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Press contact: Tim Bowern
020 8654 8945
07854 966 071
tim@hashstar.co.uk

www.leak-hifi.co.uk
+44 (0)1480 447700



Above LEAK Stereo 130 integrated amplifier and LEAK CDT CD transport

LEAK: the return of a British audio pioneer

One of the biggest names of the mid-twentieth century British hi-fi scene, LEAK is back with its first products since the late 1970s

Cambridgeshire, England – Legendary British audio brand LEAK has returned with its first products for more than 40 years. The LEAK Stereo 130 is an integrated amplifier featuring state-of-the-art circuitry nestling within a classic LEAK exterior, while the LEAK CDT is a matching CD transport.

Founded in 1934, LEAK is one of the most important names from the early years of the British hi-fi scene, responsible for many technological 'firsts' throughout the 1940s, '50s and '60s. For example, the Point One series of valve amplifiers introduced in 1945 were the first to reduce total harmonic distortion to 0.1 per cent, while its Sandwich speakers heralded true-piston cone action by sandwiching polystyrene foam between outer skins of stiff aluminium foil. Such was LEAK's engineering excellence that its 1955 Trough-Line is still considered one of the finest FM tuners ever made.

LEAK Stereo 130 integrated amplifier

The all-new Stereo 130 is a descendant of another LEAK classic, the Stereo 30 integrated amplifier, which arrived in 1963 as the first commercially available all-transistor amplifier. It spearheaded the use of transformerless transistor output stages over then-standard transformer-coupled designs, paving the way for future solid-state amps.

The Stereo 130's aesthetic resemblance, with its optional real-wood enclosure and invitingly tactile front panel, isn't the only nod to its ancestor. The engineering behind its circuit design embodies the Stereo 30's pioneering spirit, too, utilising the latest techniques and technologies to bring this classic transistor amp design bang up to date.

With its connectivity also benefiting from such modernisation, the Stereo 130 is destined to form the beating heart of many a high-performance, multi-format audio system – ready to deliver vinyl, CD, Bluetooth-streamed and USB-stored music, through all manner of speakers and headphones.

A high-quality, low-noise, JFET-based MM phono stage welcomes turntables with open arms, while analogue line-level inputs and optical, coaxial and asynchronous USB digital connections accommodate external CD players, computers, network streamers, TVs and more. Hi-res PCM (up to 32-bit/384kHz) and DSD (up to 11.2MHz/DSD256) files are supported.

The Stereo 130 also recognises the convenience of streaming music from a phone, tablet or music player over aptX Bluetooth. Yet for all its versatility, this is an amplifier that puts the music first. Whatever the source, its virtuosic performance is consistently engaging; foot-tappingly lively yet maturely refined, richly detailed and fluidly dynamic.



The Stereo 130's innate musicality is hardly surprising given the hi-fi handiwork involved. At its core is a Class AB power amp that draws on many decades of amplifier design experience. A 200VA toroidal transformer is followed by 2x15000uF reservoir capacity, helping the amp to maintain firm control of the music whilst enabling excellent dynamic range.

Headphone users are well catered for thanks to a dedicated amp stage with current-feedback circuitry, its gain bandwidth and high slew rate delivering a dynamic, detailed and engaging performance with all manner of headphone types.

In tasking the ES9018K2M Sabre32 Reference DAC chip to handle digital-to-analogue conversion, complemented by specially devised circuitry including op-amps selected for their synergy with the

ES9018, LEAK has engineered excellent digital music playback quality. And to ensure the utmost detail and expression from *every* music source, the layout of the Stereo 130's digital and analogue circuits has been carefully applied, with independent power supplies feeding all critical stages.

Bass and treble tone controls – a feature passed down from the original Stereo 30 – enable sound to be tailored to suit the varying characteristics of different analogue and digital sources. If preferred, these tone controls may be bypassed to deliver the shortest possible signal path to the precision analogue volume stage, which is controlled by a motorised ALPS potentiometer.

The Stereo 130's adaptability makes it a perfect partner for all manner of contemporary loudspeakers – not least the much-admired Linton and Denton Heritage speakers from LEAK's sister-company Wharfedale, with which it shares a classic 1960s-inspired design and walnut wood veneer.

