



MERIDIAN

CES/ISE 2011 Edition

News

Meridian at CES & ISE 2011



Meridian is showing a wealth of new and recently-released products at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas (6–9 Jan) and Integrated Systems Europe, in the Amsterdam RAI (1–3 Feb). We hope that you can visit us – at **Suite 207, 35th floor of the Venetian Tower at CES**, or **Stand 4N60, in Hall 4 at ISE** – to experience them for yourself.

We'll be showing the M80 compact entertainment system, available in a choice of three hand-finished leathers, with iPod dock included. Media Source 600, the first Meridian Sooloos product to be designed by Meridian and carrying Meridian branding, will also be on show. It's an audio endpoint for any Sooloos system, with complete Meridian integration. Then there's the Control 15, a complete Meridian Sooloos touch-screen system in a single enclosure.

However, attention will no doubt also focus on the products we are showing for the first time at CES and ISE.

A few readers will have seen the technology preview we gave our retailers and distributors of the Audio Core 200 and DSP3200 system – a complete high-quality Meridian system with the company's signature DSP loudspeakers in the most compact form yet, driven by a versatile multi-input stereo audio controller.

What you *won't* have seen, however, are the Media Core 200 and Media Core 600 – more Meridian Sooloos products with Meridian shared technologies.

The Media Core 200 is a complete Meridian Sooloos system with 1000-album storage and single-zone analogue and digital playback capability. It just needs the addition of one of the many ways you can control a Meridian Sooloos system – and it's extremely elegant and compact.



The Media Core 600, meanwhile, is its big brother, with a powerful processor, six built-in zones with analogue, digital and SpeakerLink outputs and two internal drives.

If you can't meet us in person, read about all these new products inside.

Academy names first Meridian Specialist



The Meridian Academy is pleased to announce confirmation of the first partner staff member to achieve Meridian Specialist status: Alan Parkyn from Martins Hi-Fi, Norwich, UK.

The Meridian Academy is the new, extensive training programme for our retail partners and distributors, which enables them to maximise sales by enhancing their expertise in selling, their understanding of Meridian products, and other areas. For more details on the Meridian Academy, see the full article inside.

Alan Parkyn has attended multiple Meridian Academy courses and has accumulated sufficient units to graduate through the ranks of Sales Professional and Technology Professional to achieve the penultimate level of Technology Specialist.

Alan and his employer, Martins Hi-Fi, have demonstrated both substantial commitment and enthusiasm, embracing the training philosophy and benefiting hugely from it. Alan aims to achieve Master status – the ultimate level – in 2011. Well done Alan and Martins.

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New Products

Audio Core 200 and DSP3200 Loudspeakers



Meridian previewed this gorgeous system for our retailers and distributors who attended CEDIA. Now it is shipping and has already been receiving praise and excellent comments.

The system as a whole comprises the Audio Core 200 – an extremely elegant stereo audio controller with multiple analogue and digital inputs, and the DSP3200, Meridian's most compact DSP loudspeaker to date.

The DSP3200 is a compact, elegant and great-sounding digital active loudspeaker. As is immediately evident from the shape, it echoes the design of the DSP8000 and other DSP loudspeakers in the Meridian range.

The DSP3200 is successor to the DSP3100 as the smallest loudspeaker in the Meridian digital active line, and like its predecessor can be floor-mounted on stands, or used free-standing, for example on a bookshelf. The smooth lines and high gloss finish of the loudspeaker provide an exceptionally attractive appearance.

DSP3200 is available in both high-gloss black and high-gloss white (RAL9016).

The Audio Core 200 has a brand-new appearance, again echoing the lines of Meridian DSP loudspeakers. "Audio Core" is the new Meridian designation for a controller or preamplifier, and the Audio Core 200 provides a wide selection of inputs, including Meridian SpeakerLink, ideal for connecting a Meridian Sooloos unit like the Media Core 200 or a Control 15.

In addition, there are two S/PDIF digital coax inputs, two stereo analogue inputs on phono connectors, a mini-DIN to connect an i80 iPod® dock, and two 3.5mm stereo analogue inputs that double as optical digital inputs.

