

QUAD CDP-2 £1,000



Quad's latest top-of-the-range silver disc spinner was well received by editor DP recently. In typical Quad style it bucks established design trends and goes for a unique look. Most impressive is the casing that – like the Cyrus – is a casting and looks very stylish indeed. Finish is also of a high standard and the unit as a whole looks sophisticated and uniquely 'Quad'. Measurements are 80x321x310mm, 7.2kg. As David mentioned last month, the CDP-2 makes use of a new bespoke transport, based around the VAM2202 mechanism. They have also reprogrammed a CD10 servo-decoder chip, dubbed the 'Lazy Servo'. Designed in consultation with Jon Green, one of the leading figures from Philips' CD transport division, the end result is about as close as you'll get these days to the legendary performance of the Philips swing-arm CD transports of yore. Unlike many other manufacturers these days who often use DVD or CD-ROM drives it is commendable that Quad have designed theirs from the ground up, and then only for the express purpose of reading the data off red book CDs as accurately as possible. DAC conversion is handled by a 24bit/192kHz Crystal Delta-Sigma DAC with x2 oversampling. It has fixed and variable outputs, plus three sets of optical and S/PDIF inputs meaning it's highly flexible.

SOUND QUALITY

Quad products have often been regarded as appealing to the 'pipe and slippers' brigade, but nothing could be further from the truth with the 99 CDP-2. This player can rock with the best of them. In fact I was taken by surprise by this little gem, as its performance with Moloko's 'Familiar Feeling' was funkier than with the Naim CD5i! In fact the Quad sounded nearer

to my reference Naim CDi than the CD5i – crazy! My attention was drawn to the bass which sounded slightly overblown, but was undeniably capable of delivering superb subjective results. It really provided a solid foundation for the superb crystal clear mid-band and smooth yet detailed treble. The sound wasn't quite as open as some of the others here – notably the Musical Fidelity, Shanling and Cyrus – but still allowed the music free reign. Vocals sounded silky smooth and grain free.

Listening to Jack Johnson's 'Times Like These' resulted in a more laid back presentation than the Naim, but one that was – I felt – truer to what existed on the actual disc. With the Naim he was practically sitting on your lap, whereas with the Quad one

was more aware of space around the performer and the general ambience of the room. That said, I did miss the excitement of the Naim somewhat. Trying the 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' CD next I was aware of a more well rounded presentation of the music than the other players. It was also slightly less open sounding than the others here. An accomplished performer by any standards, I still found myself missing the extra degree of insight afforded by some of the other machines here. The Quad is a fantastic 'compromise' between the punchy and upfront sound of the Naim, and the more ultra-neutral performance of the Cyrus and Musical Fidelity. For rock and dance music in particular there's little to touch it at the price.

MEASURED PERFORMANCE

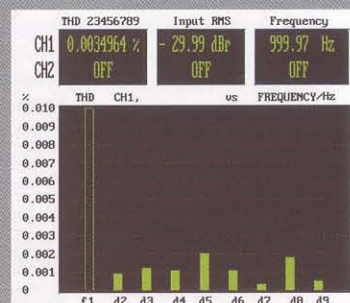
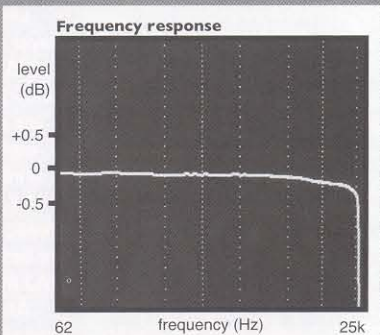
Our convolved impulse analysis showing frequency response clearly reveals a lift toward low frequencies, plus a small amount of shelving at high frequencies. Put together, these characteristics will provide the CDP2 with a full bodied sound a good sight warmed in nature than usual – never a bad thing with CD.

Distortion levels throughout the entire dynamic range were amongst the best, our analysis showing just 0.0035% at -30dB. This is a low value, and results were equally impressive at -60dB where just 0.2% distortion was measured. This helped toward a high EIAJ dynamic range value of -112.5dB, which is as good as it gets. So the CDP2 will gain no undue harshness from non-linearities.

Jitter was minimal across the audio band, with peaks no greater than 10pS. Again this is a good result, one that contributes to an easy delivery.

The CDP 2 measures well in all areas. It will sound full bodied and smooth, possibly quite atmospheric. NK

-60dB	0.2%
-80dB	4.3%
Separation (1kHz)	115dB
Noise (IEC A)	-112dB
Dynamic range	112.5dB
Output	2.4V



VERDICT **£**
QUAD CDP-2 £1,000
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FOR

- awesome rhythmic ability
- dramatic bass delivery
- see-through midrange

AGAINST

- nothing