are countered by a marginal lack of refinement.
NAD C541	£320	Sep 01	Simply the best all rounder at the price. Equally smooth, refined and powerful.
NAD 541i	£329	Jul 02	Another budget blockbuster from NAD. Brilliant musicality allied to impressive refinement makes it the one to beat at the price.
Orelle CD100e	£650	Mar 97	Clean and tidy on electronic music. Not so good with acoustic material.
Pioneer PD-S904	£400	Sep 96	Fluid midrange leads a dry bass and tonally-limited treble.
Pioneer DV-717	£550	Sep 99	Detailed and sweet-sounding, the DV-717 brings out the best in most discs. Not the last word in neutrality.
Rega Planet 2000	£498	Jun 01	A fantastically musical performer for the money, the Planet offers a taste of the high-end at an everyday price. Right now, its the best budget CD player money can buy.
Rotel RCD-951	£300	Aug 99	Good with ordinary CDs, excellent on HDCD. Construction is very solid too.
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.
Rotel RCD-991	£750	Mar 00	HDCD compatible. Easily one of the best at the price. A confident and musical player that takes some beating.
Rotel RCD-1070	£525	May 02	The new Rotel, with its build quality and superb all round performance is the pick of the strong bunch at its price. Excellent value.
Sony CDP-X3000ES	£500	Mar 98	Neutral, dynamic and stylish but not quite up with the best.
Sony CDP-XB930E	£300	Dec 99	A classy customer with a sophisticated and smooth sound that's very hard to fault.
SONY SCD-	£550	Sep	At the moment, a great buy. Plays CDs with refinement and

XB940		00	control and SACDs with a clarity and openness not found at this price before.
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.
Technics SL-PS840	£450	Sep 95	Not the last word in bass control. Midrange is more persuasive.
Terratec M3PO	£349	May 00	The first hi-fi CD player that also plays MP3 music files. Sound quality is nothing to write home about but it is still an imaginative and exciting product.
Thule CD100	£600	Apr 99	A very smooth and refined player with the added bonus of good detailing. Can lack rhythmic bite at times.
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.
<b>COMPACT DISC PLAYERS - £800 - £1499</b>			
Arcam FMJ CD23	£1100	Jul 00	Supremely capable at the price, this player offers the best of both worlds - musicality and sophistication.
Arcam FMJ CD23	£1149	Mar 02	Updated revamp with new transport. Supremely capable at the price, this player offers the best of both worlds, musicality and sophistication.
Arcam CD92	£849	Aug 01	Full bodied and musical, its an extremely impressive performer at the price.
Audio Analogue Maestro	£1100	Feb 00	The Maestro is well up with the pack on most counts, but it isn't the most musical of machines.
Audio Analogue Maestro	£1500	Apr 02	New version of the Maestro. Great value player with awesome build quality and a civilised yet detailed sound. Very fine DAC section
Audiolab 8000	£1000	Dec 96	Sweet treble and full midrange give the 8000CD a lucid sound.
Copland CDA 266	£1199	Feb 99	Perhaps lacks the last ounce of strength on Rock, nonetheless has winning all-round ability.
Creek CD53	£1199	Nov 01	Tremendously engaging manner makes it an essential audition in an already competitive end of the market. A truly fine, musical performer.
Cymbol CDP12	£1279	Dec 97	Its warm, musical sound plus HDCD compatibility are a strong combination.
Cyrus dAD3 Q24	£900	Jan 00	A new smoothie, the dAD3 Q24 is a well-pointed spear in Cyrus's march to the higher end.
Cyrus dAD-7	£899	Jan 95	Up with the best at the money, the Cyrus simply sounds 'right'.
Cyrus CD7	£800	Jul 01	Tremendously engaging and incisive sound allied to superb build and ergonomics make this simply irresistible.
DPA	£895	Jun	Breathtaking imagery and dynamics. Not strictly accurate,

