

audiovideo

august 2014

hearing • seeing • believing



FREQUENCY RESPONSE
20 Hz to 20 kHz from 0 dB to -20 dB
TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION
0.05% (1 kHz, 100 mV, 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
POWER OUTPUT
2.5W (1 kHz, 100 mV, 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
SENSITIVITY FOR RATED OUTPUT
High Imp. 400 mV (100 mV, 20 Hz to 20 kHz)
Phono Imp. 0.45mV (100 mV, 20 Hz to 20 kHz)

C2500
TUBE PREAMPLIFIER
Precision Performance By **McIntosh**
McIntosh Laboratory Inc., Binghamton, New York, USA

McIntosh
C2500 TUBE PREAMPLIFIER

- HIGH-END DEVIALET 200
- PORTABLE MUSIC ADL A1, CYRUS SOUNDCAN LIFESTYLE AUDIO
- GENEVA MODEL M, DALI FAZON MIKRO HOME THEATRE SPEAKERS
- KEF E305 SUB/SAT SYSTEM, PSB W1 & W3 AV RECEIVERS
- HARMAN KARDON AV 171, ARCAM AVR750, PRIMARE SPA23

WIN!
THE ALL-NEW BLACK KEYS CD, *TURN BLUE*

MCINTOSH C2500

Issue 286 ♦ R28 Incl. VAT



Wonderbox!



ADL A1

It seems as though we have less and less free time these days, which doesn't seem like a fair deal to me, having grown up in the computer generation.

Sci-Fi writers promised us a future where machines would make our lives easier by doing a lot of the physical and mental heavy lifting that consumed the hours we would otherwise spend actually living. But it seems the more they help, the more is expected from us and what was initially designed to be a helping hand, has become a lifeline.

It's not all doom and gloom, however: some lifestyle products have the ability to help the professional side of your life, while at the same time making your life that little bit sweeter, too.

This month I found myself with two products from Japanese-based company ADL by Furutech, one of which I was admittedly a bit intimidated to open.

The A1 portable headphone amp/USB DAC/Android DAC (say that three times fast) is something for the digital enthusiast on the go, and while that might not sound at all intimidating, it was the packaging that caught me off-guard.

Looking like something destined for some high-tech lab (no surprise the 'L' in ADL stands for 'Labs') somewhere in a foreign country, I almost felt I needed to be alone and in a safe space before un-boxing it.

Curiosity however got the best of the situation and I carefully removed what I was also worried I would be out of my depth reviewing. The actual unit was a neat, somewhat plain and somewhat fun looking little box, compact enough to fit in the palm of your hand and light as a ... handful of feathers.

A mixture of hard plastic and brushed aluminium makes up most of the A1, with minimalistic branding and labelling for a clean, ultra-modern feel. The front and back are home to all the inputs and underneath you'll find a source selector that's pretty easy to adjust.

The on/off switch and volume control knob at the front looks slightly big for its breaches but adds, what I feel, is a cool throwback to old-school hi-fi. The size also

helps when adjusting the volume.

Operation is very straightforward, regardless of source. I first linked the test unit up to my laptop via the USB mini-B-to-USB cable.

From there it was a quick trip to the sound settings in the system preferences menu and boom – ready to go!

The potential of your headphones is instantly unlocked. Bass is richer and punchier, the midrange engages you widely as it warms you up, and the treble reaches further, illuminating a world of texture absent from your computer's standard sound card.

The A1 is ideal for people who want to run DSD 2X on either a laptop or desktop computer and it supports DSD 2.8M and 5.6M data capable of sampling at 8, 16, 32, 44.1, 48, 88.2, 96, 176.4 and 192 kHz rates, which shows up on the front panel with the help of some rather slick little LED lights.

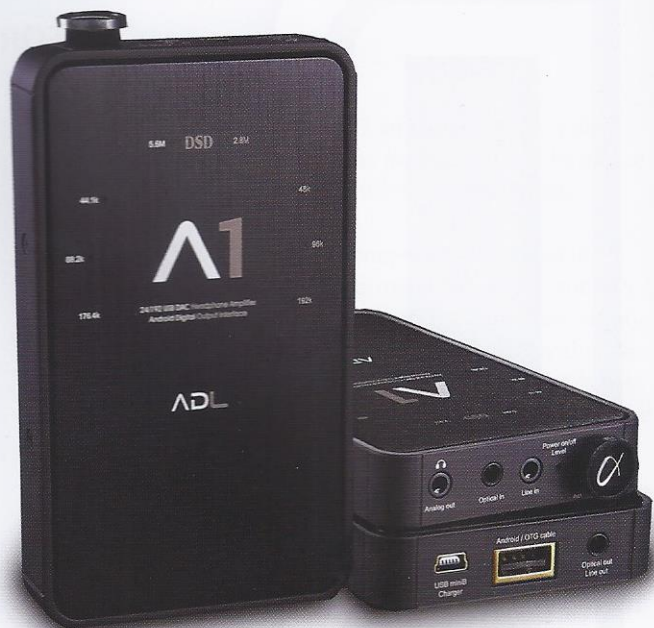
It's similarly easy to operate with your portable audio devices/smartphones/tablets/anything with a 3,5 mm input, and although it was a bit awkward as a 'walking around' kind of portable device, perhaps a big pocket and a shorter chord could help.

Built for Android-specific devices, the A1 also comes equipped with a USB A port for the OTG cable.

Sound reproduction throughout sources is a noticeable step up right through the frequency spectrum. There is a slight clipping of the initial sound when new tracks are manually selected, which is slightly annoying, but it's perfectly fine at the beginning of an album or a playlist.

Otherwise I have nothing bad to say about the A1 and I really enjoyed my time with it. An equally aesthetic carry case would round it off nicely, I think.

I love the size and weight, and it would be a perfect partner for the music producer on the go with its fantastic



7,5 hour battery life. Damn! Now I really want one. Thanks guys! My birthday was last month!

Justin Beachcroft-Shaw

VITAL STATS

Digital conversion ... Up to 24-bit/192 kHz
Sampling rates supported .. Via VT1736 32-bit/192 kHz USB chip, USB 2.0 High Speed-compliant accepts DSD 2,8M or 5,6M signal. 44,1 /48 /88,2 /96/176,4/192 kHz sampling rates supported
Connections USB mini B, USB A for Android OTG cable, combined optical and analogue out, second 3,5 mm output, optical input, line input
Dimensions (WxDxH)
 68 x 118 x 16,5 mm
Weight ± 150 g
Price R6 450

Verdict

The perfect partner for digital music lovers.

Supplied by

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Website

www.avcables.co.za

OUR RATING: 86 / 100