The Audio Core 200 can also be connected to a computer via USB and accessed as an external sound card. On the output side, twin SpeakerLink connectors are provided, which can be connected direct to a pair of DSP Loudspeakers. There's also a 3.5mm headphone socket.

The front panel features an OLED display and software-defined piano-key controls, which are also used to configure the Audio Core 200.

Internally, the Audio Core 200 features a FIFO buffer and apodising upsampling filter for maximum audio quality.

Current Products

M80, Media Source 600 and Control 15

These three new products were launched last year and have been receiving significant positive reviews.



Meridian M80

The M80's technical specifications are identical to those of the F80, but its look is even more luxurious. The stylish appearance of the M80 is complemented by a unique stitched leather top cover with integral handle. Available in three colours – Chestnut, Ivory and Obsidian Black, the leatherwork is hand-finished just a few miles from the Meridian headquarters near Cambridge by specialists with many years of experience in leather finishes for luxury British cars. The M80 comes complete with an i80 iPod dock.

The rear panel features balanced and unbalanced analogue, coax S/PDIF digital and Meridian SpeakerLink outputs, for connection to any Meridian or third-party system.



Media Source 600

The Media Source 600 (*above right*) was the first Meridian Sooloos product to be designed entirely by Meridian and incorporating Meridian's advanced digital audio technologies. As an audio endpoint for a single zone, it makes Sooloos a great deal more accessible and raises the level of performance in non-Meridian zones and systems. Exceptionally simple to use, it can be operated from the Meridian Sooloos touchscreen or any other system control unit, including wirelessly from the free iPhone/iPad app.

Inside the stylish new slimline enclosure, with its glass front panel and bead-blasted aluminium exterior, the circuitry features the very best of Meridian digital and analogue audio design. All Meridian products that include upsampling, like the Media Source 600, now feature Meridian's unique apodising filter, which delivers superior audio quality and can even correct problems caused by inferior filtering used in the recording process. The Media Source 600 also includes an ultra-low-jitter clocking system for superior stereo imaging and digital audio performance.

Control 15

The Control 15 (*left*) is a complete Meridian Sooloos Digital Media System in a single component. With built-in storage and superior audio quality, the Control 15 stores up to around a thousand CD albums in full lossless quality, and can share content with other storage on the network for full integration.

The Control 15 offers Meridian SpeakerLink for direct connection to Meridian DSP Loudspeakers, along with S/PDIF digital audio outs: as a result, you can build a complete, powerful Meridian Sooloos system with nothing more than a Control 15 and a pair of Meridian loudspeakers. Inside the Control 15 is a brand-new high-quality audio board with upsampling, Meridian's apodising filter and low-jitter clocking.



New Products

The Core of the matter

Premiering at CES and ISE 2011, these two unique new products, the Media Core 200 & Media Core 600, raise the bar for digital media systems.



The Media Core 200 and Media Core 600 are powerful new additions to the range of Meridian Sooloos Digital Media Systems. Like the Media Source 600 discussed elsewhere in this Newsletter, these Media Core products are designed entirely by Meridian and share Meridian styling and audio technology – including upsampling and Meridian's apodising filter for enhanced performance.

The main difference between the two units is primarily one of scale. Both echo the form of the popular G Series products and the Media Source 600, but while the Media Core 200 is a single-zone playback and storage unit that forms the heart of a small-scale digital media system, the Media Core 600 represents a much more powerful approach, with six zones and sophisticated synchronisation between multiple units, along with large-scale RAID auto-mirrored storage, that makes it into the most powerful and intuitive digital media system imaginable. Either model can be operated by any of the Meridian Sooloos control systems available, including the iPad or iPhone App, computers running the Control PC or Control Mac application, and Meridian Sooloos controllers such as the Control 15.

While the Media Core 600 features a pair of mirrored hard drives, the 200 includes a built-in 500GB drive like the Control 15, able to store around 1,000 CD albums in pristine lossless quality.

