

INTEGRATED AMPLIFIER

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Musical Fidelity Nu-Vista 800

We ran the scoop review of MF's debut Nu-Vista unit over 15 years ago [HFN Aug '98]. Now the company has this new nuvistorequipped integrated amp, having recently found a company to make the requisite tube bases.

Blessedly, it eschews gadgetry offering just a remote, a switchable display of input and level, home theatre pass-through for one of the four line inputs and extra speaker terminals for bi-wiring.

The Nu-Vista 800 has a fascia machined from solid aluminium and sides fitted with attractive heatsink extrusions – it even comes with spikes for the feet and with cups too, to protect floor finishes.

'Here was an integrated capable of providing a copious precise bass'

Besides its sets of multi-way binding posts, the rear copper panel houses phono sockets for line-level sources, a balanced XLR input, pre-out and line-out. That's it. Except for one bit of frivolity: the feet not only light up – the colours change from red to yellow to green to indicate the state of warm-up – they're down-lit, too.

For the '800, Musical Fidelity has moved the Nu-Vista concept along from its progenitors through the use of 'state of the art surface mount design PCB techniques'. This involved CAD/CAM PCB design and developing bespoke software for volume control and switching.

The Nu-Vista 800's preamp section is sited on the same PCB as the input switching circuitry to keep all signal tracks as short as possible. Overall configuration is dual mono, with separate mains transformers for each channel. The nuvistor stage itself is visible through the top plate of the '800.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

OK, so switch-on results in a dazzling display of colours, as if the Aurora Borealis had mated with a piece of hi-fi equipment. The '800 emphatically tells its owner that this is no ordinary unit. And it could drive Wilson Audio Alexias [HFN Mar '13] to levels that we'd never suffer for more than a few seconds!

The single track that made us sit back and go 'Whoa!' came from Hall and Oates, the punchy 'Africa' from *Voices* [Mobile Fidelity]. It opens with frenetic 'tribal' drumming reminiscent of Kodo.

ABOVE: Minimalism rules, with only massive rotaries for volume and source, and buttons below for power on/off and display settings. All functions are controllable by a solid metal remote

And within seconds of firing up the '800, we knew that here was an integrated amp capable of delivering copious amounts of controlled, extended, precise bass. The Nu-Vista 800 rocks...

When dealing with stereo, the recreation of space says as much about performance as does tonal accuracy. The '800 excelled to a point where we'd rank it alongside the very best we have ever heard.

With the remastered Four Seasons catalogue, *The Classic Albums* [Rhino], we have access to fantastic editions of superlative recordings that exist to show off one thing: peerless harmonies. 'Silence Is Golden' sounds smooth, detailed, but above all, cinematic in its spatial magnificence. The '800 is so open and transparent that you felt as if you could walk around each individual vocalist.

We played Foreigner's maudlin smash, 'Waiting For A Girl Like You' from *Foreigner 4* [Mobile Fidelity]. This track is awash with lush harmonies, synth-y swells, tasteful drumming, *ad nauseam*, but has, above all, a silky overall texture.

Fed with this, the '800 rises up like it was 1952 and it's time to unveil Cinerama. Its sound is huge, room-filling... grand rather than grandiose... persuasive rather than commanding. Using a wine analogy, this would be to most 'mega-amps' what Ornellaia is to Amarone.

VERDICT

Those lucky enough to savour early Nu-Vista models will know what's in store: the speed and punch of solid-state, with the 'love' you only get from valves. This is a stupendously powerful integrated with impeccable behaviour. ☺

HI-FI NEWS SPECIFICATIONS

Power output (<1% THD, 8/4ohm)	325W / 580W
Dynamic power (<1% THD, 8/4/2/1ohm)	370W / 700W / 1.30kW / 2.17kW
Output impedance (20Hz–20kHz)	0.03–0.08ohm
Freq. response (20Hz–20kHz/100kHz)	–0.15dB to –0.20dB/–4.0dB
Input sensitivity (for 0dBW/300W)	22mV / 373mV (balanced)
A-wtd S/N ratio (re. 0dBW/300W)	86.0dB / 110.8dB
Distortion (20Hz–20kHz re. 10W/8ohm)	0.001–0.004%
Power consumption (Idle/Max. op)	120W / 935W
Dimensions (WHD) / Weight	483x187x510mm / 45kg