

# Awards edition 2011



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# Hi-Fi Choice

**PASSION FOR SOUND**

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Awards 2011

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## Naim + B&W's £2k gems

Our verdict on the new ND5 XS streamer and B&W's latest, the PM1

### Amp champs

Sublime computer audio in our four-way amp test

### 2012's hi-fi is here

Whittlebury Hall show reveals the hottest new kit: full report on p16

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### System synergiser!

IsoTek's £600 mains conditioner will sweeten up *any* system says our expert, find out more inside...



### COMPETITION WIN!

Triangle Color loudspeakers worth **£899**

# Electric tech

Want clean mains to power your hi-fi? IsoTek's range of passive mains conditioners promises you all that and more, says **Jimmy Hughes**

**T**he quality of the mains supply directly influences the sound produced by your hi-fi. If your mains is contaminated with noise (and it is!), the sound will lack transparency and clarity, making the music seem congested and lacking in dynamics. The solution? Invest in a good mains conditioner. IsoTek offers a wide range of products, from the mighty £6k Super Titan (see *The Collection* 2011), to smaller more affordable solutions like the new EVO3 Solus at £595. This unit sits above the entry-level EVO3 Sirius mains bar and replaces IsoTek's GII Solus, which according to the company, offers higher specifications and improved performance, with no increase in cost.

## No noise

The EVO3 Solus incorporates a Delta filter network to cancel common mode and differential noise. In addition, newly devised differential filtering is individually applied to all six mains outlets to prevent cross-contamination between components.

Noise on the mains supply is only one of the problems you're trying to tackle; there's also the risk of individual components themselves (power amplifiers, for example) generating their own noise and further contaminating the supply. So isolating all six mains

sockets is an important feature. Silver-plated oxygen-free copper cables are used internally, and the EVO3 Solus also protects your equipment from unexpected voltage surges and power spikes.

There's an IEC mains input and six 13-amp unswitched mains outlets – which (given a typical hi-fi set-up) should be sufficient for most user requirements. During use the unit runs cool and makes no mechanical/physical noise so far as we could tell and there are no annoying buzzes or humming sounds to speak of.

## Modest price

Build quality is reassuringly solid. The casework is made from mild steel, with an aluminium front panel and cosmetically, the finish is good. Internally, the various components are mounted on a single printed circuit board which is resin-potted. While this helps keeps things like mechanical resonance in check, it also makes it virtually impossible see what components have been used, and prevents IsoTek's competitors from ascertaining the precise nature of its circuits!

Given the EVO3 Solus's relatively modest price, when compared to IsoTek's massive Super Titan model, the former offers very good value. Inevitably, of course, it's not as good



## DETAILS

**PRODUCT:** IsoTek EVO3 Solus

**Origin:** UK

**TYPE:** Mains conditioner

**WEIGHT:** 5kg

**DIMENSIONS:** (WxHxD)  
440 x 310 x 100mm

**FEATURES:**

- Six 13a mains outlet sockets
- Each socket individually isolated

- Silver-plated, oxygen-free copper cabling
- Cancels both common-mode and differential noise

- Protects against voltage spikes and power surges

**DISTRIBUTOR:** Soundfoundations

**TELEPHONE:** 01962 852727

**WEBSITE:** isoteksystems.com

as the bigger unit, but it provides more than a taste of its benefits at a fraction of the price. And, every little helps!

## Transparent sound

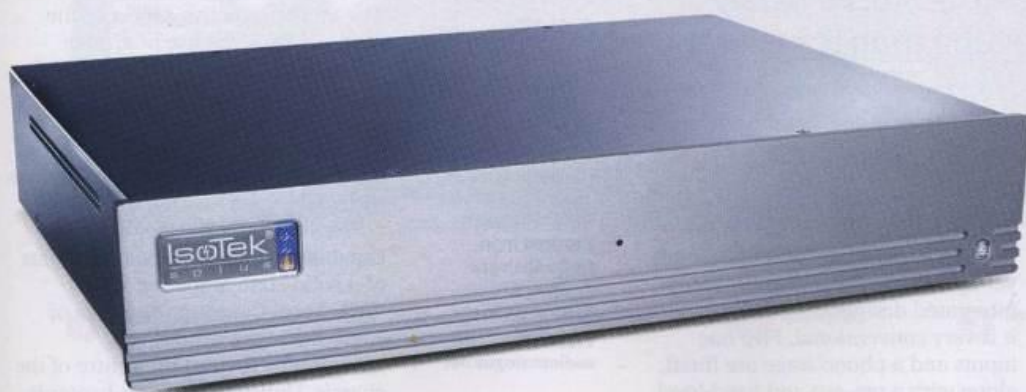
In terms of sound quality, what can you expect from a mains conditioning unit like the EVO3 Solus? Well, as you purge the mains supply of noise, you will be better able to experience what your hi-fi system is capable of – you finally start hearing your equipment as it is meant to sound.

Obviously, much depends on the quality of the mains to begin with; the noisier it is, the bigger the improvement. The EVO3 Solus enables a cleaner more transparent sound, with increased depth and a wider dynamic range. The music sounds slightly sharper and more immediate, yet at the same time smoother and cleaner, with reduced high-frequency 'edge' and less congestion in complex, busy passages. Also, the quality of sound is more consistent from day to day, hour to hour. The sound will be good, regardless of when you listen, rather than sounding best (say) after midnight.

## You're hooked

The EVO3 Solus is a simple effective means of upgrading the sound of your hi-fi; making it sound better and more consistent. You'll get the biggest and most noticeable benefit in situations where mains quality is noisy and contaminated. But, even if your mains supply is reasonably clean, you still hear an improvement. The fact that the EVO3 Solus reduces cross-contamination between components is one reason why.

Because mains purity is specific to each location, you need to try the EVO3 Solus in your own home to fully experience the benefits, once you've done so, we're convinced you'll be hooked! ●



## Hi-Fi Choice

### OUR VERDICT

**SOUND QUALITY**



**LIKE:** Simple, effective device that improves sound quality without fuss

**VALUE FOR MONEY**



**DISLIKE:** No serious complaints

**BUILD QUALITY**



**WE SAY:** Mains purity has a profound effect on sound quality. The EVO3 Solus will help your hi-fi deliver its full potential

**FEATURES**



**OVERALL**

