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Bladelius USB DAC: Rich and robust



The Bladelius USB DAC looks like a bar of chocolate.

The Bladelius USB DAC looks like a longish chocolate bar and if I were to judge its sound quality with real chocolate as the gauge, I would say it is as good as Swiss milk chocolate.

Rich and robust with a creamy texture - that's how the DAC tastes, errr, sounds.

The Bladelius USB DAC came with a thumb drive containing its proprietary driver, but I discovered that it could not load onto my wife's spanking new MacBook Air.

After a few phone calls, I was told that the new Mac OS does not require any driver to work with the Bladelius USB DAC. And so I plugged in the Furutech USB cable and connected the DAC to the Macbook Air, launched iTunes and played a few songs.

I discovered that I had more hi-res files in FLAC than WAV format and since iTunes cannot play FLAC, I had to convert some of the FLAC to WAV files using Media Monkey.



RCA outputs and ...



...the USB input.

The Bladelius USB DAC, which retails at about RM2,500 at Audiomatic at Amcorp Mall, Petaling Jaya, accepts up to 24/192 and is USB powered. It has a USB input on one end and RCA outputs on the other.

It was connected with a pair of DH Labs Air Matrix interconnects to the Melos SHA-1 headphone amp/preamp which was connected to the Bryston 4B SST with a pair of Alphacore Silver Micropurl interconnects. Speaker cables were Kimber 12TC and speakers were the resident ATC SCM40.

With the latest Mac laptops, it was plug-and-play with the Bladelius USB DAC.

I spent some time listening to a ripped WAV version of Adele's 21 and I noted that it sounded quite smooth and detailed. I also listened to several hi-res WAV files and a couple of MP3 tracks.

As mentioned before, it sounded quite rich and robust with a pretty strong bass. While it was not as detailed, refined and spacious as more expensive DACs, it had a rather 'analogue' sound signature and would definitely be in the Ayre, Rega and Orb category.

It is also one of the few DACs at its price level that accepts 24/192 through USB and it is not out of place in a main CAS system despite its entry-level pricing.