LEAK CDT CD transport

The LEAK Stereo 130 is a wonderful 'hub' around which to build a versatile, high-performance audio system, however you choose to play your music – from vinyl records to digital audio via USB and Bluetooth. For the many people for whom CD remains a crucial part of their musical diet, the LEAK CDT is the Stereo 130's ideal CD-playing companion.

The LEAK CDT is a dedicated CD transport incorporating the same slot-loading mechanism as the highly acclaimed CD players and transports made by another of LEAK's sister-companies, Audiolab. Extremely robust and reliable, it uses a read-ahead digital buffer to reduce disc-reading failures, able to play scratched and damaged CDs that are unreadable by conventional mechanisms.



By mounting the transport in its own, electromagnetically shielded enclosure, and including a dedicated power supply, the digital signal extraction from any CD is as accurate and precise as it is possible to achieve. The master clock is controlled by a temperature-compensated crystal oscillator, enabling the digital output from both coaxial and optical sockets to exhibit vanishingly low levels of jitter (digital distortion). In addition, the coaxial output is fed from a differential line driver to ensure a flawless digital signal reaches the accompanying DAC – naturally, the 32-bit DAC section in the LEAK Stereo 130 is a superb sonic match.

As well as spinning CDs, the LEAK CDT features a front-mounted USB input, enabling playback from USB storage devices. FAT16 and FAT32 formatted devices are supported, and WAV, AAC, WMA and MP3 files can be played, with file navigation available via the front panel controls and remote handset.

Vintage aesthetic, contemporary features and state-of-the-art technical proficiency go hand in hand to herald a new and unique addition to the hi-fi separates scene. The LEAK Stereo 130 is available with or without a real-wood walnut enclosure, at an RRP of £799 and £699 respectively, while the LEAK CDT is priced at £549 with and £449 without its optional wood enclosure. Both are available from August.



KEY SPECIFICATIONS	
LEAK Stereo 130	
Digital Inputs	1x USB Type B; 2x optical; 1x coaxial; Bluetooth 4.0
Analogue Inputs	2x RCA line-level; 1x MM phono
Digital Outputs	1x optical; 1x coaxial
Analogue Outputs	1x RCA pre-out; 1x headphone out; speaker binding posts
Digital Inputs – Max Sampling Frequency	USB: PCM 384kHz / DSD256; S/PDIF: PCM 192kHz
Power Output	2x 45W RMS (8Ω); 2x 65W RMS (4Ω)
Dimensions (WxHxD)	326x146x267mm (inc. wood enclosure)
LEAK CDT	
Transport Mechanism	Slot-loading with read-ahead digital buffer
Digital Outputs	1x Optical; 1x Coaxial
USB Port	FAT16/FAT32 devices; WAV, AAC, WMA and MP3 files
Dimensions (WxHxD)	326x146x283mm (inc. wood enclosure)



Founded in 1934 by Harold Joseph Leak, pioneering British hi-fi manufacturer LEAK was a mid-twentieth century trailblazer in the field of high-performance audio equipment.

LEAK has been responsible for many technological firsts. For example, the Point One series of valve amplifiers (1945) were the first to reduce total harmonic distortion to 0.1 per cent, and the ground-breaking Trough-Line FM radio tuner (1955) is still considered one of the finest FM tuners ever made. LEAK's Sandwich speakers (1961) heralded true-piston cone action by sandwiching polystyrene foam between outer skins of stiff aluminium foil. And the Stereo 30 all-transistor amplifier (1963) spearheaded the use of transformerless transistor output stages over then-standard transformer-coupled designs, thus paving the way for future solid-state amps.

Following a 40-year hiatus, LEAK – now part of the International Audio Group alongside Audiolab, Luxman, Mission, Quad and Wharfedale – has launched two new audio components: the Stereo 130 integrated amplifier and CDT CD transport, fusing retro design, classic analogue engineering and the latest digital technologies.

www.leak-hifi.co.uk



For more information and high res images please contact Tim Bownern
T: 020 8654 8945 M: 07854 966071 E: tim@hashstar.co.uk
