

BEST BUY

HI-FI CHOICE  
magazine

# Black magic

Pure Sound's first valve amplifier is able to cast a spell over its listeners

**PRODUCT** Pure Sound A30

**TYPE** Integrated stereo amplifier

**PRICE** £1,180

**CONTACT** ☎ 01822 612449 @ www.puresound.info

**W**ith only three line-level inputs, an output of just 30 watts per channel and no remote control, what was originally called the 'Bewitch' amp is hardly spell-binding in the feature stakes. However, those valves on the black chassis of the Pure Sound A30 suggest features don't matter here.

The A30 uses two matched pairs of Russian-made Electro-Harmonix 6550 power output tubes in ultra-linear (push-pull) mode. These are run with an auto-bias circuit, so there's no need to adjust, reset or monitor the bias of the tubes across their life. Valves are also used in the input section, with a pair each of 6N9P and 6N8P. More uncommonly these days, a 5Z3P valve is used as a rectifier on each channel. Coupled with a large choke, this is an uncompromising way of supplying perfectly smoothed and controlled juice to the amplifier. The rest of the design – from the ALPS Blue Velvet pot and carbon-film resistors to the SCR capacitors and

high-spec output transformers – mark this out as a no-compromise design for the money.

Sets of four and eight ohm loudspeaker terminals complete the package. One omission that might upset some is the lack of a cage to keep the hot-running valves away from keen little hands, paws or house guests.

## SOUND QUALITY

Pure Sound suggests the A30 is comfortable with almost any loudspeaker with a rated sensitivity of 88dB or more, and this is true up to a point. Loudspeakers with plastic bass drivers may end up sounding poorly controlled and thin, as they will with almost any valve amp. Fortunately, speakers (even very expensive ones) that work in harmony with the A30 sing out.

One hi-fi myth is that valve amps have a sweet, warm sound to them. Poorly designed valve amps may go for a deliberately warm sound to make them seem artificially sweet, but the A30 needs no such saccharine. It merely makes a good sound that's honest, accurate and extremely musical. Aside from the heat being given off, the only immediate pointer to the valve-like nature of the design is the soundstage 'shape', which tends to deliver a knot of instruments between and behind the loudspeakers, instead

of the virtual football field of musicians good solid-state electronics produce. The A30's tonal signature is one of invisibility and accuracy; rich in the bass, extended in the treble and extremely open in the midrange. It's not as beat-oriented as some designs, rather it's the overall sound that casts a spell with the A30. Partnered with care, it really is a bewitching little amp. **HFC**

Alan Sircom

## VERDICT

**SOUND >> 88%**



**FEATURES >> 70%**



**BUILD >> 85%**



**VALUE >> 89%**



**PRO**  
Sensational sound quality, the like of which you'll struggle to find at anything like this price elsewhere. Can be used with some truly high-end speakers...

**CON**  
...but the wrong speakers will sound flat through the A30. Some will find the lack of inputs and valve cage an issue too.

## CONCLUSION

This little amplifier is capable of playing with the really big and more expensive boys... and winning. If you partner it with the right speakers, the sound quality that the A30 can deliver is truly beguiling.

**HI-FI CHOICE** >> **89%**  
OVERALL SCORE