

PRESS RELEASE

audiolab

September 2015

Press Contact: Tim Bower

020 8654 8945

07854 966071

tim@andygilesassociates.co.uk

+44 (0) 1480 447700

www.audiolab.co.uk



Above: Audiolab 8300CD in silver finish option

Audiolab 8300CD: brilliance evolved

The King is dead, long live the King! Audiolab replaces the illustrious 8200CD with the new, improved 8300CD

Cambridgeshire, England -- Audiolab, one of Britain's most revered audio brands, is excited to announce the hotly anticipated successor to the 8200CD, arguably the most widely celebrated CD player of the current millennium. The 8300CD spearheads Audiolab's all-new 8300 Series, sporting a fresh new look and a host of improvements to enhance functionality and performance.

The outgoing 8200 Series contained two CD players: the 8200CD and 8200CDQ, the latter sporting additional preamp facilities. Both players proved hugely successful since launching in 2010, topping group test after group test, as the 8200CD became a three-time winner of *What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision's* 'Product of Year' award and the 8200CDQ was named *Hi-Fi World's* 'CD Player of the Year'. The 8300CD replaces both players, adding full digital preamp functionality (among other things) to the 8200CD's specification.

Some might ask: is it worth Audiolab making another CD player in this day and age? The answer is emphatically 'yes' – many music fans have large CD collections and this will not change anytime soon. Audiolab is dedicated to ensuring that these individuals continue to be well served with CD players of exceptional quality, but without exceptionally high price tags. Equally, if you're making a CD player with a great DAC onboard – and Audiolab's CD players are top-notch in this regard – then it makes sense to allow external digital sources to benefit, too. This, in a nutshell, is the philosophy behind the 8300CD, and the 8200CD before it.

Building on solid foundations

How do you improve upon a landmark product like the 8200CD? Very carefully indeed! It's about painstaking evolution; precisely targeted improvements in key areas, taking advantage of newly available components to make a great product even greater. The 8200CD and 8200CDQ provided the firmest of foundations upon which to build, and the fundamental ingredients that made these players great remain unchanged, including:

- **32-bit ESS Sabre DAC**

The 8200CD and CDQ were among the first CD players to use this exceptional hybrid multi-bit Delta-Sigma DAC and it continues to have a reputation as the finest high-end D/A converter chip available. Like its predecessor, the 8300CD is built around the Sabre32 9018, with 512 DAC elements (256 per channel) each operating at 84.672MHz – all digital audio sources, whatever the sample rate, are upsampled or oversampled to this frequency.

- **Exemplary jitter reduction**

Around the DAC are extensive measures to reduce jitter to vanishingly low levels, of a nature you would expect to see only in much more expensive players. Audiolab delivers superb sonic performance through the use of a proprietary, discrete master clock, in conjunction with the patented Sabre32 sample rate converter, in order to radically reduce time domain errors (jitter) from all digital input sources.

- **Time domain isolation**

While the Sabre32 sample rate converter virtually eliminates jitter within the digital domain, external 'analogue domain' induced artefacts caused by RF breakthrough, PSU coupling and so on will affect the DAC's ultimate sonic performance. Audiolab resolves this critical issue via its CATDA (Cascaded Asynchronous Time Domain Attenuator) circuit. This circuit isolates the DAC substrate from sonically deleterious artefacts that affect non-synchronous digital input data. To achieve the best possible performance, three identical cascaded stages are used – each individual stage provides increased isolation, thereby maximising timing performance, even at higher RF frequencies.

- **Selectable digital filters**

As digital audio reproduction technology has progressed, the importance of the characteristics of reconstruction digital filters has become more appreciated. The Audiolab 8300CD features user-selectable digital filters for optimal listening and measurement modes, in addition to the more conventional types for easy comparison. These filter settings allow the user to tune the 8300CD's performance to suit his or her preference, depending on system configuration, digital file quality and musical taste.

- **Discrete Class A analogue stages and sophisticated power supply**

The 8200CD/CDQ's analogue output stages and power supply were highly unusual in their extensive pursuit of quality, and the 8300CD is identical in this regard. There are, for example, a plethora of reservoir/smoothing capacitors, an impressive number of regulator chips, and discrete transistor (instead of op-amp) analogue stages at the output with ultra-low impedance to drive any cable and

any load. The power supply incorporates 34 regulated supply rails including 14 ultra-low-noise regulators, with extensive measures against power supply contamination and cross-coupling. One look inside the 8300CD and the painstaking sophistication of its circuitry is obvious.

Enhancing a masterpiece

The improvements brought to the 8300CD deliver precisely targeted advances in functionality and sound quality, as well as the player's physical appearance. As follows:

- **New 8300 Series aesthetic**

Updated external design, with softened lines. Still recognisably Audiolab, but less 'boxy'.

- **Upgraded components at critical parts of the circuit**

After hours of listening tests, Audiolab has made small but keenly audible improvements in subjective performance through the revision of specific components in both the power supply and the signal path.

