

High fidelity

The best in audio and new technology

COMING SOON

Naim SuperNait

c£2250 Spring 2007

The long-awaited and much-rumoured upmarket integrated amplifier from the Salisbury company. Expect digital inputs as well as analogue, and high standards of performance

Audica AVR-1

ETBA soon

Compact, slimline DVD receiver to match the British company's range of stylish loudspeakers

BT Vision

ETBA autumn

All-in-one entertainment centre from the telecoms company.

SONY

Launch of the all-new ES range

Three advanced home cinema receivers join a stereo amplifier and SACD player

Sony's STR-DA1200ES AV receiver, reviewed this month, is impressive enough, but it's only the entry-level model in an all-new ES range from Sony, broadening the appeal of its "Extremely high Standard" line-up. Two more expensive receivers are also available, bringing to the AV world a more advanced automatic set-up system, while those more interested in music in stereo than surround sound are served by a purist two channel amplifier and an SACD/CD player optimised for stereo working. The move sees the end of Sony's QS – Quality Standard – range, with all the new products now under the ES banner.

The new receivers build on the strengths of the £400 STR-DA1200ES, a 7x100W design with automatic set-up and HDMI-capable video switching: one step up the range is the £700 STR-DA3200ES, which increases the power to 7x110W

and adds additional inputs and multiroom capability. It's compatible with high-definition audio from HD DVD and Blu-ray, and can decode an HDMI signal to process the high-definition sound while passing the basic stereo version on to a suitable TV.

The flagship model is the £1000 STR-DA5200ES, a 7x120W design. This uses the new stereo version of Sony's Digital Cinema Auto Calibration, enabling it to measure speaker positions as well as levels and distances. To this it adds video upscaling from all inputs to HDMI, up to 1080p resolution with progressive scan sources.

The new receivers all use analogue amplification, but Sony has retained its S-Master Pro digital amplification for the TA-FA1200ES stereo amplifier, which is the first product of its kind to use



Sony's £1000 STR-DA5200ES has fast auto-calibration

automatic calibration and set-up – it's the same system found in the STR-DA5200ES. It's complemented by the SCD-XA1200ES SACD/CD player, at around £700, which has dedicated outputs for both stereo and multichannel audio, and uses audiophile components throughout. All the new products should be on sale now.

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MERIDIAN launches typically high-tech in-wall speakers

Meridian Audio is launching a range of in-wall and in-ceiling speakers designed for those who don't want conventional 'boxes' in their rooms. The in-ceiling 200 Series and the 300 series, which will eventually encompass in/on-wall models, are designed for maximum flexibility. The speakers can be driven conventionally using an internal crossover, or as part of a complete active analogue system using the G41 multichannel power amplifier, which can accept a dedicated crossover card and contains eight 100W power amplifiers, designed to drive long cable runs if required.

The 200 uses a 20cm mid/bass unit and a pivoting tweeter, and the 300s start with the 320, with a 16.5cm mid/bass unit and ribbon tweeter. The 330 adds a 20cm auxiliary bass radiator, and the 350 has twin mid/bass drivers and ABRs. Prices start from £182.50 for the P200, and go up to £2050 for

the active-ready flush-mount A350f, or £2235 for the same design in conventional passive form.

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Meridian in-wall speaker and G41 crossover amp

BOSE refines its Acoustic Wave system

Bose has upgraded its Acoustic Wave Music system, the largest of its 'all-in-one' units. The £885 Acoustic Wave II's enclosure has a 2.3m waveguide folded up inside, giving the bass real power and weight,

and this is enhanced with new digital signal processing designed in-house, giving a more natural sound, Bose says, 'from bass drums to flutes' and better reproduction of voices, too.

The built-in CD player now plays MP3 tracks recorded on CD-R discs, with display of track and artist details, and the tuner has a 'talk radio' mode to compensate for the boosted bass often found on speech programmes.

The system is compatible with the company's Bose link multiroom connection system, and can be used with an optional five-disc CD changer, which costs £299.

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