

BEST CD PLAYER £1500-£2000

Primare CD31

£1500

YOU'RE RIGHT, THIS Primare is anything but cheap. But hey – one man's pleasure and all that jazz. Besides, the cost of this CD player pales into insignificance compared to true high-end kit – think at least double this price for a significant increase in quality. This is a very accomplished CD player, and it delivers a big chunk of high-end performance at a relatively reasonable price.

We have always placed sonic ability above all else, and as you might have guessed by another Award for the Primare CD31, it sounds fantastic for the money. Whether you put it into a price-balanced system, or something as lavish as our Bryston BP26/4BSST/

VERDICT

If you're in the market for an elegant, superbly built, top-end CD player Primare's CD31 is a barn-stormer. It sounds as good as it looks

Style and substance make the CD31 a worthy Award winner

ATC SCM 50 set-up, the CD31 doesn't sound out of its depth. You get lashings of detail, well-balanced tonality and superb dynamics. We also love the fact that the Primare makes listening to music fun.

“High-end hi-fi can sound too analytical. Not here: you hear music with real soul”

Simon Lucas, First Tests Editor

Okay, so that sounds a little odd: bear with us while we explain. In our minds, there are two types of products: those that are enthusiastic, and those that aren't. Even dull players can dig up detail and deliver it with authority, but they also fail to make the music sound whole.

The Primare doesn't. It makes your music sound fresh, vibrant and wonderfully gripping. You get the point? This is one extremely talented disc-spinner.

A high price to pay, but it's worth it

Equally as important, the CD31 is easy to live with day-to-day. The logical, clear front-panel layout never looks blurred, even during daylight hours. The balanced and unbalanced connections also solve your connectivity headaches nicely.

Add in build-quality that can best be described as lavish, coupled to discreet, elegant styling, and our conclusion is simple: the CD31 is very special indeed.



STEREO AMPLIFIER

PRIMARE I30

£1500

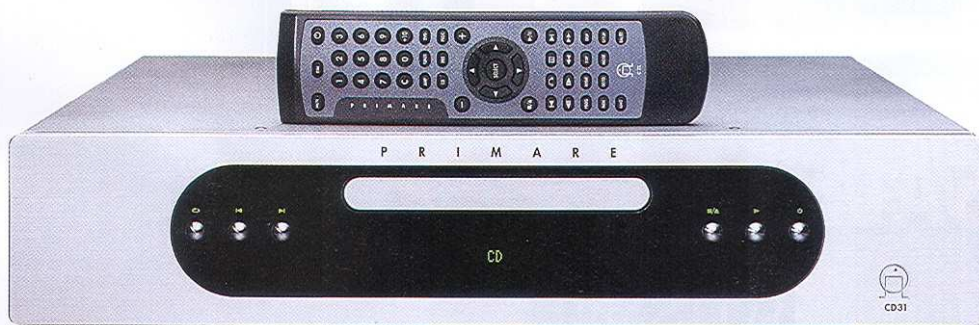
Last year's Award winner is a cracking amp. Partner it with the CD31 for a superb hi-fi system

STEREO SPEAKERS

B&W 805S

£1600

Great all-rounders with a fantastic level of insight and crisp timing. Build and finish are exceptional, too



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BEST STEREO AMPLIFIER £1250-£2000

Primare I30

£1500

WE DON'T ALWAYS describe our most expensive Award-winning amplifier as a bargain, but that's exactly what the Primare's I30 is. It is, in essence, a serious piece of high-end hi-fi equipment wrapped up in a sensibly priced package. Deeply impressive stuff.

Luxurious isn't a word you'll find too often in these pages, but the I30 justifies its use with its rock-solid casework, immaculately machined front panel, and chunky controls. We've come across amplifiers at triple this price from world-respected manufacturers that lack the Primare's build class.

Don't make the mistake of thinking the I30 is just a pretty box: take off that heavy lid, and you'll find carefully designed, fully balanced circuits and a beefy power supply. The result is a superb amplifier that'll happily live

VERDICT

The crystal-clear, transparent sound is allied to enviable build and looks, making for a hugely desirable amp

You can find amps cost three times the price that don't have the Primare's class

with components costing far more than its already-hefty price tag. It's hard to fault sonically – hence why it gets a gong.

The I30 has a transparent, insightful sound that gives a crystal-clear view into the recording and performance. As with all the best amplifiers, if either of these elements is below par, you'll not be shielded from the truth. That said, if there's even a small amount of sonic goodness in a recording, no matter how bad the rest of it is, this is one amplifier that'll let you appreciate it, where other amps might bury it in a clutter of sound.

Every genre of music stuns for sound

The Primare doesn't care if you listen to Springsteen or Stravinsky: it has the drive and timing to satisfy Boss fans, and the scale, power and finesse to make *The Rite of Spring* magical.

Think of all the things you'd want from a class-leading £1500 integrated

amplifier – Primare's I30 fulfils them all with ease. It has the kind of performance that products in the next price class upwards would envy, yet has sacrificed nothing in build, finish or usability in

“Polished, well-made and fabulous to listen to – this is hi-fi kit to invest in”

Clare Newsome, Editor

the process. If you're lucky enough to have this kind of money to spend on an amplifier, buy the Primare I30 with confidence, and look forward to many years getting to know your CDs again.



CD PLAYER

PRIMARE CD31

£1500

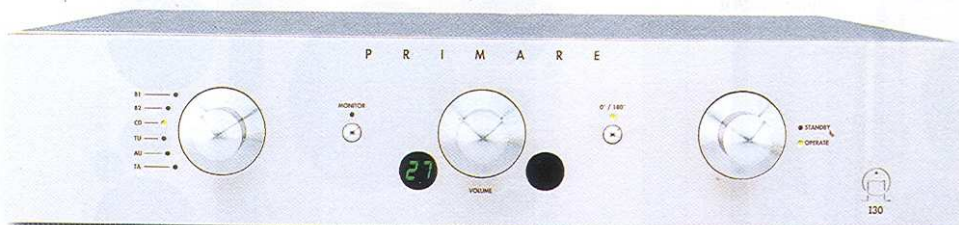
An obvious partner, but one that'll truly make the most of the I30's broad spread of sonic talents

STEREO SPEAKERS

PROAC STUDIO 140

£1400

Lively and entertaining speakers that put the music first, adding a touch of spice to the electronics



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