

BLU-RAY PLAYERS AWARDS 2015**Best Blu-ray player £300+
Cambridge CXU £900**

It is a bold move to put out a £900 Blu-ray player. After all, we've just spent a page and a half extolling the virtues of more affordable alternatives - why would you spend that much money when other hugely capable machines can be had for less?

Blu-rays are just the start

But given an appropriate system, it all makes sense. The Cambridge CXU is no ordinary Blu-ray player. For starters, spinning Blu-rays is merely one of its many talents. It is a universal disc player, capable also of playing DVD, CDs and SACDs. On top of that, it is also a DAC and network streamer rolled into one. It supports high-resolution audio up to 24bit/192kHz.

Some budget Blu-ray decks are light and hollow as a lunch box. Not the Cambridge CXU. This is a sleek, robust slab of aluminium. You get premium-quality build, with real care given to the little details - such as the feel of the buttons, the silent glide of the disc tray.

The build and aesthetics make a great first impression, one that Cambridge follows up with a glorious performance. The picture is gorgeous. With crystal clarity and bags of subtlety, it makes for a natural image, helped no end by faithful colours.

It's a dynamic picture too. Light is clean and intense but never glaring. Shadows are deep and gloomy without swallowing up finer details. Colours leap off the screen but never veer into luminous territory. Textures are crisply drawn and naturally etched.

Impresses on every level

As much as we enjoy the picture, the real treat is the sound. The CXU has a proclivity for taut, well-timed rhythms and a fluid, musical presentation. Film soundtracks are immersive and impactful - it's properly arresting stuff.

Its talents are even more obvious with two-channel music. Spin a CD and you're treated to richly detailed, spacious and melodic performance. The top end is clean and not too

bright. Vocals are clear and expressive, making the most of Leonard Cohen's baritone growl. The seductively deep and rumbling bassline on *Almost Like the Blues* is taut and controlled.

Yes, £900 is a pricey investment - but few machines can play movies and music at such high quality. If you want a player that impresses on every level, the Cambridge CXU has it all.

*The build and aesthetics make a great first impression, one that the **Cambridge CXU** follows up with a glorious performance. The picture is gorgeous*



www.whathifi.com 55