

Stereophile

500 Recommended Components

October 2014

SACD, DVD-A, & CD PLAYERS & TRANSPORTS & MEDIA PLAYERS

A+

BRYSTON BDP-2: \$2995

Essentially a beefed-up BDP-1, the BDP-2 replaces the original's 0.5GHz processor with a 1.6GHz Intel Atom N450 and upgrades its single-amp linear power supply with a larger toroidal transformer specced to provide 10 amps of peak current. In addition, the BDP-2 has two Ethernet connectors (instead of the BDP-1's one), six USB ports (instead of four), a new eSATA connector, and accommodations for an internal SSD data-storage card. Compared to the original, the BDP-2 was just as detailed and dynamic, but offered significantly faster load times and produced highs that were more effortless, said LG. The latest improvements "greatly enrich this digital player's versatility and value," he concluded. (Vol.36 No.10 WWW)

BRYSTON BDP-1: \$2195 ★

Simple in function and purist in design, the plug'n'play BDP-1 digital audio player is basically a Linux computer optimized for streaming audio files. Based on the user-friendly Auraliti L-1000, the BDP-1 plays digital files from external flash drives or portable hard drives plugged into one of its four USB 2.0 ports; it adds an AES/EBU output to the Auraliti's S/PDIF and has a front-panel display and keypad to control playback. Once properly set up and configured and used with Bryston's BDA-1 DAC, the BDP-1 produced open highs, a rich midrange, stunning dynamic range, and three-dimensional imaging, said LG. JA, too, was impressed: "Bryston's BDP-1 proved to be an excellent-performing digital source, with a low-jitter, bit-accurate data output capable of operating at sample rates up to 192kHz." BR-2 remote control adds \$375. (Vol.34 No.6 WWW)

MUSIC SURROUND-SOUND COMPONENTS (OTHER THAN SPEAKERS AND DISC PLAYERS)

A

BRYSTON SP-3: \$9500

The SP-3 combines a true analog preamp and a full-featured multichannel digital audio processor in a beautifully built, relatively compact (17" W by 5.75" H by 14.25" D) case. It uses Bryston's high-quality 24-bit/192kHz DACs and offers a full suite of connections, including: eight HDMI inputs, two HDMI outputs, a 7.1 set of analog inputs and two 7.1 sets of outputs, four S/PDIF inputs, two AES/EBU inputs, and USB, RS-232, and Ethernet jacks. The sound from the SP-3's analog stereo inputs was "absolutely pristine, powerful, and a breath of fresh air," while digital S/PDIF or TosLink datastreams sounded transparent and convincing, with especially detailed and extended treble. "I think the Bryston SP-3 is the first great audiophile preamplifier-processor," KR concluded, "It almost redefines Class A sound for a surround processor." (Vol.35 Nos.5 & 7 WWW)

BRYSTON 9B-SST2: \$8095 ★

The 9B-SST² power amplifier (called 9B-THX at the time of the review) boasts five channels, 120Wpc into 8 ohms, and is built like pro gear; *ie*, like a tank. Hand-soldered, double-sided glass-epoxy boards and elaborate grounding scheme front special-grade steel toroidal transformers. According to JA, "the excellent set of measurements indicates solid, reliable engineering." LG was impressed by this amp's speed, power, extension, its tightness and definition in the bass, and its "excellent" midrange. Fully the equal of more costly amps, with wide dynamic contrasts and "involving" vocals, and sonically similar to previous Bryston ST amps. THX conformance, a 20-year (!) warranty, and a reasonable price make this beefy, reliable amp an attractive package—a perfect choice, suggests LG, for home-theater and multichannel music systems. KR's long-term multi-channel reference. (Vol.23 No.9 WWW)