



COST-NO-OBJECT

CH Precision L1 \$47,900

Like its companion piece, the CH Precision M1 monoblock amplifier, this exceptional, dual-monaural, ultra-low-noise, ultra-high-bandwidth, fully balanced line-level preamplifier is a contender for Best in Solid-State. Designed by the Swiss team of Florian Cossy and Thierry Heeb, the L1 is a model of timbral neutrality, high transient speed, high (actually, highest) detail, precision (though not razor-cut) imaging, and wall-to-wall soundstaging. Whether it's owed to the lowering of resonance via CH's custom mass, mechanical, and constrained-layer damping or to the expanded bandwidth, superior speed, and low noise of the L1's Class A circuitry, this preamp has none of the odd-order-harmonic edginess that drives audiophiles to drink (and to tubes). It is one very smooth, sophisticated customer, and yet, though a mite "controlled" sounding, it doesn't *overly* smooth sonics, turning them dull, grey, or antiseptic. On the contrary, timbre

is lifelike, dynamics eye-poppingly fast and hard-hitting, and midband presence very realistic. Though extremely deep-reaching and outstandingly well defined in the bottom octaves, the L1 may not have the midbass and power range density of color of the Soullution 725 (and it does not come with a dandy built-in phonostage like the Soullution unit does), but it is certainly its equal in other regards—and its superior in low-level resolution and neutrality. Indeed, this is the most detailed preamp JV has heard since the fabulous Technical Brain TBC-Zero/EX. A true reference-quality unit, the L1 is well deserving of TAS' 2015 Preamp of the Year Award. JV, review in this issue