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## CREEK DESTINY

*Creek's new flagship range may look slender, but don't be deceived*

Taking our first look at this amplifier, in partnership with the matching CD player of the same name, back in HFC 277, we remarked on how cleverly Creek had maintained links with the appearance of past products, while the amp is basically entirely new both inside and out. Since then, the cheaper Evo range has appeared on the scene and the 2006 Creek 'house style' is firmly established. Amazing what you can do with what is in essence a slab box, if you try!

The amp's minimal height is deceptive. It conceals a large toroidal transformer, substantial heatsinks for each channel, and a large array of relatively small power supply capacitors. Compared with the usual pair of big, fat components, these caps bring lower power supply impedance at both low and high frequencies. This attention to detail is further illustrated in the use of high-speed Schottky rectifier diodes, which produce less electrical noise than the more familiar cheap, slow types.

The input line-up is the usual six, one of which can be turned into a phono input if desired. Switching is by relays, but Creek has kept a good ol' mechanical volume control, motorised for remote operation. Two sets of very robust WBT output terminals can be independently switched in and out of circuit. Creek's power output configuration is familiar from previous models, using MOSFETs in a proprietary 'totem pole' arrangement, while the rest of the audio circuit uses a mix of integrated circuits and discrete components. Assembly of the amp is very good indeed.

### SOUND QUALITY

If there's one definite recommendation we can make on the basis of our listeners' notes, it's to give this player a good crack in any demonstration. It's a grower, but it's worth waiting for. All three of our panellists found its overall performance more appealing the longer they listened. How come? Evidently it's a rather self-effacing bit of kit.



It's true that some qualities of the Destiny amp were appreciated from the outset. Its bass, for one – piano doesn't have very much LF level, but what bass it does have is very important and needs to be full in level, well controlled and well timed if the overall sound is to make sense. Here it did.

Gradually, listeners realised what they were getting was not an underpowered and uninvolved sound, but instead a version in which all the elements are so finely balanced that none leaps out at you. But they're all there and clearly audible, nonetheless.

In the baroque track, the Destiny's efficiently effortless treble and assured dynamics made the ensemble seem light-footed and thoroughly enjoyable. But if one chose to listen for details, they were all there too. And the scale of Rossini's *Stabat Mater* was felt in a large, deep and precise soundstage.

On the debit side, one of the listeners found the amplifier a touch cold and its unvarnished version of events will not be to everyone's taste. All the same, it is more than capable of drawing the listener into a great musical performance, sometimes even before one has realised what has going on. On this occasion, our listening panel confirmed what we first thought: this is a great little amp! **HFC**

### VERDICT

SOUND >> 88%

FEATURES >> 83%

BUILD >> 90%

VALUE >> 88%

While this amp may appear a bit flat initially, first impressions can be deceptive. In fact, it is a highly assured performer that doesn't superimpose its personality on the music. A great, honest little amp.

**HI-FI CHOICE**

OVERALL SCORE

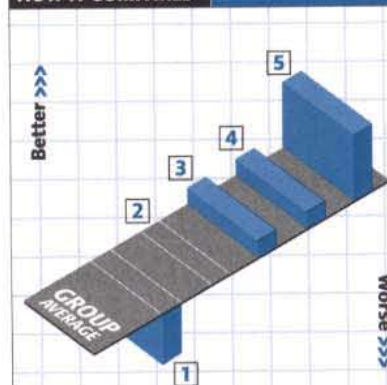
**88%**

### LAB REPORT

Power output falls shy of the rating by an inconsequential 5W, making this in practice the least powerful of the group – though 95W can rattle most windows. There's a slight droop into 4 ohms, of course, but not very big: what does become more obvious as the load gets tougher is that clipping is slightly asymmetric, which under very hard driving could make the sound a little loose in the bass.

Distortion is so-so in the midrange, but one of the best in the group at high frequencies. In fact, it actually appears slightly better at high frequencies than lower in the band, which is highly unusual. Since those midband levels are actually pretty good by most standards, it's no wonder this amp sounds clean. Noise is fine, but bandwidth depends a bit on volume setting, losing about 1.5dB at 20kHz with volume set to two o'clock, 0.2-0.5dB at more typical settings. Excellent standby power consumption!

### HOW IT COMPARES



- 1) Dynamic power >> -30%
- 2) Frequency response >> 0%
- 3) Dynamic range >> +10%
- 4) Distortion >> +10%
- 5) Output impedance >> +40%

### SPECIFICATIONS

Measurement	Rated	Actual
Power output (8 ohms)	100W	95W
Distortion (1kHz/8 ohms)	0.05%	0.009%
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	-	±0.25dB