



REVIEW: BD32 UNIVERSAL PLAYER
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New Swede

The Swede had just arrived at the office and was already attracting the envious eyes of my colleagues. They had to wait though, because the first Primare Blu-ray player, the BD32 stayed with me, much to my delight.

The BD32 is the first Blu-ray player by Primare; it rounds off the home cinema portfolio from the Scandinavians, which up to now has managed with only a DVD player. The chassis design is in line with other Primare components, but this doesn't exclude it from operating with other brands: a glance at the rear panel shows the comprehensive connectivity. Besides two HDMI ports there are audio outputs as far as the eye can see. As well as the analogue stereo output there are two balanced XLR jacks. Analogue surround sound is output via the respective RCA jacks. The BD32 also outputs digital audio signals via one optical, one RCA and even a balanced XLR output.

But the signals not only originate from Blu-ray and DVD; the Primare also plays Super Audio CDs, which are very popular in audiophile circles. Connection to network, Internet and other devices is guaranteed by eSATA, USB and, last but not least, an Ethernet port. For Wi-Fi the Primare comes with a USB dongle, which is either directly connected to the USB port at the rear or, with unfavorable reception, to the supplied USB extension with stand. After quick integration with our network the Primare reported immediately that the latest firmware was installed.

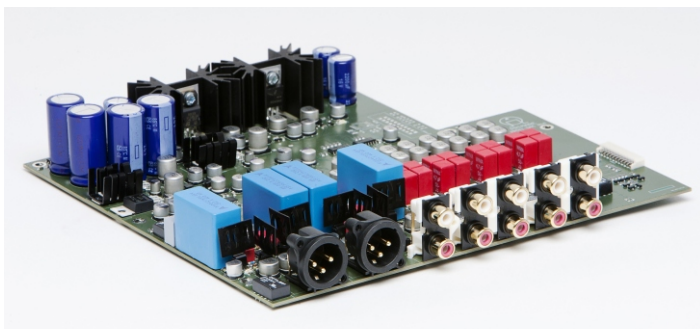
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Info: Why XLR ?

The Primare BD32 audio outputs are, at least for 2-channel operation, designed as XLR connectors. In XLR transmission the signal cables for path and return path are strictly separated from the shielding (unlike RCA cables, where the shielding is used for the signal return path). This makes XLR transmission less susceptible to interference, triggered by long cable lengths or other adjacent electric appliances. In an XLR-based system the entire chain should be wired symmetrically, which applies to the BD32's siblings, and other high-end electronics.

Hats off

The elegant finish with the visibly robust aluminum front immediately invites the tester's curiosity as to whether the internal design is consistent with the noble exterior. The BD32 is no different from all Primare products, the interior being tidy and well equipped. The main part of the weight originates in the massive steel casing plates, the even more massive aluminum front and toroidal transformer, and the well distributed heat sinks in the interior: all require bodybuilder qualities, at least until the player finds its final position. The transformer supplies two separate power supplies, one of which supplies drive and image signal processing, the other, abundantly equipped with electrolytic capacitors, supplies the sound department. This is clearly separated from and above the video board, so that the high-quality Marvell video processor Qdeo Kyoto-G2, cannot be seen. The complex sound part is, to some extent, the Primare player's second major statement. A brief glance is enough to see that the Swedes are building for performance and not budget: the finest converters by Crystal as well as Burr-Brown OP amplifiers process the digital signal for the analogue outputs. An RS232 port as well as a connector for IR extender and trigger in/out allows integration in complex control installations.



BD32 audio board

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Features and Operation

As comprehensive as it is regarding connections at the rear, the front of the BD32 is pleasantly tidy. The few buttons are sufficient for the basic functions and thanks to their discreet lighting, visible even in a dark home cinema. The standby button, also on the front, is sufficient for economy. Its hardly measurable standby consumption means that the main switch at the rear needs only to be pressed before going on holiday. The supplied remote control does not quite match the high-quality of the player. It is not backlit and the dark buttons on the dark background are close together – the most important functions should be memorised in order to access the menu in the dark.



Image and Sound Quality

The image processing is exceptionally good. No matter what came from the drive or via USB or eSATA, the Primare did not slip up: the image on the Panasonic plasma satisfied in all three dimensions. Now it was time to lend a close ear to the sound; quickly the Friedemann hybrid disc (CD and SACD) was inserted and immediately played by the BD32 in a rarely heard brilliance. More discs followed; whether live concert recordings on Blu-ray or music DVDs, the Primare universal player sounded like a pure music specialist.

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Conclusion

As could be expected, the Swedes have done a great job with their Primare BD32. From the power supply to the outputs, the player is trimmed for optimum performance, which can be seen both in video and audio performance. The Primare BD32 is an uncompromising universal player.

All that is possible is included in this high-end player by Primare. High-quality signal processing for video and audio is supported by a strong power supply. XLR audio outputs support the BD32's professional ambition. No question, this Scandinavian is perfectly manufactured and even plays SACDs.

Primare BD32 - DVD / BD / SACD / 3D / LAN / WLAN

High-quality audio section / high-quality workmanship / clearly arranged menu

Reference Class Test Result: Exceptional 1.0

Referenzklasse**Testurteil:****12/1-2012****HEIMKINO****überragend****1,0**