

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

THE WORLD'S NO.1 HOME ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

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Rega DAC | DAC | £500

Step-up DAC is a crisp-sounding superstar

Rega's new digital-to-analogue converter steps into a rather barren part of the market. There's no shortage of talent below £350, but up until now if you wanted to take a decisive step up you'd have to spend well over four figures. We think this Rega DAC is good enough to change that.

It is equipped with a USB input, as well as two opticals and two coaxials, and they can all accept signals up to 24Bit/192kHz, which most cheaper alternatives don't.

Those who like to tweak are in luck. This converter has ten filter options: five for inputs with sampling rates below 48kHz

and five for those above. The differences are subtle, so the choice really just comes down to taste. We tended to like the default setting, number one, on most occasions.

Regardless, this is an excellent-sounding product. It's detailed and dynamic without sounding harsh, even with edgy recordings such as Kanye West's *Monster* (a WAV file from our Apple MacBook). The Rega has a sweet tonal balance that balances insight, bite and refinement beautifully.

The Rega really stands out from the competition in the way it handles rhythms: it's crisp, and conveys the momentum in a

USE IT WITH

Apple MacBook

We've shown an Apple, but it could be any computer loaded with music files



piece off music superbly. The result is a musically engaging performer that reproduces the emotion in music as diverse as James Blake's *Limit to your Love* and Mahler's *Symphony No.2* brilliantly. Put simply, it makes music -no matter how complex - make sense.

There are no downsides here. If your budget stretches to £500, and you put sound quality above all else, this Rega DAC is a must-listen product.

Rating ★★★★★

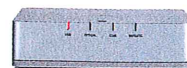
FOR An engaging performer in all genres; 24Bit/192kHz ability; solid build

AGAINST Doesn't need such a wide variety of filter options

VERDICT Something of a superstar. If your budget extends to £500 it deserves attention

Also consider

Arcam rDAC
£300 ★★★★★



If you can't quite afford the Rega, this Award-winning DAC is a fine alternative. It's well equipped and sounds as musical as they come at this kind of price

