



Exposure 2010S2 CD/2010S2D **£1,850**

With several decades of experience doing smooth but gutsy amplifiers, this twosome should do well

EIGHTIES THROWBACK

This combo is positively 'old school' in the way that it has been specified. Only the illuminated red LED on the volume knob, remote control and the lack of a phono stage marks the 2010S2D amplifier out from the old Exposure X integrated from the eighties, in terms of facilities. That and the preamp output, so you can bi-amp with the matching 2010S2 power amp if you so decide.

It has a good range of analogue line inputs alongside a tape monitor loop for the tiny number of three-head cassette or open reel decks that are still in use these days. There are no digital inputs on either the amp or the CD player, although the latter has coaxial and optical digital outs.

Exposure seems to have made the decision to allocate more funds to the internals and less to convenience features, and the result is that it's a great performer but lacks flexibility compared with its rivals here.

DETAILS

PRODUCT
Exposure 2010S2 CD £830/2010S2D £1,020

ORIGIN
UK

TYPE
CD player & integrated amplifier

WEIGHT
2010S2 CD: 5kg
2010S2D: 7kg

DIMENSIONS (WxHxD)
2010S2 CD: 440 x 90 x 300mm
2010S2D: 440 x 90 x 310mm

FEATURES

- Quoted power output: 2x 75W (8ohm)
- 6x RCA line inputs

DISTRIBUTOR
Exposure Electronics Ltd

WEBSITE
exposurehifi.com

As a brand, Exposure came to fame as a purveyor of high-end pre-power amplification back in the eighties, but launched its first integrated – the X – in 1988. Since then it has always been competitive in the mid-price sector, making a name for itself with its clean-sounding, punchy amplifiers. This combination is in the middle of Exposure's main range, and is definitely 'old school', devoid of features like UPnP streaming. Indeed the CD player could easily be a mid-nineties product in the way it looks and feels, although as we'll discover, not the sound. The all-aluminium casework of this British designed and built product is good if not luxurious, but the CD mechanism feels a tad flimsy.

Inside, it's a different matter and Exposure has gone to town with a large toroidal transformer with separate windings for the mech and audio stages and a high-precision

master clock. A single Burr-Brown 24-bit/192kHz DAC chip is also fitted.

The matching 2010S2D integrated is the little brother of the acclaimed 3010S2D (HFC 397), and has lots in common. Special cascode circuitry is used, with selected components in the signal path and discrete Toshiba power output transistors. A chunky 200VA custom-made toroidal power transformer is fitted, and together these make for a respectable 75W RMS per side. This neat amplifier is fairly minimalist in appearance and none the worse for it, with six analogue inputs including a tape monitor loop and an input that can be configured for moving magnet or moving coil phono stages if the optional £110 phono board is purchased. There's a preamp output too, making bi-wiring easy.

Sound quality

The Exposure combo pushes the music ahead still further. Right from the beginning of the listening session it is clear that it brings extra dimension to the music. It combines all the good aspects of the other combos in this group, but goes just that bit further still. Most obvious is its tonality; along with the Arcam (reviewed on page 27), it proves the most sumptuous sounding duo here. From the opening bars of *King*, the keyboards just sound more vibrant, tactile and alive. It's better located within the recorded acoustic too, and somehow one doesn't pay much

attention to the hi-fi aspects of the sound, so enjoyable is it to listen to.

Speed Of Sound also takes on an extra dimension. It sounds more anthemic, more uplifting and dramatic. Part of this is down to the excellent rhythmic gait of the combo, which pushes the song along with real verve along with the full-bodied tonality. Bass guitar has more thump than all here bar the Arcam combo, and the piano sounds bigger and more impactful. The same goes for *Summertime*; although this pairing doesn't throw information out at you like the Musical Fidelity duo (page 35) it still gives a beautifully vibrant recorded acoustic, and this mixed with the creamy flute sound and superbly etched hi-hat makes for a luxurious listening experience. It gives a rousing rendition of *Lorelei* too, sounding powerful and expansive, without a hint of harshness ●

Hi-Fi Choice

OUR VERDICT

SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★ **LIKE:** Superb, musical sound; clean styling; ease of use

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★ **DISLIKE:** Lack of facilities and connectivity

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★ **WE SAY:** No-nonsense, fuss-free combo that's designed to sound great

FEATURES ★★★★★

OVERALL ★★★★★

