



POWER AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR
Audio Research Reference 160S

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The Audio Research Reference 160S takes much of what made the mono Audio Research Reference 160M (from 2018) an award winner in its own right, and shrinks it down to a single chassis with few – if any – downsides. Like its bigger brother, the Reference 160M uses a combination of 6H30 input triodes and KT150 power tubes – two each per channel. It also allows push-pull and triode operation, and sports a twin channel variant of the see-through ‘GhostMeter’ front panel, making for a design that is both classic Audio Research and very novel.

Our listening test highlighted just how similar the Reference 160S sounds to its monophonic brothers. The amplifier is extremely dynamic; Alan Sircom suggested that it makes “many amps we think of as dynamic sound a little flat and boring by comparison. It extends that dynamic contrast from the quietest level to getting on for PA levels.” He also praised it for its satisfyingly musical performance; “I became so enveloped with the music the lines between ‘reviewer’ and ‘music lover’ evaporated.” +

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