



MAY-JUNE NEWS

Featured Product: Bel Canto USB Link 24/96 is a Hit!



Our featured product this month is the USB Link 24/96 from Bel Canto. High-res audio from your computer has taken a great leap forward with this magic little box. The picture above shows the little whippersnapper, a sleek silver anodized aluminum case about the size of a small deck of cards nestled behind a DAC. Nicely finished, and fitted with a Stereovox BNC-equipped interconnect, this device provides a cutting edge interface between your computer and your DAC's SPDIF input. In our case, we are using a Sony Vaio notebook PC and (of course!) the Bel Canto DAC-3, and the results are as musical as any digital we've heard.

What about media? Well, to begin with, Apple lossless files playing from iTunes never sounded so good! Case in point: Steely Dan's Alive in America live recording (Giant 9 24634-2). Even better are 24/96 flac files available at a growing number of hi-res download sites (such as Reference Recordings' Minnesota Symphony Orchestra/Eiji Oue 2001 recording of Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances, available at HDtracks). We are using WinAmp to play these

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files, although it is our understanding that with a little work flac files can also be played using iTunes. Anyway, it's really about the music, and we look forward to the coming explosion in high-res downloadable music.

News & Announcements

Heirloom Audio Hosted Colorado Audio Society's March 2009 Meeting

A couple of dozen die-hard audiophiles converged on Heirloom Audio for an evening of great company, great food, great music, and great sound. We enjoyed the evening very much and plan to host again in the future. If you are not a member of CAS, consider becoming one. Lots of interesting events await you for hobknobbing with fellow audiophiles and with industry leaders at the forefront of high-end audio. For details, check out their website at www.coloradoaudiosociety.org.

Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, sponsored by Heirloom Audio

Mark your calendars: **A Handel Celebration**, in observance of the Handel year in 2009, also to include Bach's 4th Brandenburg Concerto, May 1-3, 2009. For details, check out their website at www.bcocolorado.org.

Heirloom Audio Product Lines

Aspara Acoustics

Tired of speakers that can't get going without drawing a kilowatt or more out of the wall? Want sensitivity without enormous size or weight? Wish for these things without high frequencies beaming at you like lasers? You must be wishing for Aspara HL1 horn speakers. This is a natural, musical sounding horn speaker that can actually image! With a whopping 100dB sensitivity, these babies are plenty happy with just a few watts. Only 28 inches tall at the shoulder, 43 inches tall at the top of the head, and a very manageable 114 pounds, they are easy to live with as well. Come hear them with our Quicksilver SET Mono amplifiers (8 watts).

Bel Canto Design

Newest digital wonder from the mind of John Stronczer is the **USB Link 24/96** (includes a short Stereovox SPDIF BNC-equipped digital interconnect for \$495 – and that's not a typo!). To our ears, this was the star of the 2009 CES. Playing 24/96 data files from an Apple notebook computer via USB Link to the forthcoming 12V DAC3 and Virtual Battery Supply, with REF500 monoblocks driving Joseph Audio Pearls, the sound of a jazz guitar and amp was more live, more palpable than anything heard before. A very memorable experience.

Cambre'

Our latest Core rack from Cambre' features natural maple with black rods/feet. Pair this as we did with some natural maple speakers with black drivers on black stands (Reference 3A's of course!) and load up the rack with a few deep black beauties like those from Naim, and you have a music system that beckons with a physical attraction that grabs many an audiophile and won't let go. You know what we're talking about – it's part of the pride-of-ownership lust. Buying for the sonic benefits and indulging the audiophile lust at the same time is what we call having your cake and eating it too.

You can order Cambre' Core in standard 4-shelf racks or order by the shelf. The standard 4-shelf rack is the better bargain, of course. If you desire a configuration that is lower to the ground, 3-shelf double-wide video racks are also available. Or, consider combining a standard 4-shelf rack with an extra top (an amplifier stand) to make both a 3-shelf rack and a 2-shelf rack. This makes a very versatile combination and an impressive display for your fine audio treasures.

