Audio

The music lovers' guide to the best hi-fi

NAD C300 integrated amplifier

Meridian 800

Meridian has released a Reference CD/DVD machine in its 800 Series. Extraordinary picture quality and surpassingly good CD audio performance are claimed. A complex unit built with computer-style modular cards, it employs a DVD-ROM drive for accurate data retrieval. A second drive bay is included for future use. Stand-alone or rack mounting chassis are available and the player uses proprietary the Meridian High Resolution (MHR) link to interface with other 800 Series units and Meridian's DSP 96kHz digital input active loudspeakers. Software maintenance upgrades can be downloaded via a PC, which is also used for ease of installation. The standard unit has Composite, S-Video and Component Video outputs, five coaxial and two Toslink connections. It is also available with a digital output for use with surround sound processors or Meridian DSP loudspeakers, or analogue for use with stereo amplifiers or conventional active loudspeakers. Typical retails prices are £8,530 for the complete player in a standard product chassis or £8,410 as a digital transport.

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Matsushita DVD-A

Matsushita has developed the world's first audio and video decoder system LSI (large scale integrated circuit) for DVD players based on the DVD-Audio Specification Version 1·1 (as outlined in Inside Audio in May). The device (MN677521) incorporates all of the digital signal processing required for a DVD-Audio/Video player on a single 'chip' and will greatly simplify the process of manufacturing DVD-Audio/Video players. Its many features include DTS decoding and Virtual Headphone. Vast amounts of digital signal processing are needed to accommodate the various options for audio and video processing demanded by DVD-Audio/Video players, not least the various signal compression formats which include MPEG2 video and subpicture decoding, Dolby Digital, MPEG1/2 audio and LCPM (linear pulse code modulation)/P-PCM (packed PCM compression). All these formats are processed using the same hardware resources under control of the accompanying software. This capability has only been made possible through the development of Matsushita's second generation on-chip Media Core Processor (MCP1+), an audio/video/graphics circuit combining sequential and parallel processing and which doubles the performance of its previous multi-processor. Engineering samples are to be shipped this month (November).

NAD integrated

New from NAD is the C300 integrated amplifier. Described as a super-budget unit, this £145·95 has been developed from the C320 and C310 models and is rated at 25 watts per channel into 8 ohms, with a peak current capability of 40A. Whereas the C320 used a hybrid bipolar/MosFet output stage the new model uses only MosFets. It has inputs labelled Disc (MM), CD, Video (sound only), Aux, Tuner, Tape 1 and Tape 2, the Tape 1 input operating as an off-tape monitor with three-head recorders. Bass, treble and balance controls are fitted together with a tone defeat button for purist listening. A large Holmgren toroidal mains transformer is employed and the output is driven from a discrete component Class A stage. Short-circuit, overtemperature and VCD offset protection is included as is remote control of volume and mute.

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