



Rotel RDV-1060

PRICE	£750
SUPPLIER	B&W Loudspeakers
CONTACT	01903 221500

If Rotel's range of separates is mopping up the market, then this RDV-1060 DVD-A player makes it a clean sweep. At £750, this model offers excellent build quality, and is the only player here to feature correctly colour-coded 5.1-channel sockets (the same channel colours used on my graphs, incidentally). An ESS processor enables progressive video output with NTSC and PAL sources while a new DVD-ROM drive, from Keytronics in Japan, represents a further evolution from previous players. Replay of CD-R discs is still unreliable, but CD-RW is handled comfortably.

Rotel's on-screen display resembles that featured on the Cambridge DVD57 and is simple enough to navigate. The Audio setup page deals with digital output settings and degrees of compression, while the 2- or 6-channel output mode is defined within the Speaker setup page, [right]. The main/sub crossover frequency is not adjustable, but channel delays and level trims are adequately covered. The General page does offer a generous array of TV, picture mode, and other facilities, even offering a dimmer for the fluorescent display.

LAB REPORT

Fig 1 shows that 'small' main channels (centre, green) have a premature LF roll-off, not unlike the Panasonic player, but are otherwise very extended. With

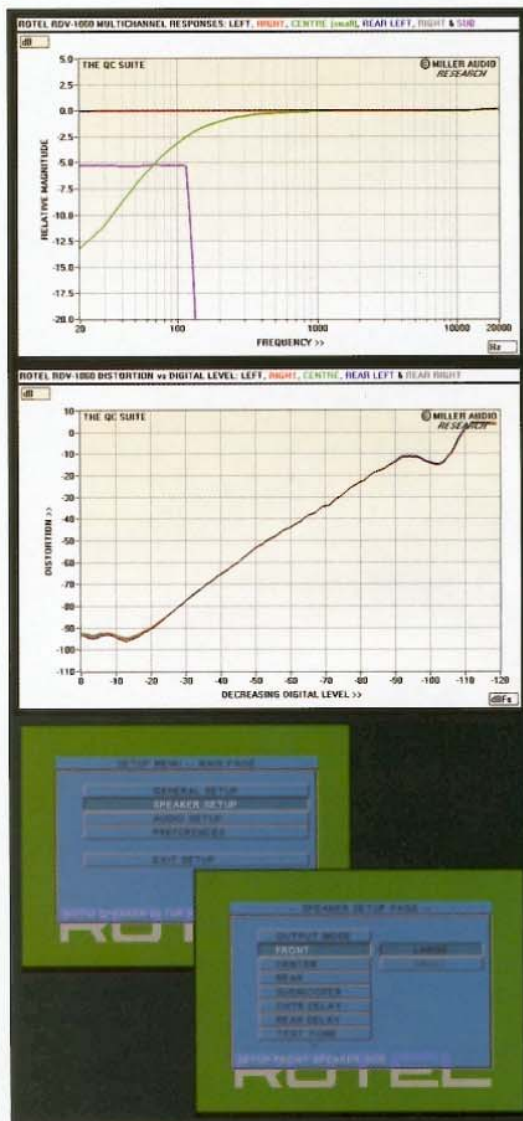
24/192 DVD-A, this amounts to $-1\text{dB}/60\text{kHz}$ and $-3.5\text{dB}/80\text{kHz}$ with ultrasonic distortion as low as 0.0016% (30kHz/ -20dBFs). The sub level (purple trace) is reduced to -5dB to accommodate re-directed bass from 'small' main channels (which works perfectly) but, like the Panasonic, this is thrown into disarray if the sub is disabled and either centre or surrounds are reduced to 'small'.

Fig 2 shows higher distortion than might be anticipated from three CS4396 24-bit/192kHz DACs ($\sim 0.002\%$ midrange, 0dBFs to -20dBFs) but channel tracking is clearly excellent. There is some uncorrelated or noise-like jitter surrounding HF signals, but correlated jitter amounts to just 250psec, which is a fine result.

SOUND QUALITY

'This is clearly the classiest player so far', remarked one listener, pre-empting the final decision of the panel. Indeed, for while the player's overall balance is keenly judged, individual instruments are also clearly depicted without destroying the unity of the music as a whole. It combined tonal smoothness with sharp image focus: for the first time, not only could we hear the female chorus to the Steely Dan track but also count their number. With the previous three players, these girls were a 'wash of treble sibilance'.

Track after track, we were drawn into the performance, a truly big and three-dimensional sound that filled the room. The lazy vocal theme to 'Goodbye Porkpie Hat' was conveyed without dragging at the heels of



the music itself. Even at low volume levels the sound would slip, unforced and articulate into the room, the player quickly developing a very charged atmosphere, immersing us in a pool of music and communicating with little perceived effort.

Described variously as 'gorgeous' and 'luxurious', the RDV-1060 drew us further into every DVD-A in our selection. By whatever means, it seems capable of delivering a genuinely insightful, room-filling sound free of the strain or hardness typically associated with 'digital' distortions. It's an organic player in a field of GM crops.