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Copland Digital Room Correction

How does digital room correction sound? Less chaotic, you might be thinking. That may be true, but that's not what hits you. We find that the "live venue" factor goes off the scale when you engage the Copland DRC-205 (\$2995), and this effect is not subtle. In what other way can you spend this amount of money to dramatically upgrade the performance of your whole system? Check out this [The Absolute Sound](#) 2007 Digital Signal Processing Product of the Year winner and be convinced.

Furutech

At Heirloom Audio we feature the Furutech e-TP609 power distribution block (winner of [The Absolute Sound](#) 2008 Editor's Choice Award) and its less expensive brother, the e-TP60. These are exceptionally well-built power blocks, and worthy of our highest recommendation. Although we currently display just these two Furutech products, we can special order anything you need from their extensive selection of products offered in North America.

Graham Slee

An important contribution to our versatile vinyl presentation at RMAF 2008 was the unique "Revelation" phono stage from Graham Slee (\$1599). Vintage mono LPs (and even some early stereo LPs) can be a discouraging affair, given the lack of a universal standard for equalization that existed pre-RIAA. That's where this handy phono stage comes in, providing adjustable EQ for the most common equalization curves of the day. It has 42.5 dB gain, and can be paired with their Elevator EXP for MC mono cartridges such as the Lyras.

Hannl

If you are really into vinyl, you have probably seen other record cleaning machines in action. If so, you'll immediately appreciate the virtues of the Hannl Aragon LP cleaning machine. In our view, a cleaning machine should: 1) be a pleasure to use, 2) produce consistently excellent results, 3) do it reasonably fast, and 4) require minimal fuss and maintenance. To those need-to-have features we would add the following nice-to-have features: 5) be reasonably quiet, and 6) be reasonably low in what might be called "flaming nerd factor". The Hannl Aragon truly possesses all of these features. We would be very happy to show you its capabilities.

Lyra

An action shot: The Lyra Skala, reproducing great beauty with exceptional grace. At \$3555, we know it is a big investment, but this one is tough to beat at any price. Come have a listen to the compelling musicality of this latest generation Lyra. Sumptuous yet revealing reading of the amazing amount of information hidden in the grooves of your record collection is what you'll enjoy with this cutting edge moving coil cartridge design!



Naim

It took a long time to find another CD player worthy to expand our range, but at last we have done so. The Naim CD5x possesses many of the features we hold dear (musicality, heirloom quality, pride of ownership, and affordability). As with all Naim designs, the CD5x is a shrewd combination of thoughtful design, refined engineering prowess, and a smart aesthetic.

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One feature of the CD5x in particular embodies all of these qualities. Perhaps not obvious to the casual observer is that the CD drawer is actually a complete CD turntable that slides out of the case, thus retaining the mechanical integrity one expects to find in a top-loader-with-magnetic-puck, but with the convenience of a drawer loader. In other words, it's like having a top loader that does not require the top shelf of the rack. And there's not a bit of wobbly play or klunkiness in the drawer action; instead it's firm, smooth and deliberate.

While one might wish the CD5x had digital outputs, Naim believes that there is some performance cost to having them, and as good as this player sounds you might well believe they are onto something. Performance again in mind, they have provided the means to upgrade the power supply, and the FlatCap2x fulfills this role very nicely.

We are also very pleased with the NAIT XS integrated amplifier. It makes you want to pull out music you have not listened to in ages. Music you had previously written off as a disappointment suddenly becomes viable in the hands of this amp. The NAIT XS conveys an intensity, an insistent quality that defies obvious description. Perhaps this is what some refer to as pace and rhythmic timing, though these terms suggest an unrelaxed quality which is not the case here. Rich baritone voices from favorite operas seem more moving than remembered, pianos more richly played, and acoustic guitars more present. All good things, and just a few of the myriad examples that illustrate the nature of this fine new integrated from Naim.