Designed for rack mounting as well as stand-alone operation, additional Media Core 600 units can be linked together to form an extremely large-scale integrated system consisting of up to several tens of zones. Multiple Media Core 600 units can be linked with RJ45 cables and synchronised using "Meridian House Sync" ports. This ensures that whenever zones are linked to play identical content, their clocks are perfectly synchronised, giving zero playback timing drift between linked zones.

Each Zone of the new Media Core products is available digitally via Meridian SpeakerLink and S/PDIF, and also via analogue outputs. The analogue outputs are driven by very high quality digital to analogue converters and can deliver variable or 2 Volt peak-to-peak fixed levels, while the digital outputs can deliver standard or high sample rates as desired, upsampling using Meridian's famous apodising filter for maximum audio quality, and/or downsampling when required.

Once connected to a Meridian system via SpeakerLink, the Media Core product immediately assumes the role of a Source for Meridian communication protocols, allowing full integration with the Meridian system for control as well as audio, for example allowing centralised control of system volume. They also act as a Core component in a Meridian Sooloos system, automatically locating and integrating themselves with other Meridian Sooloos components found on the same network including integrating stored libraries, ensuring full interoperability.

Media Core products can operate as part of a stand-alone system, with connection to multiple analogue or digital audio systems and to an Ethernet network (Internet connection is required for functions such as Internet Radio and Rhapsody®). In such configurations, the system setup is extremely simple and amounts to little more than "plug and play". The Meridian Sooloos Control PC and Control Mac applications can be used to import music from CD and audio files of a wide range of types, as well as controlling the system. The products can also be operated using one of the several other touch-screen and computer-based control solutions available for Meridian Sooloos products, such as the iPad or iPhone application, or the Control 15. In addition, the Media Core 200 can be controlled directly via an optional compatible IR receiver or WiFi adaptor.



Training



Welcome to the Meridian Academy

Since the release of our first product in 1977, Meridian has treated audio differently, combining a detailed understanding of psychoacoustics with the latest audio developments from our co-founders and our talented R&D teams. At the same time, Meridian has developed sales and marketing tools to attract new customers and build brand loyalty amongst our existing product owners.

Now, we want to share our secrets with you, our partners, to enable you to become a part of the growing Meridian family. We're offering a series of professionally-designed courses – the Meridian Academy – to provide you with the tools and materials you need to confidently sell, install, market and maintain Meridian products in your environment, delivering quantifiable overall benefits to your retail operation.

In keeping with Meridian's brand development strategy, the Meridian Academy helps change the way we collectively think of the company, focusing on the luxury and performance facets of the Meridian Experience – aspects that become increasingly relevant as the retail channel develops.

To realise this, our Training Manager, CEDIA Certified Outreach Instructor Graham Knowles, identified three fundamental focus areas: Sales, Technology and Business.

Each of these is addressed in a separate "stream" – a group of courses providing exactly what you need to know to improve your selling skills; help you install and support Meridian products; and make the best use of Meridian for your business. Research and experience demonstrate that well-trained partners will be more successful.

Courses can be combined to achieve Meridian Audio Qualifications ("MAQs") and certain MAQ combinations will advance a Partner's status from "Student" right up to "Master" – the ultimate achievement – and will be recognised by Meridian with a special presentation.

Our objective is simple: to increase sales by ensuring that our partners can deliver the "Meridian Experience", dispelling the myths of complexity surrounding Meridian systems and encouraging the development of a logical best practice. In addition, with the introduction of the first-ever Meridian Service course, selected partners can be trained to take on service roles so that we can collectively deliver a better, faster and more effective after-sales and support experience.

Each course includes comprehensive documentation including a presentation, an in-depth training support document and other material as required. The service course also includes a suite of comprehensive, easy to follow service guides for current products, on course to be completed during Q1 2011. Training documentation is accessed via a website portal ensuring that the very latest information is available as quickly as possible.

