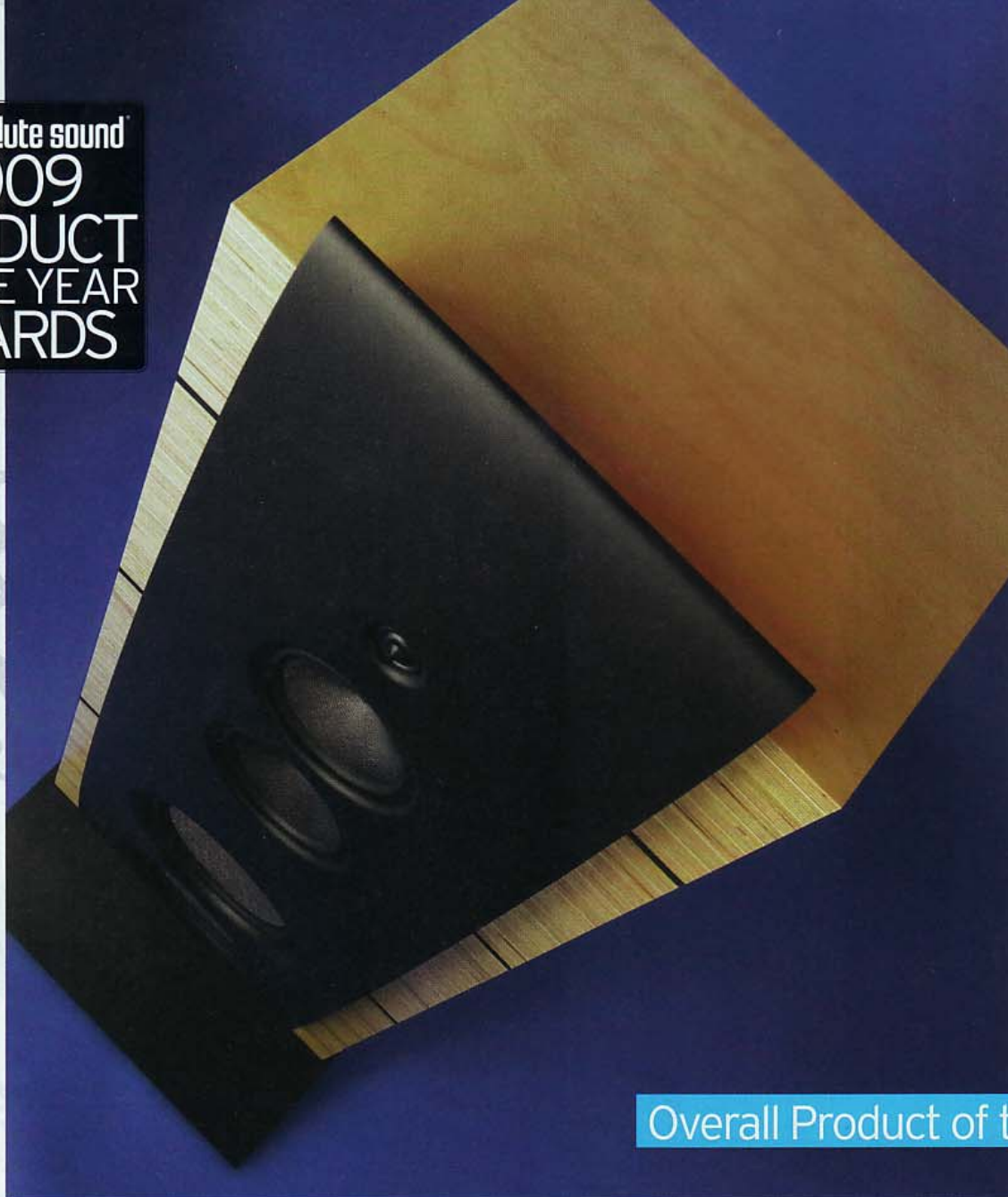


the absolute sound  
2009  
PRODUCT  
OF THE YEAR  
AWARDS



Overall Product of the Year

## Magico M5 Loudspeaker

**\$89,000**

The words “the best” have been bandied about quite a bit in our magazine and on our Web site (avguide.com)—and there is legitimate concern that they are being overused. Unfortunately, no other words will do to describe how JV feels about Magico’s new four-way, five-driver dynamic loudspeaker, the M5. It is the best loudspeaker he’s heard. Not only did the M5 redefine an entire genre of speakers (large multiway dynamic-driver floorstanders) for him, it carried him substantially closer to the absolute sound. So close, in fact, that, for the first time, he could imagine the possibility of someday achieving a genuine facsimile of the real thing—not merely parts of it, not merely midrange or treble, voices and violins, but the whole thing from the lowest notes to the highest, from the least dynamic utterance to the most. That is how natural—how complete—the M5 sounds to his ears. It is, in fact, the most complete loudspeaker he’s auditioned. Phenomenally low in distortion, phenomenally high in resolution, phenomenally extended at the extremes, and phenomenally neutral and natural in overall balance, here for once is a big dynamic speaker that disappears like a little one, that resolves like a virtual electrostat, that does large-scale dynamics with the speed, weigh, and impact of a horn-loaded transducer and small-scale ones with the whisper softness and superfine resolution of a ribbon, that soundstages almost as three-dimensionally as the best omnis. There may be other loudspeakers on the market or on the horizon that will outperform the M5s overall—the absolute sound is, after all, a rapidly moving target. If there are such speakers, JV simply haven’t heard them, which is why this instant classic and standard-setter truly deserves *The Absolute Sound’s* highest honor—Overall Product of the Year. (Issue 196) tas



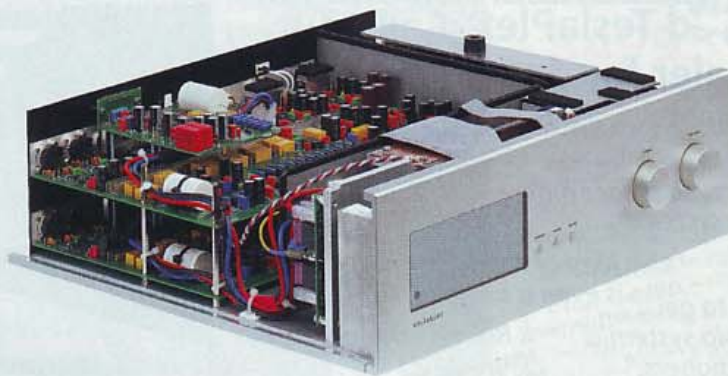
the absolute sound  
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## Entry Level All-in-One System of the Year

### Primare DVDI-10

**\$2595**

Combi-components are more often about convenience than performance but the DVDI-10 is that rare multi-tasker of substance. Whether you want to watch HDMI-quality video or export your iPod's metadata to the DVDI-10's front-panel display, the remote-controlled Primare stands at the ready. With music you'll find a strong sense of pace and timing, thanks in part to the DVDI-10's cool-running 75Wpc Class D amplifier topology and onboard A/D converter. Not