

Meridian 507

Musical magic revisited By Michael Jones

**Meridian 507 CD player.
\$4470**

The importance of industrial design in consumer products is amply shown with the Meridian 507 CD player. Part of Meridian's 500-Series of components, which first appeared in 1993, the 507 looks all but identical to my six year old Meridian 508.20.

That a design can not only survive for several years, but still look fresh, is a compliment to the industrial designer.

The outsides of the Meridian 507 may have been designed several years back, but the insides are all new. Within the elegant exterior are six-layer PCBs with surfaced mount technology, carefully selected components and four separate power supplies.

The 507 uses 192kHz, 24 bit digital-to-analog converters, followed by a direct-coupled high quality analog output stage. Meridian also boast about their double buffering techniques to reduce jitter.

As with seemingly every CD player these days, the 507 will play CDR and CD-RW discs.

I reviewed the 507's predecessor, the Meridian 506, way back in February 1994 and said "this is a player that will give long-term satisfaction, and reward

the music lover." And that's the way I feel about the 507 too.

The 507's exterior hints at the sound of the player: elegant. This is a very smooth yet highly detailed CD player, bringing forth a wealth of unforced detail from my CDs.

Joe Henderson's tribute to Mile Davis,

So Near, So Far, showed this clearly. The brushed drums and cymbal work of drummer Al Foster was shown to be a lot subtler in both sound and intent than on my older 508, with the newer



player making my old faithful sound a little crude. The initial pluck of Dave Holland's double bass appeared a little subdued though.

A favourite over recent years has been US singer Sam Philips. Listening to *Flame* from her compilation *CD Zero Zero Zero*, showed that the 507 responded well to the subtle and organic rhythms among the bongos, bass and acoustic guitars. Again, there was a lack of glare or any sign of harshness to the sound. Delicious stuff!

Aficionados of chamber music can find CD sound to be a little hard to take, as many CD players have a subtle glare, which can make string tones uncomfortable.

Combine that with the unsubtle, almost paint-by-numbers approach of many players to the stringed instrument timbres, and you have a recipe for uncomfortable listening.

A beautiful string tone in Beethoven's quartets, with no sense of glare, and the subtle, realistic way of reproducing both the timbre of the instruments and the way they integrated with the acoustics, make the 507 appear almost purpose designed for chamber music.

That the 507 can portray the rhythmic subtleties of this music – something even many high-end players can't match – brings the music alive.

Comparing the 507 to my older 508 (20-bit version) was illuminating. The 508 had a little more weight and power to the sound and a slightly firmer bass, but otherwise the new 507 was ahead.

The 507 was cleaner and clearer, making my old 508 sound a touch glarey. It also had a subtle and supple way with rhythms that made my 508 – no slouch in this area – sound a bit wooden.

But one recurring thought from the comparisons was that Meridian make CD players that remain sonically competitive for years to come. So you can buy a 507 with the confidence that you have a great sounding CD player for today. And tomorrow.

The 507's exterior hints at the sound of the player: elegant. This is a very smooth yet highly detailed CD player, bringing forth a wealth of unforced detail from my CDs.

