

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

**Eminently
compatible**

As well as supporting high-res, the Minox plays all manner of file formats, including FLAC, WAV, MP3 and Apple Lossless



Systems

All-in-one streamers, micro systems and ready-made home cinema set-ups - we've listened to them all and singled out five leading performers

Best music system £400-£800

Cambridge Audio Minox Xi

Fancy a streaming system, but not sure if you're ready to dish out the cash for a class-leading Naim or Cyrus? This excellent Cambridge Audio Minox Xi is just the solution for you. It's an impressive package, offering myriad streaming features and the kind of insightful yet musical performance that's difficult to achieve for £600.

Width, height and depth

Down to business, and the Minox charges through alt-J's dreamy dub-pop tunes with a lively, sure-footed sense of rhythm. Instruments are easily identifiable and placed inside an airy soundstage that's as wide as it is tall and deep. Dynamic upheavals are handled with ease. There are no hard edges, and plenty of dynamic headroom.

The subtle harmonics and vocals inflections in *Fitzpleasure* are beautifully conveyed. There's texture to the synthesised strums, while the ethereal sound is weighted and cohesively organised. The song flows so smoothly that you barely notice just how deep and taut the bassline is nor how crisp the sound is. The Minox Xi makes it all sound effortless.

High-resolution audio files are supported up to 24-bit/96kHz. We would have preferred an upper limit of 192kHz, but it's not a deal breaker.

The Minox Xi is kitted out with a good spread of digital and analogue connections, including three USB ports. Supplied dongles give the unit aptX Bluetooth and wi-fi abilities. One of the biggest attractions of this Cambridge Audio system is that it gives you thousands of internet radio stations at your fingertips thanks to the preloaded BBC iPlayer, Rhapsody and Pandora services. Spotify playlists can be streamed from your smart device, while connected laptops and NAS devices can be played using wired or wireless methods.

This is an attractive piece of kit, too. The petite size will fit into most spaces, and we're quite taken with the sleek, glossy finish and sharply legible display.

What we love most about the Minox Xi is its ability to balance stunning levels of insight with an easy-going approach to music. Its willingness to get along with a variety of speakers comes a close second. Awarding it a Product of the Year gong was an easy decision. It's a fantastic system.