



Hegel Music Systems Viking

DIGITAL CD PLAYER

All-new CD players are not a common thing in this day and age, ones from a company as compact as Hegel are rarer still. The company still holds a candle for optical disc though, stating that when implemented correctly it is the best digital format on the market. The Viking is them putting its money where their mouth is.

Slotting In

The Viking makes use of a slot-loading mechanism derived from an automotive source, coupled to an AKM 4493SEQ DAC coupled with the Masterclock and Soundengine tech developed for its streamers. Unusually, no form of upsampling or other digital manipulation is employed but the Viking does make use of the Clock technology to deliver outstandingly low jitter and uses an OLED display to keep noise levels to a minimum. The Viking, like the Mohican that preceded it, is resolutely CD-only!

In our test, Jason Kennedy felt the key to the Viking's appeal is that the thoroughness and care that has gone into its engineering is not something that manifests itself as audible in the sound it creates. While that sounds like damning the Viking with faint praise, instead, the player goes about striking a welcome balance between the smooth and refined sound of many players from the Far East. But it also has a level of general get up and go more in keeping with European and North American designs. And it does this without any inherent contradiction.

It delivers a performance that combines effortless timing with a noise floor so low as to be irrelevant and then works in a level of space and three dimensionality that changes scale to fit the material you are asking it to play. The result is a player equally adept at pleasing heart and head, whether or not it plugs into a Hegel amp.

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