

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR 2011

Classé

CP-800

When Classé delivered the CP-800 to HFC's offices, hopes were high. Classé boss Dave Nauber had already stated the unit was better with a mobile phone than any CD player and so the challenge was born. Two of our most experienced reviewers confirmed, independently of one another, that they preferred listening to music via the USB input over a variety of expensive, high-end CD players. This ground-breaking preamp will leave its mark in hi-fi history, of that we're certain.

DETAILS

PRICE: £4,450

TYPE: Preamp

TELEPHONE:
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WEBSITE:
classeaudio.com



It's been a fascinating journey of discovery for us compiling this year's Awards issue. So many great products have come out of 2011 that products in some categories were almost impossible to separate. So, it's important to note that it would be a mistake to dismiss category 'finalists' in the stubborn pursuit of a 'winner'. Instead, we'd advocate trying to listen to as many products as possible in a given section, to discover what's right for you. If you can put the effort in before

making a purchase, the long-term satisfaction will far outweigh the initial auditioning legwork.

Many of our award winners this year were plucked from our unique *Blind-Listening Group Tests* – the most rigorous test regime in the hi-fi press, while some achieved such exceptional scores in their 'solo' reviews that they were certain to go through to our Awards shortlist. Then there were products that simply stood out from the crowd. Notable standouts include both

Audiolab's 8200 CD and amplifier, Logitech's Squeezebox Touch and Michell's Gyro SE turntable, but there could only be one winner...

Classé's CP-800 preamp has caused quite a stir in the HFC offices and has even had some reviewers checking their bank balances! For us it was a clear winner: a product that breaks the mould, creates a benchmark for sonic excellence and begins to question the value of expensive CD players. Top marks, then, to Classé on a job well done.