



EXPOSURE 2010

SOUND ★★★★★

VALUE ★★★★★

£599.00

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GUARANTEE 3 years

Traditionally – and few brands are more seeped in tradition than this one – Exposure components have had rather rough-hewn and uncompromising aesthetics. But this has recently changed to the less distinctive but arguably more attractive and house-friendly appearance you see here. Exposure components are no longer quite so iconoclastic under the skin either, and it turns out that the 2010 CD uses many of the same key components as a number of other models, in particular (from this group) the Talk Thunder 1.1.

At the core of the 2010 is a Burr Brown 24-bit/96kHz DAC and Sony

CD Text mechanism, built onto an aluminium chassis with an extruded aluminium fascia (in a choice of black or *au naturel*). There's a basic but adequate set of native controls and an attractive blue display which can be dimmed or switched off entirely.

Digital outputs are available in optical and electrical flavours. The only slightly disappointing feature is the old-fashioned and cluttered looking remote control, a throwback to an earlier time and surely past its retirement age.

SOUND QUALITY

Overall, the Exposure has more dynamics and warmth than most of

the others in this test. The sound has "real body and presence" and "good vocal control", both comments referring to the Marc Cohn track, though the symphonic excerpt was deemed "thin" by one. Raw might be a better term; this player can appear to lack resolution and sound congested with some material, but the Ravel piano recording was generally liked. One panellist however voted consistently against the 2010 condemning it as "flat", "confused" and "unable to hang together". He was the only one to prefer the Talk Thunder 1.1 to the Exposure, but this was a decidedly minority view. Though they share many of the same key components, the Thunder is around £50 more expensive.

For my money, however, this is the superior player and while it lacks the range, neutrality and above all the resolution of the best in this group, it remains a thoroughly musical player at a very attractive price. Of all the

The 2010 is only let down by its cluttered-looking throwback remote control.

players this month it is probably the one that will have the greatest appeal to those who cut their audio teeth on analogue sources, and who dislike obviously digital-sounding components. The top end has more than the usual restraint, and the warm, rough physicality of the sound should make vinyl users especially feel at home.

CONCLUSION

This is a player that gives every indication of working consistently well in a wide variety of systems. It never pushes the music to the raw and bleeding edge, but then that isn't really an appropriate quality for a model that may be asked to take up residence in systems of widely varying capabilities. At this price and given its impressive mix of strengths it's a firm Best Buy.

"THE WARM, ROUGH PHYSICALITY OF THE SOUND SHOULD MAKE VINYL USERS ESPECIALLY FEEL AT HOME."



THE LAB REPORT

HAVING JUST MENTIONED THE PCM1716 DAC in the Cyrus Lab Report, we find the very same chip in Exposure's new player, together with the CD-Text-compatible BD25 mechanism from Sony that's also used in the Arcam and Talk players. This is a tried-and-tested DAC that performs well in this application, offering a low 175psec jitter with a textbook 103dB S/N ratio and low 0.0015% distortion at its peak output of 2V. That's 2.0V, precisely! Distortion does increase slightly to 0.007% both at lower levels (1kHz/-

30dBfs) and at high frequencies (20kHz/0dBfs) but its low-level resolution is exceedingly good with minuscule errors of +0.0/-0.2dB over a full 100dB range. Exposure's +/-0.02dB response specification is a little optimistic, however (the decimal point is probably in the wrong place) because the 2010 has a very gentle -0.3dB treble roll-off. Overall, no major problems to report with this model, though a comparison with Talk's similar Thunder 1.1 player should prove interesting...