

2010 Product of the Year

ANALOG



The Audio Research REF Phono 2

\$11,995

www.audioresearch.com

Review in Issue 33

As you might guess from our review in this issue, the ARC REF Phono 2 is a spectacular phono preamplifier, offering a level of performance that few others can match at any price. What makes the REF Phono 2 so special is that it offers huge helpings of musicality and tonal richness, which you would expect from a world-class tube preamplifier, yet it also has a level of weight and dynamic slam that you might mistakenly think only a solid-state preamplifier could offer.

With a dramatically reduced tube complement than the REF Phono 1, this unit uses four 6H30

tubes in the gain stage along with a 6550 and another 6H30 in the power supply, so tube replacement will not break the bank.

But one of the best features in the REF Phono 2 is its ability to change gain, loading and EQ from the comfort of your listening position. And unlike some multi-input phono preamplifiers that make you choose between MM or MC operation, both inputs on the REF can be configured either way; a blessing to the analog aficionado using multiple tonearm and cartridge combinations.