

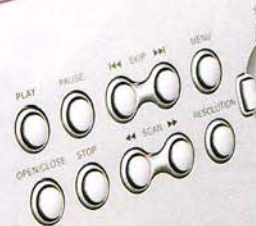
BEST BUY

HI-FI CHOICE  
magazine



DVD / SACD / MP3 Player T 585

NAD



# Totally NAD for it!

*It's hardly in 'classic NAD' budget territory, but this new universal player offers terrific value for money*

**PRODUCT** NAD T585

**TYPE** Universal disc player

**PRICE** £800

**KEY FEATURES** Size (WxHxD): 43.5x10x30cm

• Weight: 8.63kg • Audio outputs: 2ch analogue (RCA phono), 5.1ch analogue (RCA phono), optical digital (Toslink), coaxial digital (RCA phono) • Video outputs: composite video (RCA phono), S-Video (mini-DIN), component video (RCA phono trio) • AV outputs: Scart socket, HDMI 1.1 output • Custom Install connections: RS-232 port, 12V trigger mini-jack

**CONTACT** ☎ 01279 501111 @ www.nadelectronics.com

This new 'universal' disc player from classic 'budget specialist' NAD is a serious solution to a serious set of requirements, and consequently it costs proper, serious money. £800 is several times the price of a typical budget universal player, though it is still well short of the price of esoteric high-end models.

What you get here starts life as a slightly simplified, bargain-price variant of the NAD Masters Series M55 universal player. This is broadly in Arcam DV137 territory for quality, flexibility and price – they both cost around £1,300. In common with virtually all universal players, the T585 starts life as a DVD-Video

player, which can also play CD (of course), DVD-Audio and SACD. It is also compatible with almost all types of recordable and recorded disc-based media, including WMA, but as usual excluding DVD-RAM.

The T585 includes a wide range of interfaces. On the audio side, the player has separate 5.1 channel and two-channel stereo/downmix analogue audio outputs – the 5.1 output can be fed from an integral Dolby Digital decoder – and the usual optical and coaxial outputs handle digital multichannel codecs in digitally wrapped form, to be decoded by an external processor or amplifier.

The NAD is unusual (though not unique) in that it processes SACD in its native DSD form. At the very high end of the market there is at least an argument that can be marshalled in favour of converting DSD to PCM for decoding. However, at this price level, it is NAD's contention at least that there is no such case to be made, and the NAD does process DSD natively – up to a point. The limit is set by the HDMI output (the only output deemed sufficiently protected – by HDCP – to stream the digital data off disc). The version of HDMI used here (1.1) has no passthrough for DSD.

Video connectivity is equally well catered for. The familiar analogue options are present and correct: composite, S-Video and component, plus Scart and (unusually) a VGA output of the kind normally limited to some projectors. There's also the aforementioned HDCP-encoded HDMI output, for digital video connection. This is an upsampling video player, and the component, S-Video and HDMI outputs are capable of streaming up to 1080i video.

The T585 is well equipped with the kind of bells and whistles you might expect from this kind of player, including an unusually attractive, simple to use on-screen menu system. This incorporates a comprehensive bass management facility that works independently for each major disc group – SACD, DVD-Audio, DVD-Video – and more sound and (in particular) picture tweaking options than are normally available. The unit has an onboard Dolby Digital decoder and SRS Tru Surround, which gives a surround-like effect from a single pair of speakers... allegedly. Other codecs (DTS for example) are handled by off-player processing, via a digital output in the usual way.

The rather button-bound remote control handset is fully dedicated to the player: it has



**“SACD has a clean, energetic quality, with plenty of fine detail, which is reproduced in a natural-sounding acoustic space.”**

no punch through options for the system TV or amplifier, and there's no button illumination, but the control layout is clear and easy to learn. Video processing is performed by Faroudja's DCDi system, rather than the more exotic solutions used by some.

The disc mechanism comes from Sony (one of the few options available for SACD) and the video decoder from ESS. Hybrid 24-bit/192kHz audio DACs are from the Burr-Brown stable. AMX/Crestron system controllers can be accommodated, and the unit offers infra-red and 12v triggers, plus an RS-232 interface.

**SOUND QUALITY**

This is an altogether better player than NAD has produced in its classic 'mainstream' series before. CD performance is firm and bold, with a well-extended and tuneful, if noticeably warm bass. Many mid-price systems that end up with this player will probably work rather well with this bass. The other end of the band also has the same characteristic smoothness, and the midband has depth and weight, with good agility. It works well with electronic music if it has been well recorded, but it really thrives with acoustic material, such as vocal, instrumental, orchestral... the usual suspects, if you like.

Often with less costly universal players, SACD ends up being soft edged and disappointing, where DVD-Audio tends to ape the sound of

CD. This gives DVD-Audio an edge, with comparatively strong presence and detail, especially on a multichannel stage. DVD-Audio performance here can be categorised in just this way. This player is one of the few that had no problems with early Dual Discs, which have caused real difficulties in the past.

The SACD chain is palpably superior to the usual run of the mill. It doesn't have the slightly lazy quality of some of its ilk, but has a clean, energetic quality, with plenty of fine detail, which is reproduced without grain and in a natural-sounding acoustic space – given a suitable-quality recording as source material. Again the bass has real weight and gravitas, but it does not go over the top. It is also tuneful and it times well.

**VIDEO PERFORMANCE**

Good as the audio performance is, picture quality is in some respects even more impressive. There is a solidity about DVD video replay that places the NAD on a par with more costly players. Video upsampling does not improve the inherent resolution of the picture, of course, but using the NAD's video scaling will result in a much more stable picture, with deep, saturated colours and good black levels (black level tracking and other parameters can be adjusted in the set up menu), while motion artefacts are well

suppressed – better so than with many other implementations of Faroudja DCDi video scaling and processing.

For those unacquainted with NAD's more exotic and capable Masters Series, this model is a more solid piece of equipment than one might expect from the brand. Although the exterior styling has been compromised in the process of reducing the selling price, it is a palpably better engineered player than older classic models, and you will see and hear the difference. Impressive stuff! **HFC**

*Alvin Gold*



**FORMAT COMPATIBILITY**

|           |   |               |   |
|-----------|---|---------------|---|
| DVD-AUDIO | ✓ | DVD+R         | ✓ |
| DVD-VIDEO | ✓ | DVD-RAM       | ✗ |
| SACD      | ✓ | MP3 AUDIO     | ✓ |
| CD        | ✓ | WMA AUDIO     | ✓ |
| HDCD      | ✓ | AAC AUDIO     | ✗ |
| CD-R/ RW  | ✓ | VIDEO CD      | ✓ |
| DVD-R/ RW | ✓ | JPEG PICTURES | ✓ |

**VERDICT**

**SOUND >> 88%**

An impressively well thought through design. Well built, with exceptional video quality, powerful and authoritative CD/DVD-Audio sound and well above average SACD performance.

**VISION >> 91%**

NAD livery arguably looks a bit tired. Remote handset lacks backlighting and punch-through controls.

**FEATURES >> 92%**

**VALUE >> 91%**

**PRO**  
An impressively well thought through design. Well built, with exceptional video quality, powerful and authoritative CD/DVD-Audio sound and well above average SACD performance.

**CON**  
NAD livery arguably looks a bit tired. Remote handset lacks backlighting and punch-through controls.

**CONCLUSION**  
This player takes NAD's excellent, top-end Masters Series platform and drips it down into a more affordable, classically styled frame. Both audio and video are delivered with splendid depth and solidity, making an impressive mid-price all-rounder.

**HI-FI CHOICE OVERALL SCORE >> 90%**

