



MICHAEL CALDRE GEAR 08.24.11 6:30 AM

## HIGH-END AUDIO GEAR IS CAVIAR FOR YOUR EARS



### AYON AUDIO CD55

Ayon Audio is mostly known for its amplifiers, so it's not surprising to see the company has incorporated a tube-based preamp into this CD player. There are inputs for external analog sources, so you can plug in anything and use just the digital-to-analog converter or the preamp inside. But of course, it's made to play CDs, and at that, it excels — to the tune of \$11,380.



## D'AGOSTINO MOMENTUM

Dan D'Agostino has been making amps for 32 years, mostly at Krell Industries, where he's a co-founder. Having spent that much time in the high-end audio business, he's seen his share of amps that sound great, but are beastly-looking.

So this year, he debuted his newest design, the Momentum, a 300-watt monoblock amplifier dignified by beautiful copper heat-sink side plates and a glowing analog VU meter on the face. "I wanted to make something people could put in their listening room and say, 'Wow, that looks really nice,'" he says.

D'Agostino's hand-wired, all-analog monoblocks sell for \$45,000 a pair. He says he's also working on a stereo amp, a preamp, and a phono stage to match.



## VON GAYLORD UNI SEA

You've seen a liquid-cooled PC — here's a liquid-cooled amp. Von Gaylord's Uni Sea is a four-piece Class A amplifier, and the two monoblocks are each topped with fluid-filled acrylic cylinders that regulate the temperature of the transmitting tubes. At 200 watts per channel, it's powerful, but it ain't cheap. The price tag is \$100,000.