Renaissance		95	but who cares?
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.
Holfi 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	Jul 99	Commendably solid build, smooth top-end and velvety overall sound.
Marantz CD-17 KI-S	£1300	Sep 97	The KI-S has a valve-like smoothness and clarity.
Meridian 506	£875	May 95	Characteristically dry Meridian balance which could do with more emotion.
Meridian 506.24	£1195	Oct 00	Highly musical yet very detailed sounding, this player has it all. Even-handed to a fault, it sounds great over a wide variety of music.
Meridian 507	£1195	Jun 02	Another quintessentially Meridian silver disc spinner, the 507 is a wonderously endearing and engaging listen.
Musical Fidelity X-Ray	£800	Feb 99	Bright, clear and well-built, the X-Ray's transparency can be hard on poor recordings.
Musical Fidelity CDA 3	£800	Jan 00	Assured dynamic control and unimpeachable value for money.
Musical Fidelity CD Pre24	£1999	Jul 02	Combined CD & preamp. A highly versatile and accomplished performer that's both musically coherent and equally impressive when it comes to practicality.
Myryad MCD 500	£1299	Jun 00	Excellent with large scale classical or opera. Lacks a bit of clout with rock or dance music.
Myryad MCD 600	£1299	Sep 01	Warm, even-handed, pleasantly voiced player that ultimately fails to inspire. Still fine value though, some will not want anything more.
NAD S500	£1000	Jun 00	A great little player with excellent performance and sleek looks. Highly recommended.
Naim CD3.5	£1080	Feb 00	Quality CD player that sounds exciting and rhythmic. Not for the weak-hearted or laid-back though.
Naim CD5	£1125	Apr 01	Superbly built, reasonably priced with a fantastically exciting yet sophisticated sound, the CD5 is one of Naim's best products yet.
Pink Triangle Numeral	£1099	Apr 98	This very natural one-box fully justifies its £1000 price tag.
Philips SACD 1000	£1299	Sep 01	A fine player of both multichannel and two channel SACD discs, along with good DVD-Video. Although having an exciting sound, its a bit too mechanical with CD.
Quad 77	£850	Nov 95	Competent, entertaining machine with neat styling and remote.
Rega Jupiter	£998	Jan	Superbly musical and engaging player that's voiced for real



2000		02	music rather than hi-fi demo discs - a fantastic new contender and top value too.
Roksan Caspian	£895	Aug 97	The Caspian is a gifted player well worth its asking price.
Shearne Audio Phase 7	£1499	Dec 99	The Phase 7 leads the pack for smoothness and tonal colour more than for detail and excitement.
Sony SCD-XA333ES	£1200	Dec 01	A very fine player indeed. A tad bright, but also detailed and sweet. CDs are full and spacious sounding and SACD finely detailed and insightful.
Sony SCD-555ES	£1200	May 01	This good value dual-purpose SACD/CD player is no substitute for a top class CD-only machine, but works well enough if you want a taste of SACD. Extremely well built.
Sugden CDMaster	£1250	Oct 01	The stylish and sleek CDMaster is a fine performer that's easily at the top of its class. Highly recommended.
Sugden SDT-1	£850	Mar 93	A superb all-rounder with particularly convincing rhythms.
T+A CD 1210 R	£1150	Sep 99	Outstanding build at a price which isn't expensive considering what's on offer.
Teac VRDS-10SE	£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.
<b>COMPACT DISC PLAYERS - £1500+</b>			
Advantage CD1	£1995	Jan 00	Has the high-end classification of smoothness mixed with detail.
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.
Copland CDA 289	£1898	Dec 00	Powerful yet bequiling sound puts it close to the top of the CD pile, making it excellent value for money.
Denon DCM 5000	£1500	May 00	Multifunctioned Jukebox style player will hold 100 discs. Plays CD & HDCD with proper high fidelity.
Linn Sondek CD12	£12000	Jun 01	As far as it's possible to discern, this is probably the best CD player in the world - ever!
Marantz CD-7	£3500	Sep 00	CD's past meets its future with wonderfully charismatic results.
Marantz SA-1	£5000	Mar 01	Possibly Marantz's best ever product. An exquisitely voiced device that excels in replaying both CDs and SACDs.
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.
Meridian 588	£1950	Dec 01	Excellent in all musical respects, this smooth, organic player is a winner, but it's not cheap.

Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista 3D	£2960	Nov 01	Amazingly big and bold sounding player that's among the finest around. Definitely different but certainly addictive.
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.
Sharp DX-SX1	£2700	Apr 00	Super clean and detailed, but lacks both power and raw emotion. High price ensures a limited customer base.
Sugden Masterclass CD	£2700	Jan 02	A high end player in a different mould. Concentrates on the organic rather than the mechanical making it a fine 'analogue' player.
Teac CD-X1	£2300	Jun 92	You'll either love or hate this machine's great flair and confidence.

