



# Awards '05

PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

ALL IN ONE SYSTEMS

## Arcam Solo

**SEPARATES MIGHT HAVE** been the building blocks with which the house of hi-fi was built, but the future of system-building might well see us requiring just one brick at a time. And if it does, it'll be sleek, slim, attractive bricks like this one that cause the change of heart.

Arcam has created a one-box system that really can replace three, because it does so without sacrificing performance. This CD/DAB tuner/amplifier combination offers excellent all-round sound, along with the convenience of a one-box product. Add to this solid build and splendid styling and you can see why we've got ourselves so excited.

We won't lie: a similarly priced, top-notch separates system would still pip the Solo for bottom-line sound quality, but this Arcam certainly gets close enough for us. It's more than deserving of our highest praise.

### The sound of separates

Lift the lid on the Solo, and the secret to its sonic success becomes clear. The CD transport, digital-to-analogue conversion circuitry, and audio output stage essentially matches those of Arcam's renowned CD73T, while the DAB circuitry is straight from a standalone tuner. No wonder these elements show no signs of performance corner-cutting.

Pick out a track from the *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory OST* and the Solo uncovers impressive detail, delivering a clean and cohesive sound. Even when throwing something a little

busier in its direction, the Solo keeps calm and poised, systematically failing to come across remotely flustered.

Kraftwerk's *Home Computer*, from their recent live CD, shows off the Solo's excellent timing, and its ability to really drive a track along. Switch to the tuner and the performance is just as pleasing. A good selection of stations are found, noise levels are low, and the overall resolution is fine. As with any tuner, a quality aerial is recommended.

The unit itself is blessed with a fine finish and standard of build. Controlling it is intuitive, too, while the remote is sensibly laid-out and responsive. The buttons on the front of the machine, though they look the part, could feel friendlier to the touch, but it's a minor criticism – especially with that remote.

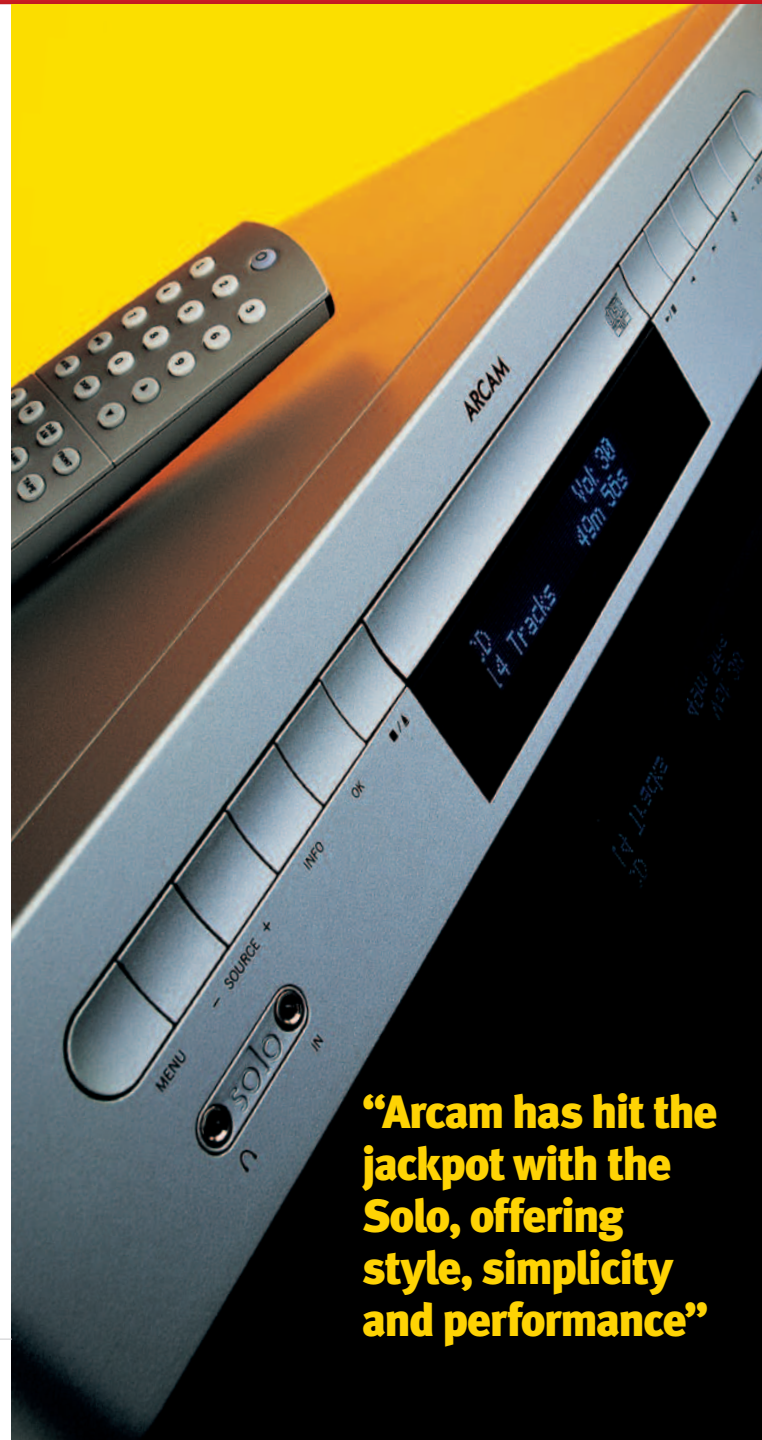
If it's features that get your pulse racing, then look no further than four line-level inputs, preamp and multiroom outputs, and a digital out for the CD and DAB. There's even an array of alarm options.

Arcam has hit the jackpot with the Solo, delivering a beautifully-designed one-box solution, giving as much convenience and style as it does performance. It's the ultimate hi-fi building block.

### VERDICT

The Solo sticks its neck out, and goes it alone – and it's an unmitigated success. Looks, style and ability, for now, this is the one-box system to rule them all

[www.arcam.co.uk](http://www.arcam.co.uk)



**“Arcam has hit the jackpot with the Solo, offering style, simplicity and performance”**