- **Full digital preamp functionality**

The 8300CD adds full digital preamp functionality to the 8200CD's spec, with adjustable volume level and source selection accessible via the player's front panel and remote handset (the 8300CD had digital inputs but didn't offer this level of control). This means the 8300CD can be connected directly to a stereo power amp, or a pair of monoblocks like the new Audiolab 8300MB, as well as to a traditional integrated amp like the equally new Audiolab 8300A.

- **New slot-loading CD transport mechanism**

As some reviews noted, the loading tray used in the 8200CD and 8200CDQ was a rare weak spot in the design, seeming less sturdy than was perhaps ideal. The 8300CD sports a new mechanism that includes slot loading – much quicker and neater than the old tray. The new mech also reduces the occurrence of disc rejection, able to play CDs that the 8200CD/CDQ might have rejected because of dirt or damage, while increased disc stability and reduced susceptibility to resonance contribute to the 8300CD's improved sound quality. The new mech's digital buffer circuit is a perfect mate to the asynchronous input of the DAC, too, enhancing even this area of performance.

- **Improved high-resolution USB input**

The asynchronous USB input on the 8200CD/CDQ was compatible with PCM data up to 24-bit/96kHz – impressive at the time of launch. The new 8300CD processes data up to 32-bit/384kHz via USB; this is a far higher specification than that required by current hi-res music formats, ensuring the 8300CD is fully equipped for future advances in ultra-high-definition digital sound.

- **DSD via USB**

The USB input now also accepts DSD files (the digital audio system originally developed for Super Audio CD). This is a significant addition, as DSD has an important role to play in the developing

high-resolution digital download scene. Accordingly, the filter section now includes four extra filters for DSD playback (in addition to the seven filter settings for PCM files inherited from the 8200CD), allowing the user to optimise the noise floor to suit the performance of the source file and the bandwidth of associated equipment such as amps and speakers.

- **Upgraded digital processing**

The upgraded digital processing associated with the increased resolution at the USB input delivers additional sonic benefits, for both CD replay and other connected sources, whatever the resolution of the file. In advancing the capability of the USB input to include files of up to 32-bit/384kHz, the processing of data preceding and within the Sabre DAC has increased the subjective resolution of musical detail and dynamics, resulting in a more energetic and transparent performance that sets a new standard for CD players at this price level.

- **Expanded connectivity**

Connectivity options have been further expanded with the addition of an AES/EBU digital input and XLR digital output. These join the full complement of inputs/outputs retained from the 8200CD: 2x coaxial digital inputs; 2x optical digital inputs; 1x asynchronous USB input; 1x coaxial digital output; 1x optical digital output; single-ended RCA and balanced XLR analogue outputs; 12V trigger loop.

Price and availability

The Audiolab 8300CD is available from October in a choice of silver or classic Audiolab black, with an RRP of £999.95.

###

audiolab

Formed in the early 1980s by Philip Swift and Derek Scotland, Audiolab earned worldwide acclaim with the 8000A – an integrated stereo amplifier that became a classic ‘step-up’ from the budget models of the time. During the ensuing years, the 8000A established itself as one of the most successful British amps ever produced, and was joined by a range of electronics including CD players, pre/power amps and an FM tuner. The brand switched hands in 1997, changing its name to TAG McLaren Audio; and so it was known until 2004, when Audiolab became part of the International Audio Group and returned to its original name.

Audiolab introduced the full-width 8200 Series components in 2010, combining the company’s original ethos of simple, well-constructed ergonomics and crisp, transparent sound with innovative, performance-led design concepts. The quality of these components, in tandem with the now-legendary M-DAC and its siblings from the compact LAB Series, earned Audiolab more awards in the UK press during the last five years than any other brand of high-performance audio electronics. 2015 sees the next major evolutionary phase in Audiolab’s story, as the new 8300 Series propels the brand to even greater heights.

www.audiolab.co.uk

IAG

IAG (International Audio Group) is a manufacturer of audio equipment for domestic and professional use, plus professional lighting systems and luxury yachts. With its headquarters and manufacturing facilities in Asia and offices (including R&D) in the UK and North America, IAG is a manufacturer with a truly global reach.

IAG's audio business employs more than 2,000 people worldwide. Its factory complex in China is one of the largest custom-designed consumer electronics manufacturing facilities in the world and benefits from an exceptional level of vertical integration, with all component parts – even the tooling – made in-house. The Group's domestic audio brands – Audiolab, Castle Acoustics, Luxman, Mission, Quad and Wharfedale – all enjoy a worldwide reputation for excellence, with illustrious histories that stretch back decades. Top-class British audio engineering remains critical to these brands, with world-renowned designer Peter Comeau leading an acoustic design team brimming with international talent.

The combination of rich brand heritage, purpose-built production facilities in China and experienced audio engineers from around the globe makes IAG a unique proposition in the world of consumer electronics.

www.iaguk.com



For more information, product samples or high-resolution images, please contact Tim Bown
T: 020 8654 8945 M: 07854 966071 E: tim@andygilesassociates.co.uk