The Meridian Academy has got off to a roaring start in the UK with more than 91 people from a variety of partners passing through its doors in the first two months alone. Assessment results have been consistently higher than expected and feedback has generally been very positive. More than a third of the participants have already come back to take another course. CEDIA certification is being sought for some of the courses so that CEDIA members can gain CEU points (Continuing Education Units).



Retail Focus

Introducing Meridian 'Shop in Shop'

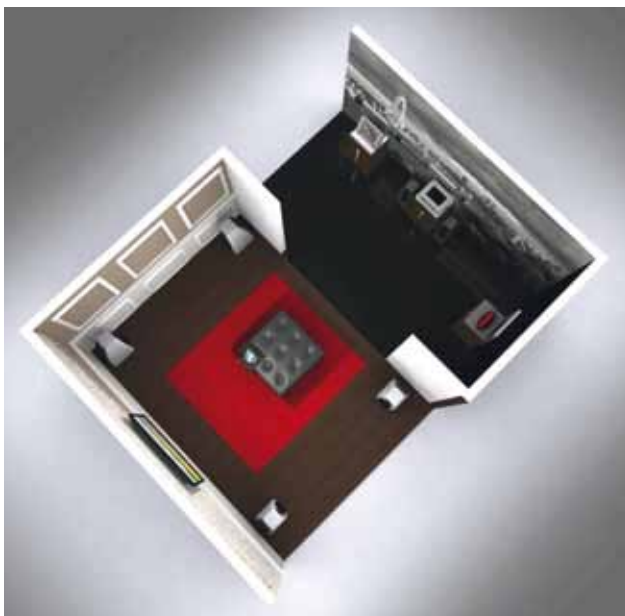
Meridian extends the design themes developed for dedicated showrooms around the world for use in multi-brand retail environments, by creating a range of 'shop in shop' modules.



Small footprint installation with single podium

Eleven Meridian boutique stores will be open around the world by the Spring of this year. The Bangkok, Santiago (Chile), Mexico City, Kuwait, Taipei (Taiwan), New Delhi & Bangalore (India) and Moscow (1) locations will be followed by the UK, Moscow (2), Singapore and Beijing (China) in the first quarter of this year. Working with KVB Design, the leading retail specialist responsible for these distinctive dedicated showrooms, Meridian has developed a series of smaller configurations that bring the same key branding elements into a conventional multi-brand retail environment.

The Meridian shop-in-shop concept is designed to fit into any retail location and offer a distinct tailor-made brand presence for the Meridian product portfolio.



Dedicated Meridian area – freestanding with surround room

Based around a series of standard 'building block' modules, the concept offers expandable, flexible solutions for small, medium and large footprint retail areas. The medium and large footprints also provide options for wall, mid-floor and corner locations, and dedicated home theatre demo rooms.

Key elements include black and red carpets that define the Meridian area of the store, coupled with a warm grey wall colour. Familiar standard wood-finish podiums, which have been available previously, display the products, while black wall frames are mounted behind them, carrying either text and graphics or a luxurious black quilted leather-look panel. Wall graphics, including dramatic monochrome photography by Yariv Milchan, stand behind the entire assembly to provide a distinct atmosphere that enhances the other elements.



Medium footprint with corner location

The small-footprint installations include one or two podiums and a single rear panel. The medium installations also include two podiums, and in addition to the panels behind them, feature a wall graphic. There are several different arrangements that can be employed to suit specific stores.

The large footprint shop-in-shop offers multiple product displays in a complete, enclosed Meridian environment. Wall sections, large format graphic walls, bespoke furniture and lighting combine to create an extensive and private Meridian room-set, simulating the home environment in order to display products as they would appear in the customer's home. These installations are custom designed and built to suit the specific retail location, using many of the same retail components as the small and medium footprint shop-in-shop concepts. They can also include a complete surround theatre area based around either a projector or flat panel display. One option is a freestanding environment featuring two adjoining rooms (left), with entrances at opposite sides, one leading into a display area with multiple podiums, the other leading into a theatre area with surround audio.

To find out more about an installation of this type, whatever the size, please contact your Account Manager.