

NEWSLETTER vol. 1

September 2008

A few selected UK dealers will have the authority to retail the Absolute Studio products. As further proof of his commitment in pushing the boundaries of music reproduction, Ricardo himself will handle any dealer or press enquiry relating to the complete range of Absolute Studio products.

THE ABSOLUTE SOUNDS STUDIO NEWSLETTER 2008

Our long-held desire to assemble a special coterie of brands was realised when we found the core of our system in darTZeel. It exemplified and embodied all of the values that a product must possess to qualify as a part of the Studio concept. Slowly, methodically, we have built up a family of manufacturers that address the specific needs of a certain type of connoisseur. For the upcoming season, we are pleased to announce that the system has been completed with the definitive speaker, turntable and compact disc models to complement the darTZeel electronics and Yter cables.



Continuum Caliburn System

CONTINUUM

Helped in no small measure by the praise from our good Friend Michael Fremer of Stereophile, the world's No 1 vinyl junkie, Continuum's Caliburn turntable with Cobra tonearm has been recognised as the world's finest LP spinner. It has, without doubt, re-written the rules for vinyl playback. Uncompromised construction, designed using the most advanced FEA software and shape optimisation, provided with vacuum disc hold-down, with absolute isolation from feedback and vibration, we've never heard our records sounding so good, nor so silent in-between tracks.

Now there's a sister system from Continuum, offering nearly the same performance but at a much lower price point. The Criterion turntable with Copperhead tonearm is to the Caliburn what the Lamborghini Gallardo is to the Murcielago. And if you know your cars, that means negligible sacrifice. Either Continuum turntable will show you what Fremer and his cohorts have known for years: the black vinyl LP is the best source available. And now we have a pair of decks worthy of our LPs.

Simply saying that this is the "world's best turntable" is unlikely to move you. You have to hear it to appreciate the merit of that claim. Every turntable manufacturer believes that their flagship model has no peers. But our experience with turntables includes previous contenders for that title, so we know what constitutes the best. And the Continuum doesn't just meet the criteria. It leaves it in the dust.

DARTZEEL

We know of no brand as careful, cautious and deliberate as our Swiss friends at darTZeel. Serge and Herve – audio's answer to the Thompson Twins – are steeped in the finer aspects of civilised living, from cars and watches to the better wines and cheeses, and this joie de vivre permeates the products they make. So far, all they have released – but to universal acclaim – are the NHB-18NS pre-amplifier and the award-winning NHB-108 Model One Power amplifier. The gap between them was long, but they didn't disappoint, and the pre-amp was worth the wait. Now, and we can't believe it's happening, they have finished the third model in their line-up, a component we've been waiting for since the brand was launched: the CTH-8550 integrated amplifier.

Why our enthusiasm for an integrated? Because the world is downsizing and for many, especially in urban locations, space is at a premium. So we've noticed an upswing in the sales of high-end integrated, where one chassis does the work of two. But make no mistake: this is pure darTZeel through and through. It will deliver 200 Watts per channel under 8 Ohms, or 350 Watts under 4 Ohms and can be ordered either without phono stage, with one MC phono stage, one MM phono stage, or both. (It is not possible to have either 2 MM or 2 MC.) As with its siblings, you can order it in either darTZeel gold-red or full black, and the features list is comprehensive: A newly-designed fluorescent display for user-friendly operation, 7 standard inputs, full HT bypass function for all inputs, a darTZeel preamp output for driving an external NHB-108 power amplifier and much more. If you're a darTZeel wannabe, who's been waiting for the one-box solution, this is your year.

MAGICO

As Absolute Sounds nears its 30th Anniversary in high-end audio, we can look back on almost the entire history of the genre and the audio miracles we've witnessed and mourned. During that time, among the legendary speakers, which arrived to thunderous acclaim, were the original Beveridge and Apogee models, the first Wilson WATT, the Sonus Faber Guarneri and a few others that shook the entire industry. They arrive rarely, without warning. And we're lucky if it happens three or four times a decade. This phenomenon has occurred again, with a speaker that has garnered universal praise all who is lucky to hear it. Magico's V3 has entered the high-end consciousness with a slew of rave reviews and magazine front covers, and we are now in a position to offer this to British music lovers.

