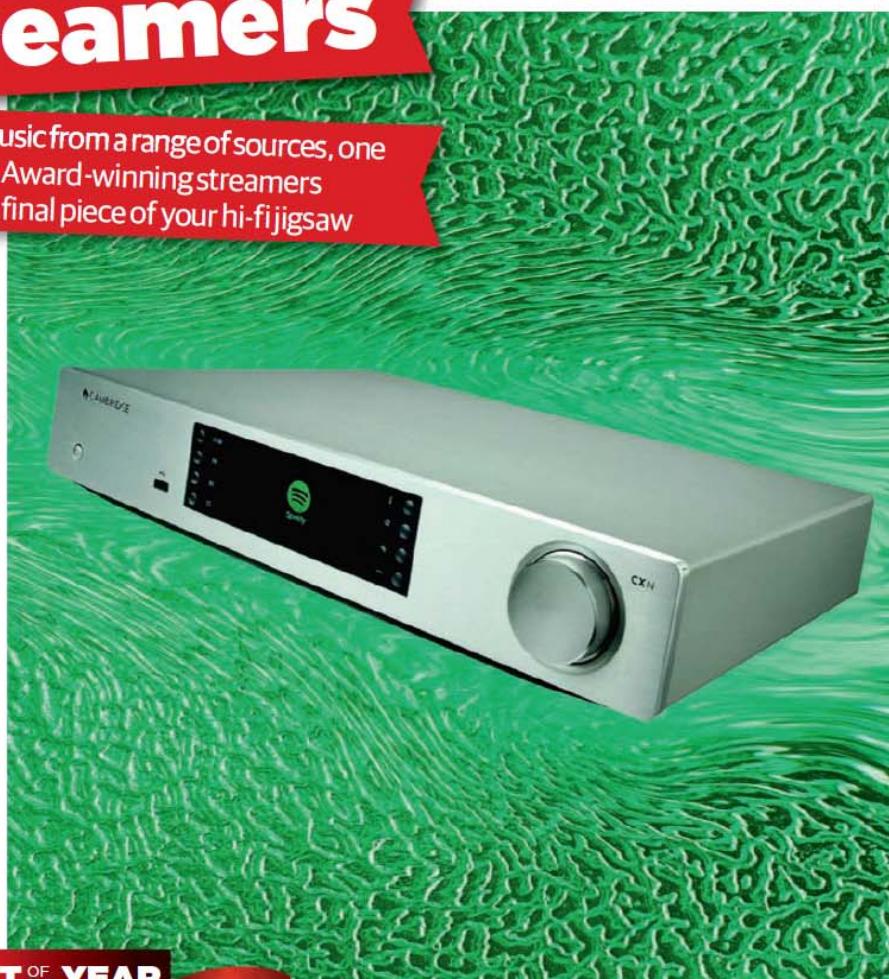


AWARDS 2015 STREAMERS

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Streamers

If you play music from a range of sources, one of these five Award-winning streamers could be the final piece of your hi-fi jigsaw



PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Best streamer £500-£1000

Cambridge CXN £700

Cambridge Audio is back with a vengeance this year, with its new CX series garnering a slew of five-star reviews. The CXN streamer is one of the jewels in the line up, wowing us with its new sleek and shiny design, its ease of use and its excellent performance.

The CXN builds on the Award-winning Stream Magic v6 streamer, but a fresh design makes it feel like a complete overhaul. With classy brushed-aluminium casework, a delightful control dial and a punchy, 4.3in full-colour display, it feels far more premium than its price suggests.

But it's the hugely enjoyable sonic performance that makes the CXN our Product of the Year. Basslines are meaty and solid, and there's a lively sense of rhythm. Voices are rich and smooth, and the expansive, full-bodied sound fills the room with easy-flowing dynamics.

Complexity with cohesion

The Cambridge CXN has an exhaustive spread of connectivity: if you have a music file stored somewhere, the streamer will probably play it, regardless of recording quality. It also features Spotify Connect and

internet radio, so you have access to a few million more songs. There's support for AirPlay, you'll need a separate dongle for Bluetooth.

File support is extensive: all the popular formats such as WAV, FLAC, AIFF, ALAC and MP3 are supported, up to 24-bit/192kHz, as well as DSD 64 files (which you can play using the back-panel USB input). In fact, all three USB (type A) ports can charge your smartphone - Apple and Android - but will only play back media stored on sticks or hard drives. A pair of RCA analogue and balanced XLR inputs, two optical inputs and a USB type B port for hardwiring your laptop are also available.

Switching between inputs and scrolling through your music library goes smoothly with the redesigned remote control. There's a decent app as well, but we like using the intuitive handset more.

In fact, the CXN is an absolute joy to use - every aspect of the streamer has been given such careful attention that it's sure to win people over. The functionality, design and ease of use are the best we've seen at this price, and the engaging sound it provides makes it one of the most pleasing products we've heard this year.