

Choice SESSIONS

The latest products, the best recordings and our own point of view on the most interesting developments to hit the hi-fi scene. Concise reports by the *Choice* team.

CD PLAYER

Meridian 506

There are two integrated CD players in the latest Meridian range. The first is the £795 506 tested here. Meridian also has a higher definition 508 player, as well as a 500 transport and 563 digital-to-analogue converter, but these are well past the £1,000

Meridian's 506 oozes a little sophistication

exception. It can set the pulse racing when playing fast percussion or driving rock, but its forté is simply getting the information off the disc without interpretation. It can also play

sounding pseudo-detail of many an expensive player.

There are a number of players at this price but the new 506 has to be one of the best.

Alan Sircom



barrier.

All use the Delta-Sigma bitstream chipset.

The 506 is superbly built in Meridian's 330mm square style, and its glass top is very pretty, if a fingerprint magnet.

One notable omission is a remote control. Intended for use in a complete Meridian system, the company recommends its sleek £50 Meridian *System Handset* to control this CD player. This is rather frustrating if the 506 is the first bit of Meridian electronics in your system. However, the player will recognise instructions from any Philips RC5 handset.

Meridian players have traditionally had a very cerebral sound and the 506 is no

my most likely to mis-track discs with ease.

Try as you might, you are very unlikely to find fault with the performance of the 506. It may be a little too refined for fans of heads-down rock, but in absolute terms it's a hard package not to admire.

If I were to sum up the sound quality of the 506 in a single word, it would have to be 'natural'. The imagery is particularly well-defined, creating a handsome 3D soundstage with solid, physical sounding instruments. It presents an accurate, detailed reproduction of what's on the disc but not with the shiny, hi-fi

Meridian Audio Ltd,
14 Clifton Road, Huntindon, Cambs
PE18 7EJ. ☎ (0480) 52144

VERDICT MERIDIAN 506

Great package; well-balanced sound; as sophisticated as it looks.

Remote control extra; may be too cerebral for some tastes.

£795

SOUND: ■■■■■■

VALUE: ■■■■■■