

# WHAT HI★FI?

## SOUND AND VISION

SEPTEMBER 2007 £3.99 www.whathifi.com

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**1400**  
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STAR BUYS

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### 1 BEST-EVER DVD RECORDERS

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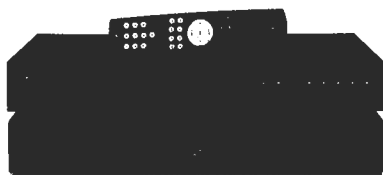
### 3 NEW SET SPECIAL

Flatscreen tests, from £150 baby to Full HD beast



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Why your hi-fi needs a pre/power boost



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We've heard the new 685s – should you?



haymarket



INSTANT CINEMA > OPTOMA'S DVD-PLAYING PROJECTOR p18



SACD PLAYER  
Marantz  
SA-7S1  
£5000



STEREO SPEAKERS  
Beauhorn B2 Rhapsody  
£2750  
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PRE/POWER AMPS  
Plinius P10/M8  
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# Temptations

THE WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE KIT

SACD/CD PLAYER  
MARANTZ  
SA-7S1



£ 5000

**FOR**

It has a refined, informative and natural presentation; excellent build and finish

**AGAINST**

Understated sound might not appeal on a short listen

**VERDICT**

A great SACD/CD player, but give it a proper listen or you won't realise what the fuss is about

If you're about to spend the price of a small car on a CD player, we imagine you'll take your time – good idea, as this **Marantz** is coy about revealing its incredible ability

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS DON'T** count, at least when it comes to Marantz's new range-topper. Take a quick listen to the SA-7S1 SACD/CD player, and it comes across as overly polite. The player initially seems understated, lacking the punch, bass power and impressive dynamics that you'd expect for this kind of money – which is five grand, remember.

Listen longer, over hours and days, and that impression changes. This is *not* a machine that goes for the quick hit. This Marantz is in it for the long run, and its balance will keep you listening year after year, rather than exciting you today, and letting your interest wane after a couple of weeks.

Regardless of format, this is a supremely smooth and clean-sounding disc-spinner. There's no trace of undue harshness, which makes it a really easy listen, even over extended sessions. The subtle approach to dynamics and punch isn't the weakness it first appears: take a closer listen, and you realise the SA-7S1 isn't half as polite as you first thought, and the impression is mainly to do with the lack of edge and hardness. This is the kind of player that revels in the subtleties, revealing bags of low-level detail when required. Want

With understated looks and sound, the Marantz oozes class for those who don't need to boast

**“Want to follow Big Boi's rapid-fire lyrics on *Speakerboxxx*? Well, this CD machine delivers the kind of listening experience you linger over”**

to follow Big Boi's rapid-fire lyrics on *Speakerboxxx*? Or hear the organ-pedal sounds from the opening of Eric Bibb's *Where the Green Grass Grows*? In that case, this machine delivers the kind of in-depth listening experience you'll want to linger over.

Complexity doesn't faze the SA-7S1, either: it replays dense music like Ravel's *Bolero* with ease. Perhaps the machine's greatest strength is its fluid-

ity: instruments and vocals are delivered in an ultra-natural and convincing manner, making most rivals sound mechanical in their approach. It's this quality more than any other that makes the SA-7S1 such a likeable machine.

Weaknesses? Timing isn't particularly crisp, though it's precise enough to keep fast-moving rhythms alive. And it would be better to have just a little more authority in the bass. Also, we'd prefer Marantz to get rid of its user-adjustable filter and noise-shaping options, and settle on what it considers best. That way you concentrate on the music, rather than messing about with the player.

Marantz has a long history of making top-class CD players, and the SA-7S1 simply adds to that

long-established and extremely admirable reputation. It's beautifully built, easy to use, and sounds excellent. Whether for CD or SACD, the Marantz SA-7S1 is a must-hear product.



**TYPE** Integrated SACD/CD player  
**ANALOGUE OUTPUTS** RCA, balance XLR, headphone  
**DIGITAL OUTPUTS** Coaxial, optical  
**EXTERNAL CLOCK INPUT** Yes  
**HDCD-COMPATIBLE**  
**No CD TEXT** Yes  
**MEMORY** Yes  
**DISPLAY OFF** Yes  
**FINISHES** 1



Its strength is  
its fluidity: music  
is delivered in an  
ultra-natural and  
convincing manner

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