

# SOUND IMAGE

AUSTRALIA'S  
No.1 AV GUIDE  
AWARDS 2013



## SPECIAL AWARDS ISSUE

110 WINNERS  
42 CATEGORIES



# THE YEAR'S

# BEST



# HI-FI



# & HOME CINEMA

**AIRPLAY - HEADPHONES - BLU-RAY**  
**NETWORKED AV RECEIVERS - DACs**  
**CD - AMPS - LOUDSPEAKERS - INCAR**



## STEREO AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR OVER \$5000



### Dan D'Agostino Master Systems Momentum Monoblock

The category says 'Stereo', but our winner is actually a monoblock power amp — so you'll be needing two of the **Momentum Monoblocks** (\$59,995 the pair) to power your two-channel system. D'Agostino's new eponymous brand is a far cry from his previous designs at the helm of Krell, where his early creations were, alongside competitor Mark Levinson, seminal in defining solid-state high-end equipment in the US. Stunningly finished, adorned with a Breguet-style needle dial and loaded with polished copper flanking the solid aluminium chassis, the Momentums are powerful for their

size (a very heavy 32 × 53 × 13cm), delivering 300W into eight ohms, all the way up to 1200W into a 2-ohm load. There are 28 output transistors in each monoblock, quoted as being "among the fastest high-output transistors available... a blistering 69MHz..." permitting very high bandwidth (only -1dB down even at 200kHz, and flat from 20-20kHz).

Balanced XLR is the only input option, and we've twice experienced the Momentums benefitting from careful cable synergy; during our review time such changes lifted their performance from great to absolutely superlative. Overall the sound signature is subtly

laidback, a balance that allows vocals to project well forward, as they should, within a potentially immense soundfield (depending on the recording) backed by deep and powerful bass capable of providing a truly visceral experience through the right speakers. It's one of the most physically beautiful audio components we've ever seen, and sonically it stands head to head with the very best. An integrated Momentum is now also available.

[www.advanceaudio.com.au](http://www.advanceaudio.com.au)



### B.M.C. Amplifier C1



### HIGHLY COMMENDED



### Gryphon Mephisto



B.M.C. loves its symmetry and circles — the huge rotary control on the left of the \$8370 Amplifier C1 does nothing other than turn the amplifier on and off, but it balances the volume control, which works differently to most, and is at the heart of the C1's performance. It adjusts the *gain* rather than the *voltage* of the signal being fed to the amplifier, a process the company calls 'Discrete Intelligent Gain Management', and which creates some odd side-effects — for example, the lower the volume level, the faster the amplifier is able to switch inputs, taking

up to eight seconds for the circuit to stabilise on the next input, potentially half a minute if you're shuttling through several intermediate inputs. But the performance is worth the wait — even at relatively low levels the abundance of power was manifest in superbly detailed bass... effortless, and with a solidity that echoed what we'd expect to hear in a live performance. It's quirky and unusual... but an integrated amplifier with real character.

[www.nationalaudiogroup.com.au](http://www.nationalaudiogroup.com.au)

The \$79,995 Gryphon Mephisto is a massive stereo power amp, weighing in at 108kg and measuring 71cm deep (50cm wide and 34cm high). It uses 40 high-current output transistors, the Danish high-end company quoting its power as 175W into 8 ohms in Class-A, doubling up all the way to 1400W into a 1-ohm load, and it's another with blistering

bandwidth — still within the -3dB envelope up at 400kHz. Big grins were evident from the start of our auditioning process, the Gryphon sounding totally controlled, tight, staggeringly dynamic, fast and detailed. It surgically resolved the most complex mixes, while hard-slammng with dynamic contrast and keeping tonality accurate, and delivering a high measure of the best triode sound magic in the separation, the space around the notes and sonic images. It's a Class-A monster, but with a delicate touch.

[www.kedcorp.com.au](http://www.kedcorp.com.au)





STEREO AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR OVER \$5000

**Dan D'Agostino Master Systems  
Momentum Monoblock**



# The Ultimate Expression

Audiophiles know Dan D'Agostino as the world's most skilled and passionate designer of audio electronics, and the first to champion the use of high-powered solid-state amplifiers in high-end audio. With the Momentum monoblock amplifier, he has begun anew with revolutionary concepts, innovative materials and a fresh-slate design.

The Momentum monoblock amplifier is the ultimate expression of Dan D'Agostino's passion for music. It sounds warmer, more

musical, more alive than any other amplifier Dan has designed — perhaps than any other amplifier, period.

Each Momentum is hand-built and individually tested in D'Agostino's Connecticut factory.

Sound+Image's award of its ultimate amplifier accolade to the Momentum recognises this unique pinnacle of amplifier design — like nothing that has come before, the Momentum achieves new levels of sound quality.



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