## BUYING GUIDE & REVIEWS INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS –

**1992 – 2003**

**UNDER £300**

**PRICES SHOWN ARE THOSE AT THE TIME OF REVIEW**

Integrated Amps	£	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 sibilance 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 SEx	£250	Mar 96	The Aura has a smooth, civilised 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.

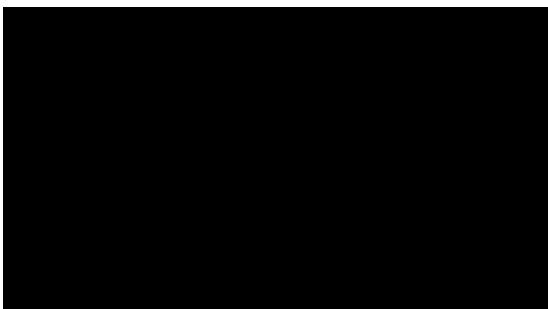


Harman Kardon HK610	£180	Jun 95	Thorough-going down to earth liveliness. Bright but clean which gives appealing vivacity.
Harman Kardon HK620	£280	Oct 95	Not quite a giant killer, the Harman is nevertheless a good solid budget buy.
Harman Kardon HK670	£250	Mar 02	Great sense of power and grip but sometimes sacrifices subtlety and detail for outright attack.
Kenwood KAF-1030	£155	Sep 02	If you have bass-heavy speakers, the Kenwood could well smooth things out. An expressive treble sometimes wins through.
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 PM6010 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.
<b>INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS - £300 - £799</b>			
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

Cyrus 5	£500	Aug 00	Good value and well built, with an exciting and very solid-state sound. Could be a little bright for some.
Cyrus 7	£700	Feb 01	Don't judge this amp by it's size. It combines impressive scale with delicacy in an attractive package.
Cyrus Straight Line	£398	Nov 98	A good, honest bit of kit with a fine musical sound and no glaring vices.
Densen Beat 100	£650	Dec 97	If a musical adrenaline rush is what you seek, fine. Listening in bulk, rather clinical and cold sounding.
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.
Holfi 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.
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

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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 a far more accomplished all-rounder, and one of hi-fi great bargains right now.
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.
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 Candy	£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.
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.
Tag 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 unsubtle with it.
Technics SE-A900 MkII	£300	Mar 99	Nominally a separate pre and power, but the pre can't work alone. Exciting but unsubtle.
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.
Unison Research Unico	£750	Aug 02	Another stromer from Unison Research - big, beguiling, punchy sound and great build and style make it a true audio bargain!
Valve Audio Exclame	£310	Dec 99	The Exclame does an excellent job of being all things to the the audiophile on a budget.

## INTEGRATED AMPLIFIERS - £800 - £1500+

Arcam FMJ A32	£ 1099	Apr 01	A brilliant package, combining great power, fine sound and superb flexibility, but all-out audiophiles should look elsewhere.
ATC SIA2-150	£ 1250	Sep 01	A fine sounding amp with bags of power. Relays music with good emotion but lacks that last ounce of fluidity to carry it off.
Audio Analogue Maestro Intergrated	£ 2500	Oct 01	Plenty of power on tap but it uses it subtly to favour jazz and classical. Build quality is simply superb for the money.
Audionote Soro Se	£ 1999	Mar 95	Needs the right loudspeaker but a good musical presentation is in there somewhere.
Brinkmann Integrated	£ 2000	Dec 01	A very tasty slice of high-end at a relatively sensible price. Great clarity and detail, but lacks a bit of clout.
Bryston B-60	£ 1350	Feb 02	Clean and controlled, the B-60 has an impressive way with rhythm. Lacks a bit of low end slam though.
Copland CSA 14	£ 1099	Apr 96	A sweet and subtle sound. Fine midrange; transparent and open with vocals.
Copland CTA-402	£ 1500	Mar 01	A great introduction to the joys of valves, but an all rounder it is not. Sweet, beguiling sound that lacks drive and grip. Some will find no better way of making music for the money, others may soon tire of it.
Credo IMP-702	£ 1075	Jun 97	Very solid, enjoyable amp but not the smoothest top end or the most open sound-staging. One of the best amp for rock and heavy music directions.
Croft Cameleon	£875	Apr 02	An affordable and effective entry into the valve sound. transparent and sweet with good bass but the midrange can sometimes jar.
Densen DM 10	£ 1299	Jun 95	Dual mono construction gives strong stereo separation. Brutal resolution of detail but not the clearest ever.
Electrocompani et EC1-4	£ 1900	Jul 01	The EC1-4 is natural sounding, powerful and transparant. Could be a tad bright and tiring in some systems and competition is tough.
Exposure Super XV	£800	Oct 95	A stringy-sounding transistor amp for rock. Build and finish could be better and price lower.
Gamma Rhythm	£ 2499	Jul 96	Partnered with sensible loudspeakers of good bass depth, the Rhythm is capable of impressive performance.
Hegel H1	£ 1495	Jul 02	Very transparent and coherent sound with great sound staging and detail. Well made but not one for the loudies.
ION Systems Obelisk 100	£ 1099	May 93	It was designed by Richard Hay, who started out at Radfords, then later went on to Nytech / Ion Systems/. The Ion 100 is the basic of

