

Best of the rest over £6000

## Accoustic Arts Drive 1 Mk2/DAC 1 Mk4



£6185

**ACCUSTIC ARTS** IS a name that's new to us, but judging by the quality of this German two-box CD player, it's a company to be reckoned with.

The Drive 1 Mk2/DAC 1 Mk4, to give them their full names, are immensely well built, as you'd expect at the price. The Drive 1 Mk2 transport is a simply laid-out affair, with chunkily proportioned controls. We particularly like the sliding mirrored cover that protects the disc-spinning

**"This player is right up there with the best in its areas of real strength"**

mechanism: it feels solid and lights up a funky shade of blue, if desired. As with most specialist manufacturers, Accoustic Arts buys in an OEM CD-spinning mechanism rather than making one in-house. Here, it's the well-proven Philips CDM Pro 2M.

This CD player is one of the most natural and fluid we've heard. It makes much of the competition sound mechanical, and mirrors the

**↑ FOR**

Impressive build; natural and fluid presentation; treble refinement

**↓ AGAINST**

This player lacks a little verve

**→ VERDICT**

A great-sounding combination that just needs a little extra bite to become a total all-rounder



organic quality people like in vinyl. Voices and instruments are richly textured, which adds considerably to the sense of believability. Treble has to come in for a special mention: it shimmers when required, is refined, and packed with detail. There's not a hint of the bright, hard sound that CD replay is still tarred with.

**Rather pulls its sonic punches**

So far, you know there is an awful lot this two-boxer does well. It's undoubtedly right up there with the very best in its areas of strength. However, the Accoustic Arts isn't quite the brilliant all-rounder we hoped for. Play something simple such as The

Beatles' *Help!* and you'll notice a subtle lack of exuberance and drive. This player pulls its punches when it comes to delivering hard-hitting dynamics and so fails to milk a recording for the last percentage point of drama. A slightly lazy attitude to timing doesn't help.

We have to keep things in proportion, of course: neither of the shortcomings we've mentioned is massive, but they do manage to take the edge off what is otherwise a class-leading performance.

**SPECIFICATION**

**Audio outputs** RCA, XLR, AES/EBU, SP/diff  
**RCA, SP/diff BNC CD Text** No **Memory** Yes  
**Display** off No **Finishes** Silver/chrome  
**Size (hwd)** 20 x 48 x 38cm **Weight** 28kg