

HOME THEATRE/SYSTEMS

NAD VISO 5.1 System

What happened to NAD?

VITAL STATS

Receiver

Output power	5x60 watts
Surround Sound Formats	Dolby Digital and below
HDMI inputs/outputs	1x out
Frequency Response	20 -- 20 kHz
Signal to Noise Ratio	>100 dB
Weight	12.6 kg

Speakers

VISO LR 5 Compact Monitor x 4

VISO C20 Center x 1

VISO S10 Active Subwoofer x 1

Drive units	LR5 & C20 , 1x 1-inch aluminium dome, ferro fluid cooled HF, 4-inch injection moulded metalised polyprop cone MR, 1x 8-inch injection moulded metalised polyprop cone (subwoofer)
Impedance	8 ohm (Nominal)
Sensitivity	86 dB (87 dB centre channel) Typical Listening Room
Frequency Response	75 Hz- 23 kHz (front/rear and surround), 36 Hz- 150 Hz (sub c/w 110W powered amp)
Weight	2.4 kg (front and rear), 4.0 kg (centre), 10.2 kg (sub)

VERDICT I can't believe it's NAD when I look at it. It's super hot sexy... in hi-fi... finally! Best of all though, as soon as you turn it on, it's still all NAD.

PRICE R25990 (System)

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When I first received the boxes for the brand new NAD VISO Five System for review in my system, I honestly didn't pay any attention to the pictures on the outside. After all, NAD is about grey boxes with odd green power control buttons, excellent quality switch gear and good interconnecting stuff. But it was never, ever, really what one would call, well, 'pretty'.

In fact NAD might have been the butt of more than a few jokes in the industry regarding the looks of their kit -- brushed quickly aside as soon as you heard it, because quite clearly the cash was spent on the inside...

This VISO Five system is different. In a word, it is beautiful. Not just beautiful in as in an Aston Martin beautiful, but as in a this-cannot-be-a-NAD drop dead gorgeous beautiful.

I sat in front of it for a good half an hour, admiring its lines. Still, I have to pinch myself about it. I checked the box, the badging and the manual. It's all NAD baby, and it is scrumptiously good. Look, there is some good looking kit out there today, but across my humble reviewing station, this NAD system blows them all out of the water to the point where the prior competition just became irrelevant.

And so, I find myself on the horns of the dilemma that all reviewers of hi-fi find themselves on. Where has the cash spend on the product gone? And just why is it that NAD felt the need to suddenly rediscover the swan from within the bosom of the duckling?

These are the kind of thoughts that disturb me and keep me awake at nights. Why? Why NAD why?

But once the shock wears off, and the jaw dropping stops, and one settles down into manageable drooling, you know what happens? Those old ugly NADs? I don't miss them for a second! This system -- well, it can sound like rubbish if it wants to. I suppose I would begin to care, maybe in the year 2020. All right, I am far too crabby to suffer bad sound that long. Maybe 2019.

The simple fact of the matter though, is that the system doesn't sound like an empty air-headed bimbo. This is a Charlize Theron. Charming. Sophisticated. Intelligent. Witty. Engaging. And with a pair of legs that- Oh, never mind. You get the idea.

The NAD VISO Five is an integrated DVD player surround sound receiver. It is the focal point of the system, and at 60 watts a channel may not be as powerful as some competitors, but remember that this is NAD power and a NAD watt always counts for more than any other watt. The VISO Five doesn't disappoint, driving its Viso Thirty (centre and front channel) and Twenty (powered sub and rear surrounds) speaker systems with contemptuous ease.

The front and rear speakers are identical piano gloss, black finish units that just look super sexy. Fishnets on Charlize, if you like. The metal baffle plate on the tweeter would look ridiculous on any other speaker, but coupled to the metal cone of the woofer and the metal insert around the woofer's outer rubber surround, the NADs pull off a look that is sophisticated, modern and discerning. The same applies to the center and the sub -- and the resulting system oozes breeding.

Breeding is the name of the game here, with NAD, and it always has been. NAD continues this with a sound that more than justifies the asking price. Forgetting about the gorgeous looks for a moment, and even with a blindfold on, the system sounds sexy as hell.

On review I found that the unit, in stereo, delivers absolutely classic stereo music -- with the two teeny tots of speakers giving a superb account of themselves. They are accurate, pacey, and forward, without being brash and badly behaved. They are engaging and exciting to listen to, without being bright, and

without being fatiguing or boisterous. I found them able to deliver a good sound stage and able to position instruments and voices without blinking an eye, as if it were second nature.

The treble towards the upper end of the spectrum, where I always pay extra special attention, was full and detailed. The speakers are not shy or crossover-damped that I could tell, which always leaves an extra sparkle and detail to the sonic picture. From there on down things got better and better with the midrange of the speaker being warm, smooth and natural. Of course there is no real low end to speak of below 65 Hz as per the specs, but in a multi function system this is of course expected.

Running the subwoofer in stereo was actually easy to integrate with the front speakers. The sub adds a whole new dimension of musicality, and in all honesty, this is how the system has to be listened to in stereo mode. Because NAD engineered the system to work together, you can only adjust phase control or add an extra 10 dB to the output -- the rest is already done for you. I might have tweaked a little, but only because I like to play, and I doubt I could have improved the overall sound any.

As a movie centre though, with the superb centre channel delivering its silky smooth dulcet vocals and super crisp movie action, the VISO system really tightens the screws and reveals its mean and bad side. It grips the movie in a vice and it never lets up. Movies are given the NAD once-over and the result is a super impressive listening experience, in which all the components pull together operating as a cohesive whole in a bang for the buck experience that other systems will battle to match.

Chuck in the sex appeal factor and there is no way that any living, breathing, human being can resist. As far as a reinvention of a brand goes, NAD could show Lion Lager a thing or two about how it should be done. A double thumbs up with an air punch thrown in for good measure. I really, really enjoyed this system!

William Kelly