The NAIT XS can pair with a wide range of speakers. Alone it can bring forth bounty from small monitors like the Reference 3A Dulcets (by far the most natural match we have found for these speakers). By upgrading the preamp's power supply with a FlatCap2x or HiCap2, it can also be the heart of even higher resolution audio systems, bringing it into the league of speaker pairings like the Reference 3A Episodes.

Nordost

New in our showroom are the Quasar Points vibration isolation accessories. Their dark, sleek look is perfectly suited for placing under Naim components such as our CD5x CD player. As with their cousins, the Pulsar Points, and as with Nordost products in general, there is an elegant simplicity to Quasar Points that belies the inherent mastery of the concept at work. Cleverly designed as a tungsten ball with cup above and below, they also feature a cone-like taper that, besides being very attractive, might also play a role in terms of their ability to minimize the harmful effects of vibration on the components they are placed beneath.

Comparing the Quasar Points and the Pulsar Points, the differences are somewhat subtle but audible. Piano recordings tended to sound richer with Quasar Points. A certain magical quality of some acoustic guitar recordings was subdued relative to the Pulsar Points. The character of your system and your musical tastes might well dictate which way you would want to go. Come hear a demo of these affordable and very worthwhile isolation devices.

Nottingham

The **Interspace Junior** with 9" Ace Interspace unipivot tonearm (\$1999) is a Nottingham in every sense. Foremost is the sound, which is organic and fluid without coloration. It features the same drive motor successful in so many of Nottingham's designs, more economically integrated into the plinth. Dimensions are compact, but this is no lightweight turntable. The alloy platter and composite plinth are *MASSIVE* beyond expectation. The tonearm mounting and many of its parts are skillfully machined from aluminum. As with other Nottingham turntables, each design detail is the product of many years' experience building turntables by ear. We especially like the combination of the Interspace Junior with the Lyra Dorian MC cartridge. Heirloom quality at a fair price.

Quantum Resonant Technology

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We have yet to hear a high-end digital source that didn't benefit from the power purification supplied by the QX2 and QX4. It is a startling difference to everyone who hears it. The human voice is the greatest beneficiary of this wonderful but mysterious technology. Singers calm down and sing more beautifully, more like they are happy to be singing. Electric bass acquires greater definition and clarity. A jangly guitar takes on a richness that seems to place the player and the guitar amp in the room, instead of merely placing an image at a point in an artificial soundstage. Our advice? Don't be content with someone showing you graphs of their power conditioner at work. Trust your ears to hear the difference before and after, because if you can't, you are just buying an expensive power strip in a box.

Quicksilver Audio

We display several models of these Heirloom quality tube power amplifiers and preamplifiers, including the Silver 70, Mid Mono and SET Mono monoblock amplifiers and the Line Stage, Remote Control Line Stage, and Full Preamp preamplifiers. Most others are available by special order. Those lucky enough to own Quicksilvers enjoy a natural, musical bliss, economical yet rock-solid build quality, and the comfort of knowing their purchase will last many satisfying years. Considering tubes? Never underestimate the musical communication of a Quicksilver amplifier.

Reference 3A

We are proud to display the Grand Veena, the Episode, the Veena, the MM deCapo-I, and most recently added, the Dulcet. There is a model to suit every budget, each one scoring big for musicality. Fine craftsmanship makes them beautiful. Easy drivability and modest dimensions and weight make them easy to live with. We have for display an example of the standard natural maple, the cherry stained maple, the piano gloss black, and our favorite, the piano gloss cherry, so you can get a good idea of the finishes available. Call to arrange an audition of what we consider to be the most musical line of affordable speakers available from anywhere in the world!

Audiophile treasures from:

Aspara Acoustics ▲ Bel Canto Design ▲ Cambre' ▲ Copland ▲ Furutech ▲ Graham Slee ▲ Hannl Vinyl Care
Lyra ▲ Naim ▲ Nordost ▲ Nottingham Analogue Studio ▲ Quantum ▲ Quicksilver ▲ Reference 3A

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