

it doesn't get any better than this. It does, of course, but you'll have to spend at least a grand before the difference is worth it.

Reviewed by WG, Issue 140

Cambridge Audio Azur 540A v2

\$499

cambridgeaudio.com

PoY '06

The Azur 540A is quite an overachiever, delivering ultra-smooth and almost tube-like liquidity from a budget solid-state integrated amplifier. The amplifier sounds more powerful than its 60Wpc rating. Nice build-quality, lots of features, and an outstanding remote control round out this bargain.

Reviewed by RH, Issue 162

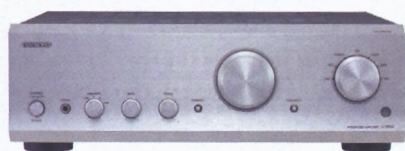
Rega Brio 3

\$645

soundorg.com

A very good sounding, well-built little amp at a fair price, the Brio 3 outputs 49Wpc into 8 ohms and 64Wpc into 4 ohms—enough to drive any reasonably sensitive loudspeaker, and its input array will accommodate the typical assortment of sources owned by most music fans. The inclusion of a real phono stage—not just a line-level input labeled “phono” requiring an outboard device—is a nice touch.

Reviewed by BW, Issue 167



Onkyo A-9555

\$699

onkyouusa.com

The \$700 A-9555 is surprisingly lightweight for its power rating (100Wpc into 8 ohms, 200Wpc into 4 ohms), thanks to what Onkyo calls “hybrid Class D” switching-amplifier technology; nevertheless, it can reveal subtle textures and delicate harmonies in an almost tube-like fashion, without tubes’ heat or noise. In real-world use, the A-9555 is both transparent and dynamic at all listening levels, and, in BW’s words, “a musical joy.”

Reviewed by BW, Issue 166

Rotel RA 1062

\$699

rotel.com

Don't let this amp's 60-watt rating or modest price temper your expectations. It's capable of towering dynamics, spellbinding nuance,

combined with an uncolored and surprisingly transparent sound that is thrilling to hear. Deficiencies include a reduction of dynamic scale, minor congestion during complex passages, and a not-unpleasant gloss over high frequencies.

Reviewed by AT, Issue 149

\$1000 - \$2000

PrimaLuna ProLogue One

\$1375

primaluna-usa.com

The sweet and affordable ProLogue One features a 12AX7, 12AU7, and a pair of EL-34s per channel in a very simple circuit. In classic EL-34 style, the ProLogue throws a very wide and deep soundstage and has a wonderful midrange, without sounding gooey like a Dynaco Stereo 70 or other vintage design. The ProLogue One is very neutral with little signature of its own.

Reviewed by JD, Issue 151

Naim Nait 5i

\$1495

naimusa.com

GE '02 PoY '02 PoY '04 GE '05

Naim's entry-level Nait 5i is a 50Wpc integrated, apparently straightforward in circuitry. None of this prepares you for what this amp can do with music. The Nait is not only a great amplifier for the money; it is an outright great amplifier, giving each instrument a rich harmonic structure, while preserving the clarity that's on the recording. Given its moderate power output, not the ideal amplifier for big rooms or low-sensitivity speakers.

Reviewed by TM, AVGM, Issue 7

Cambridge Audio Azur 840a

\$1499

cambridgeaudio.com

The 120Wpc Azur 840A solid-state integrated amplifier features Cambridge's innovative “Class XD” circuit. Apart from its substantial power output, the 840A's greatest strengths are its articulate and well-defined sound and its lifelike, energetic dynamics (this is not one of those polite, self-effacing British amps). What is more, the 840A is highly flexible, offering multizone capabilities and home-theater “pass-through” modes.

Reviewed by CM, Issue 167

Cyrus 8vs

\$1795

cyrusaudio.com

All-around musicality is one of the Cyrus 8 Series' greatest strengths, with terrific musical timbre and that sense of rightness and natu-

The music “breathed” of sweetness and was thought at times he instead of solid-state.

Reviewed by JH, Issue 140

Vincent SV-2

\$1795

vincentaudio.com

The well-built Vincent amplifier combines the best of both worlds by providing a vacuum-tube preamp and a 100Wpc solid-state power amp. The Vincent will appreciate the V's deep, powerful, authoritative sound and tube-fueled delicacy, almost surround-like in its presentation.

Reviewed by BW, Issue 162

\$2000

Cayin Audio A-05

\$2095

acousticsounds.com

Costing a mere \$950, the Cayin A-05 built honey boasts first-class McIntosh proud, while it was made to sound like a tube amp. No apologies necessary. In the latter, it will deliver the same level of detail, contrast, and fine musicality that is sweet and seductive.

Reviewed by JS, Issue 140

Creek Destination

\$2395

musichallaudio.com

With this 100Wpc integrated amplifier, the plug-in mm/mc phono stage, and the minded Creek goes on to achieve great success. The performance merits comparisons rather than with other integrated amplifiers.

Reviewed by JH, Issue 140

Jolida JD-100

\$2400

jolida.com

High-powered vacuum-tube amplifiers get very pricey, which is why the tube-powered integrated amplifier of a pleasant surprise. It blends the character of great EL-34 designs with the great EL-34 design and rock-solid bass response of 6550 designs.

Reviewed by JD, Issue 151