

STEREO AMPLIFIER • DAC • HI-FI RACK

STEREO AMP
PRIMARE
I30

£ 1500

FOR

Detail, dynamics and timing are all excellent; superb build and finish

AGAINST

Absolutely nothing apart from the quality of the competition

VERDICT

Primare has hit the bulls-eye: this is a fabulous amp for the money

Sublime build, and top finish – that's amp creation the Primare way

Primare gallops to glory

THIS AMPLIFIER HAS a lot to live up to. Its predecessor, the A30.1, was a multiple Award-winner with a breadth of appeal that few rivals could match at the time. The I30's performance means once again Primare has a product to challenge the very best at its price level.

Place this elegant integrated next to the leading opposition from the likes of AVI, Myryad or even Naim and it's hard not to be impressed by the I30's extra dose of class: it feels rock-solid and all the controls work with the kind of precision rare even at mortgage-money. Features are spot-on, too. You get balanced inputs – the amplifier has a fully balanced symmetrical

circuit layout, a preamp output for bi-amping, and remote operation.

All these things are very nice, yet they're not why we rate this amplifier so highly. That honour belongs to its sound. The I30 is one of the cleanest, most informative amps available below the three grand mark. Its 100 watt per channel output may not sound particularly impressive up against the 175 watt rating of AVI's Laboratory series integrated, but the I30 still delivers seismic dynamic shifts of Holst's *Mars* with real conviction and composure. Using a set of ATC's SCM50

speakers the sound doesn't harden up at even high volume levels: the amplifier carries on delivering crescendos with no sign of buckling under the pressure. Impressively, the Primare I30 doesn't lose grip of the subtleties of the performance under such circumstances, either.

The good news doesn't stop there. Timing is crisp, so the hard-charging rhythms of Massive Attack get treated with the respect they deserve – imaging, with the right tunes, is superbly layered and focused with the precision of an electron microscope. Add a neutral tonal balance into the equation and you'll understand why we rate this amplifier so highly.



ALSO CONSIDER



**AVI LABORATORY
SERIES
INTEGRATED**



£1500
NOVEMBER 2003
This compact integrated packs plenty of power. Times well, too

**MYRYAD
MXI2150**



£1700
MARCH 2005
Big, bulky and not particularly good looking, but the MXI2150 has plenty of talent