

POWER AMPLIFIERS
OF THE YEAR

COST-NO-OBJECT

CH Precision M1

\$94,750/pr.

This deluxe, Swiss-made, bridgeable (or adaptable to stereo), high-current, high-power, 200W Class AB monoblock amplifier—authored by the same engineers, Florian Cossy and Thierry Heeb (the C and H of CH Precision) who designed Goldmund's distinguished electronics back in the day—seems to have a good deal of the technological DNA of another Swiss company's, Soudution's, world-class electronics. Like last year's Overall Product of the Year Award-winning Soudution 701/711 amplifiers, the M1 is ultra-fast on transients, ultra-high in resolution, and ultra-low in noise and coloration. CH Precision's amp and preamp use no global negative feedback at their default setting (although users can add as much or as little NFB as they choose by means of menus accessed via the LED screen built into the amp's front panel). When the amps are configured in their default position, JV reports that he would be hard put to choose between the M1 and Soudution's 711, save for the midbass and power range, where the SMPS-powered Soudution (the CH Precision uses an extraordinarily high-quality transformer-based

power supply) still holds an edge in weight, impact, and color. However, when it comes to overall resolution, it is a different story. Indeed, with less of a dark (i.e., "bottom-up") balance, the CH Precision draws ahead in this area. Indeed, the M1 is the highest-resolution solid-state amplifier JV has auditioned since the Technical Brain TBP-Zero/EX. If you're shopping for the best in solid-state, you definitely need to hear this Swiss marvel. Which, of course, is why it's winning this year's Product of the Year award for cost-no-object amplifier. JV, review in this issue



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CH Precision L1

\$47,900

Like its companion piece, the CH Precision M1 monoblock amplifier, this exceptional, dual-monaural, ultra-low-noise, ultra-high-bandwidth, fully balanced line-level preamplifier is a contender for Best in Solid-State. Designed by the Swiss team of Florian Cossy and Thierry Heeb, the L1 is a model of timbral neutrality, high transient speed, high (actually, highest) detail, precision (though not razor-cut) imaging, and wall-to-wall soundstaging. Whether it's owed to the lowering of resonance via CH's custom mass, mechanical, and constrained-layer damping or to the expanded bandwidth, superior speed, and low noise of the L1's Class A circuitry, this preamp has none of the odd-order-harmonic edginess that drives audiophiles to drink (and to tubes). It is one very smooth, sophisticated customer, and yet, though a mite "controlled" sounding, it doesn't *overly* smooth sonics, turning them dull, grey, or antiseptic. On the contrary, timbre

is lifelike, dynamics eye-poppingly fast and hard-hitting, and midband presence very realistic. Though extremely deep-reaching and outstandingly well defined in the bottom octaves, the L1 may not have the midbass and power range density of color of the Soudation 725 (and it does not come with a dandy built-in phonostage like the Soudation unit does), but it is certainly its equal in other regards—and its superior in low-level resolution and neutrality. Indeed, this is the most detailed preamp JV has heard since the fabulous Technical Brain TBC-Zero/EX. A true reference-quality unit, the L1 is well deserving of TAS' 2015 Preamp of the Year Award. JV, review in this issue