It's enough that this handsome floor-stander has build quality reminiscent of the finest furniture, with fittings that scream 'high tech'. Bespoke drivers and a complex crossover, fine-tuned to perfection, ensure that the sound matches the speaker's physical presence. Set up in our listening facility with darTZeel electronics, the Magico V3 has dazzled every visitor to that room, including two of the fussiest reviewers in the country. The latest addition to our Studio family, the Magico is also the latest in a hierarchy of speakers that history deems to be "true greats".

METRONOME

It looks like a prop from a futuristic SF movie, a three-legged construct of Perspex and metals, and yet it is but a CD player. But what a CD player! At a time when we're bombarded with warnings about the demise of CD, along comes a player which extracts so much music from silver discs that we've incorporated it into our elite Studio family. It matches the darTZeel electronics and Magico speakers with such élan that we have a hard time pulling ourselves away from our new listening room. But it's not just a piece of space-age sculpture. This Silver Machine (which reminds us: where are those Hawkwind CDs?) uses the best pickup mechanism money can buy: Philips' CDM12 PRO 2, but with custom modifications and a new clamp. The power supply boasts EMI rejection by Schaffner filter, power is courtesy of five transformers and

Metronome Kalista Reference



seven regulators for the transport – one for each critical part of the transport: display, servo mechanism, micro-processor, digital output stage.

To ensure that it can integrate with any pre-amp or DAC, the Kalista provides the complete array of standard digital outputs, including S/PDIF at 44.1-96KHz, another S/PDIF 44.1KHz, AT&T ST 44.1-96KHz and an AES/EBU input for 44.1-96KHz. If you fall in love with this, keep in mind that it's a real showpiece, so it will want pride of place, a surface able to accommodate dimensions of 450x450x160mm. You'd swear Lalique had something to do with it.

MIMETISM

We can't get enough of Mimetism. Their 20.1 CD player provides a natural progression from the affordable Copland, and it works so perfectly with the darTZeel electronics that we no longer feel so impatient waiting for darTZeel's own CD spinner. But now there's an in-house amplifier to consider, Mimetism's own luscious 15.2. Delivering a juicy 2x180W, this solid-state beauty offers full remote control, a crystal-clear info display and the cleanest, most minimalist styling we've ever seen. We weren't exaggerating when we said before that our brands are addressing modern needs. This product would look good in a museum of modern art. And yet it boasts all of the techno-goodies you could require, including power courtesy of Hitachi Lateral Mosfets 2SK1058 & 2SJ162 complementary power transistors, in a configuration of two pairs per channel. Its input section uses a cascode differential stage for the best performance, and its driver operates in pure class A. The circuit is fully direct-coupled but for a single ingress capacitor, and all signal paths are kept as short as possible. And the remote itself is a work of art, a long, thin, sculpted bar of solid aluminium, with controls not only for the 15.2, but also the Mimetism CD player and any other device that uses RC-5 codes. All-in-all, Mimetism is a brand to watch. And to listen to....

YTER

Discreetly, with minimal fanfare, Yter has seduced a following from the world's toughest audio critics and most discerning customers. Is it the mix of simplicity, price and a truly manageable form? Or maybe it's the leather wallets in which they're supplied? Whatever circumstantial evidence leads to the positive reaction, above all it's the performance, thanks to the design team which consists of Sonus Faber's Franco Serblin and his son-in-law, Massimiliano Favella, a qualified metallurgist. Virtually hand-made, demand for the original speaker cable and interconnect still outstrip supply. Last year, though, the team at Yter responded to an overwhelming plea for an XLR-terminated, balanced version of the interconnect, so now users of Krell and Audio Research equipment in balanced mode can enjoy these stunning wires from Italy.

Studio products will be available through selected Absolute Sounds Dealers. Please go to our website to pick the one dealer of your choice.