to mention an appealing tonal balance that is neither warmly romantic nor coolly clinical. Given appropriate speaker matching and a vivid 1080p display, the Primare will perform at levels certain to raise a few eyebrows among audiophiles and videophiles alike. Add to this the smooth aluminum casework and discrete top-mount controls. Come to think of it, about the only thing this multi-tasking Swede won't do is supply the meatballs. (Issue 193)



### Soultion 720

**\$40,000**

The Swiss-made Soultion 720 uses speed and bandwidth to set new standards of low distortion and high resolution. Biased slightly toward the gemütlich, it adds the same touch of natural timbral warmth and body that the Soultion 700 monoblocks add, without sacrificing neutrality, resolution, or transparency to sources. The thing has terrific bass—big, powerful, bloomy, tremendously deep-reaching, and tremendously solid and well-defined. Its midrange resolution is as fine as any piece of electronics, tube or transistor, JV has heard—nothing seems to escape it, although it doesn't sound a bit analytical. Its top end is reminiscent of the Magico M5 in that you're not aware it's there until something with treble energy shows up. The 720 is a full-function preamp, meaning it has a built-in moving-coil phonostage that is itself a model of power, control, transparency, and resolution, with particularly stunning bass. A slam-dunk choice for TAS's 2009 Cost-No-Object Preamp of the Year. (Reviewed in this issue)

### Soultion 710 Stereo/ 700 Monoblock

**\$40,000/**

**\$115,000**

The Swiss-made 120Wpc Soultion 710 stereo amp and its 430W monoblock big brother, the Soultion 700, are ground-up reworkings of solid-state circuits executed without regard to cost and with the sole object of building the best possible amplifiers. What the boys from Dulliken were after was the inherent musicality and low time-related distortion of tubes combined with the high current/drive capability and low THD of solid-state. The sonic results speak for themselves. Utterly neutral, utterly grainless and distortion-free, astonishingly quick on starting transients and detailed on stopping transients without ever sounding sharp or etched, standard-settlingly high in resolution, standard-settlingly transparent to sources, with superb grip and extension from bottom to top, extremely wide soundstaging, and unusually natural in imaging (both in size and dimensionality), they are less "there" as pieces of electronics than any other amps JV has tried. The best solid-state amplifiers JV has heard and this year's indisputable Cost-No-Object Amplifiers of the Year. (Reviewed in this issue)

