

preferred it, even though at other times I stayed with the upsampled setting for fairly long periods.

WORTHY SUCCESSOR

Production of Shanling's CD-T300 was limited to 300 pieces because it used the now out-of-production Philips CDM4 transport mechanism. But as far as I can tell, the CD500 is a worthy successor, and certainly is rather an admirable product in its own right. Much as I admire the CD500's visual chutzpah – it somehow seems to encapsulate the unstoppable optimism and confidence of Shenzhen itself – I'm not really a fan of big bright blue lights in the living room, or even massive metal styling. But I still ended up feeling nothing but affection for this brash and bulky product.

While Shanling will probably sell plenty of CD500s, even at £3600, the keener distributors would really have liked some more CD-T300s. Shanling has now answered their

prayers with the promise of a new model called the CD-T300PRO, built into the same stunning casework but using a current Philips transport, the CD-Pro2. At the same time, the CD-T100 has been revamped as the CD-T100se, the now obsolete PDM200 HDCD chip effectively replaced in a new line-up which includes the Burr-Brown SRC4193 for upsampling.

So it looks like there is no stopping Shanling. When all else fails, we can still laugh at the lapses of Shenzhen English ('Keep away from Heat, Moisture, Dust and Vibrator,' the CD500 user's manual warns helpfully) but this is a very serious company.

It may be that one major aim of Shanling's high-end hi-fi products is to provide a shop window for the company's massive OEM design and production business. Or it may be, at least some of the time, that they actually do it for love. Anyway, that's certainly what this product sounds like, and it really should be heard. ☺

FOR:
Liquid, unfatiguing and detailed sound

AGAINST: Not much, if you love the blue lights



ABOVE: Rear panel includes single-ended and balanced (XLR) analogue outputs plus S/PDIF (phono) and AES/EBU (XLR) digital outputs

FEATURES
■■■■■

SOUND QUALITY
■■■■■

BUILD QUALITY
■■■■■

VALUE FOR MONEY
■■■■□

With battleship build and exuberant design, plus Shanling's trademark lighting effects, the CD500 is a real attention-seeker. But that certainly isn't the whole story. Even if you're not the sort of person who fixes blue lights under his car, this player demands to be heard. With a smooth yet involving sound, and no real vices, the CD500 gets more likeable the more you listen and is a more than serious contender at the price.

Hi-fi news 19/20
OVERALL RATING

Review system breakdown

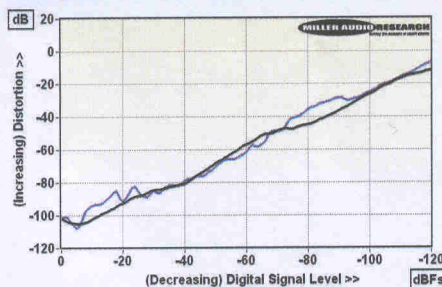
AMPLIFIERS: Classé CAP 2100, Ensemble Fuoco, Musical Fidelity kW pre-amplifier and kW 750 power amplifier
LOUDSPEAKERS: Dali Ikon 6, Ensemble Figura, PMC DB1+
CABLES: Cambridge Audio, Ensemble Dynaflex interconnects, Chord Odyssey, Ensemble Megaflex speaker cable

Contact numbers

UK DISTRIBUTOR: Real Hi-Fi **TEL:** 0870 909 6777
WEB: www.realhi-fi.com

Hi-Fi News lab report

Shanling CD500 Reference: Distortion vs Digital Signal Level (1kHz vs 20kHz)



This is the first CD player I have encountered that allows (synchronous) 8x oversampling to be directly compared with (asynchronous) 44.1kHz-to-192kHz upsampling. The former is achieved using an NPC SM5847 oversampling chip, the latter through an SRC4193 sample-rate converter from Burr-Brown, although the audio subsequently passes through a common series of PCM1704 DACs and EH6922 output triodes. In the event, there's little to distinguish the two modes which both offer a low ~150psec jitter and fabulously low distortion of 0.0003% (midrange) to 0.007% (treble). There are some unusual 'wobbles' in distortion versus digital level (see graph) but, once again, this is common to both over- and upsampled modes, along with the high 2.4V output, wide 110dB S/N ratio and excellent >105dB channel separation. Only in the rejection of digital images does the upsampled mode surpass oversampling (112dB versus 107dB), although neither will exert any subjective impact. In the event, it's the asynchronous upsampling mode that represents the tougher maths for the player... PM

Hi-fi News lab specifications

Maximum output level	2.41V rms (4.83V balanced)
A-wtd S/N Ratio	110.4dB
Distortion 1kHz, 0dBFS/-30dBFS	0.0003%/0.006%
Distortion 20kHz, 0dBFS	0.007%
Digital Jitter	150psec
Linearity at 1kHz (-90dBFS)	±0.2dB
Stereo separation (20Hz-20kHz)	>105dB
Frequency response (20Hz-20kHz)	+0.0/-0.25dB