

of classic midrange warmth and airy treble sweetness with bass response as nimble as it is formidable. Further, Mimas' modular design allows the owner to easily add superb phono and DAC options as the need requires. The very definition of what we all seek from an integrated amplifier. (294, 313, 330)

Technics SU-R1000

\$9499

This integrated amp bristles with innovative technologies and features. Digital input signals stay in the digital domain, driving the switching output stage directly and greatly reducing signal-path circuitry. The cutting-edge design includes a battery-driven clock, and a phono stage that combines analog and digital circuits to realize cartridge frequency-response correction and crosstalk cancellation. Rated at 150Wpc into 8 ohms and 300Wpc into 4, the SU-R1000 can drive even demanding loads without a sense of strain. The SU-R1000 has excellent bass, with exceptional definition and dynamic realism. Dynamic detail is exceptional from very low to high levels, and so is midrange and upper bass detail. The outstanding phono stage lives up to the sound quality of the rest of the unit. Colorations are very low, dictated more by the source components and speakers than the amplifier. Beautifully built, it is a modern update of classic Technics aesthetics. (317)



unerringly open, airy, and sweet where appropriate, yet also highly charged and aggressive when so called upon. The main issue that listening to the C51 provoked was the way it integrated individual criteria—frequency, imaging, dynamics, transients—and wove them together into a seamless tapestry of reproduced sound. A triumph in its category. (243)

Balanced Audio Technology VK-3500

\$11,995

The VK-3500 is a hybrid design that marries a tube preamp stage with a solid-state power amplifier section. (It can also be had with an optional phono stage.) Effortless in sonic delivery, the VK-3500 offers a remarkably complete package combining loads of user flexibility with a clean, neutral, detailed, balanced, and coherent voice that beautifully conveys music's myriad aural, intellectual, and emotional elements. Not for those seeking the seductive golden warmth offered by some tube designs, this BAT is definitely more Audio Research than Conrad Johnson. (280)



Balanced Audio Technology VK80i

\$9995

BAT's first all-tube integrated is a stunning piece of industrial art that delivers over 55Wpc of pure triode power. The design combines the 6SN7 dual triode with the unique 6C33C-B power triode, originally designed for avionics

applications and famously used as a regulator tube in the radio communications system of the MIG-25 fighter jet. The focus is on simplicity of operation and reliability, hence the automatic-bias circuitry. It sounds far more powerful than a comparable KT88-based amp and shifts gears without changing its sonic character. There is no perceptible textural grain or brightness even when it is driven hard. It is above all else a superb demonstration of triode power that offers a happy escape from the garden-variety push-pull beam-power or pentode amp. (319)

Devialet ExpertPro 220

\$10,000

The amplifier offers exceptional neutrality arising from an extreme indifference to loading and extremely low distortion. (This is a hybrid amp: It uses a digital circuit to rough out the current demands but the sound you actually hear is that of a Class A output stage that trims the signal to perfection.) A great amplifier if ever was, what makes the ExpertPro 220 unique is Devialet's Speaker Active Matching (SAM) system. You download onto an SD card, and then into the SAM unit, an electronic model of your speaker (Devialet has these models for a vast number of transducers—so your speaker is most likely covered). This model is then used in real-time to correct the speaker's lower frequencies to match the input. SAM lowers distortion, makes timing correct, and extends response down—a long way. (The speaker is monitored so that overload never happens, but as much bass extension is generated as the speaker is capable of.) A revolution in audio amplification for speakers. (298)



Pass Labs INT-250

\$12,600

A force to reckon with,

the muscular INT-250 with 250Wpc (and 500Wpc into 4) embodies effortless dynamics, ultra-wide bandwidth, superb low-end control and grip, and effortless, unpretentious highs. Optimized for greater flexibility with grunt-worthy speaker loads of 86dB efficiency or less, its soothing and seductive sonics are an ideal companion for analog LP playback—this Pass integrated just makes you want to spin vinyl endlessly. Remarkable, too, is the amp's lush midrange that pushes a loudspeaker to the very edges of its performance envelope. (263)



MBL Cadenza C51

\$11,600

With its soft, understated lines, svelte controls and connectivity, and jewelry-like finish, it's easy to misjudge the depth, complexity, and sonic resolve of the C51—a 180Wpc, modified Class D tour de force. It has the touch of the classicist in terms of the import it places on the finest inner details, and its resolution of acoustic space is almost eerie in its specificity. Its top-end is top-notch—airily extended with none of the early era Class D veiling that often constricted and cloaked these octaves. Designer Jürgen Reis' hybrid topology known as LASA is

T+A PA 2500 R

\$13,750

The highboy integrated amp of the vaunted R Series from Germany's T+A elektroakustik, the 140Wpc PA 2500 is twice as tall as, and more powerful and equipped with more connectivity than, its nearest sibling. It includes a dual-mono, fully balanced,