the legendary Nytech amps. Highly regarded back in the '90s and a favourite of Joe Akroyd from Royd Audio & Brian O'Rourke from Ruark Acoustics. Apparently Joe used one for testing all the Royd's he built. Its class A/B, with a single rail architecture, rated at 60W output. Superb for classical & jazz favorite.

Lavardin IT	£ 3200	Apr 99	Has clarity in spades and an extremely rare tonal purity. Outclasses many transistor alternatives with ease.
Mcintosh MA6800	£ 3735	Sep 95	A mighty confection of power, facilities and style, and it sounds good to boot.
Moon 1-5	£ 2500	May 02	Extremely tight, open and authoritative sound make it a joy to listen to. Factor in superb build and brilliant ergonomics, and it's surprisingly good value.
MusicaL Fidelity A3	£850	Aug 01	A level of detail and transparency rare at the price (and higher). The A3 is a class leader in solid state design.
MusicaL Fidelity A3.2	£979	Sep 02	Another MF product that offers muscle and transparency in abundance. Confident and detailed.
Musical Fidelity A1001	£ 2499	Jun 98	Awesome power and seismic bass. A very good all-rounder with super-clean sound.
Musical Fidelity A300	£ 1400	Oct 99	High power integrated with phono. Exquisite manners and power to spare. Sets new standards at the price
Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista M3	£ 2995	Jan 01	One of the best sounding amplifiers you'll ever hear, the M3 has detail and transparency beyond comprehension. surely a future classic.
MVL Integral A2	£850	May 99	An excellent performer with any music. Adept at handling subtle details. Difficult to beat at the price.
MVL A2+	£ 1450	Jun 00	A controlled, powerful sound ensures that the A2+ remains well up in its price range.
Myryad MI 240	£ 1500	Aug 01	A powerful and detailed sound thats easy to live with, plus great flexibility and features.
Pathos Classic One	£N/A	Jul 01	Fantastic looking integrated with a big and lush sound. Good with orchestral and well-mixed rock and pop.
Pathos Classic One	£ 1250	Sep 02	Re-vamped replacement for its lower priced predecessor. Great looking hybrid amp with whisper quiet backgrounds, plus detailed and sweet midrange and treble. Thin sounding with the wrong speakers though, so audition carefully.
Pink Triangle Integral	£ 3995	Jun 02	Superbly musical with plenty of power and bass. Not the most intricate sounding of amps at the price but definitely one for music lovers.
Plinius 8100	£ 1450	May 01	A crisp looking, well built and powerful integrated with a commendably clean and controlled sound. Definitely one to consider if its the Krell sound you crave.
Red Rose Rosette 1	£ 2999	Mar 02	Beautiful looking, sweet and confident sounding, the Rosette 1 is a cracking modern solid state amp.



Shearne Phase 2	£ 1180	Apr 97	Even-handed performer deals confidentially with music regardless of genre. Not as smooth as the best.
Sonic Frontiers 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 Research S2	£995	Sep 00	Mellifluous single ended valve integrated with meticulous manners. Excellent dynamics with the right 'speakers. Too smooth to suit everybody though.
Unison Research S2K	£ 1295	Jan 02	A cracking looking and airy sounding valve amp, though low output means partnering with more sensitive 'speakers.
Unison Research S6	£ 1600	Apr 01	Beautifully built and voiced amp offering a taste of the high-end at a reasonably affordable price. Superb value for money.
Unison Research Simply 845	£ 2950	Mar 98	Allied to all the right 'speakers will handle all musical genres with smoothness and power.
Unison Research Unico 1	£800	Nov 01	A brilliantly musical all rounder, the Unico gives you your cake and lets you eat it, with relish.