

## BUDGET COMPONENT



### Peachtree Nova D/A integrated amplifier

(\$1199; reviewed by John Marks, Vol.32 No.8, August 2009 WWW)

In my opinion, the most exciting products of our competition are found right here. Components in our Budget Product category offer outstanding performance at relatively low cost, and often benefit from technologies trickled down from more expensive designs, marketed to reach younger music lovers. While there's no doubt that products such as the Rega P3 turntable, PSB Alpha B1 loudspeaker, and Apple iPod—all previous bargain-priced champions—can provide newcomers a gateway to high-end audio, they can just as easily rekindle the enthusiasm of longtime audiophiles. Either way you look at it, these products are about the twin engines that keep high-end audio vital and fun: performance and passion.

It's no surprise, then, that votes were scattered across the board. A remarkable 10 of the 11 contenders, from Sony's XDR-F1HD AM/FM tuner (\$99.99) to Simaudio's Moon i-1 integrated amplifier (\$1700), received at least one first-place consideration. This

is as much a testament to the diversity of our writers and their priorities as it is to the strength of the products they nominated. But while the competition was flooded by offerings from well-established brands, it was newcomer Peachtree Audio's Nova D/A integrated amplifier that won our hearts with its special combination of style, performance, and versatility.

Talk about exciting. During this year's Spring Fever open house at Stereo Exchange, a leading high-end retailer in Manhattan, the scrumptious little Peachtree Nova was practically leaping into guests' laps. I was there. I saw. People *wanted* this thing. *Badly. Seriously.* Can you blame them? The nifty Nova combines an 80Wpc class-A/B power amplifier, a high-quality internal USB D/A converter, and a cool tubed line stage. It has eight inputs: five digital (one USB, two coaxial S/PDIF, two optical TosLink) and three line-level analog. If you wanted to, you could even stuff a Sonos Zone Player in its butt and listen to music all over

### 2009 RUNNERS-UP

(in alphabetical order)

**Bel Canto USB Link 24/96**

**Benchmark DAC1 USB**

**Pre D/A processor**

**Cambridge Audio DacMagic**

**D/A processor**

**Musical Fidelity V-DAC D/A**

**processor** (\$299; reviewed by Sam Tellig

and John Atkinson, Vol.32 Nos.5 & 12,

May & December 2009)

**Oppo BDP-83 universal player**

**PSB Imagine B loudspeaker**

(\$1000/pair; reviewed by John Marks &

John Atkinson, Vol.32 Nos.2, 4, 6, 8, & 10,

February, April, June, August, and October

2009 WWW)

**Shure SE310 earphones**

**Simaudio Moon i-1 integrated**

**amplifier**

**Sony XDR-F1HD FM/AM tuner**

**Wadia Digital 170iTransport**

the house. With its real-wood veneer wrap, rounded corners, and Eamesesque high profile, the Nova looks awesome. *Plus*, it sounds great: punchy dynamics, pointed articulation, impactful bass, and well-defined treble. Even John Marks liked it!