

# Pricey Isotek justifies expense

## Isotek Titan

£1425

### MAINS CONDITIONER

#### ↑ FOR

Allows your system to work at its best; fine build quality

#### ↓ AGAINST

Only makes sense with high-end systems; just two power outlets

#### ... VERDICT

The Titan isn't cheap, but in the right set-up it works wonderfully well – not an extravagance in the best systems!



NEARLY £1500 IS a lot of money to spend on a mains filter. You need a high-end set-up, something costing at least four grand, before buying a product like the Titan makes sense.

But those with more modest systems shouldn't stop reading, because Isotek makes more affordable

products – such as its £549 Minisub GII Vision – which do a similar job albeit on a far less dramatic scale. So what is the Titan and what does it do?

Essentially, it filters the mains without restraining its output. The pay-off is that your electronics have a better quality supply to work from, and so can do their job better.

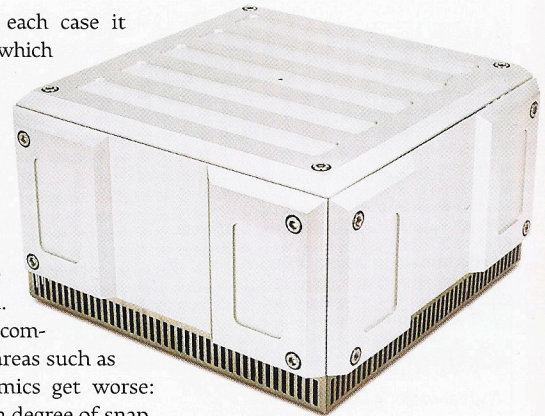
Isotek engineered this unit with high-power electronics such as amplifiers in mind, but there's no reason why it can't be used with CD players, DVD spinners and even video displays. There are plans for add-ons that expand the Titan's paltry two-socket arrangement, though you can just plug in a multiway extension to do the same job, and that's what we did for most of this test.

As with all mains products much of their effectiveness depends on the quality of the original supply. If that happens to be top-class, you won't notice much of a difference when you introduce the filter. But the story changes dramatically if it isn't. We tried the Titan in a number of

locations, and in each case it justified inclusion, which is high praise for such a pricey unit.

Most filters can improve the refinement of a system. The top end is a bit smoother and any background noise is greatly reduced. However, it's fairly common to find that areas such as timing and dynamics get worse: rhythms can lose a degree of snap, while crescendos fail to make the impact that they did previously.

It's precisely in these areas that the Titan excels. If anything, the timing of our reference Krell system gets even crisper and its ability to discriminate between subtle dynamic shifts improves. Are the differences night and day? No, but once you live with the Titan as part of your system it becomes very difficult to live without it. And that's the reason we recommend it extremely highly.



This is the most expensive mains filter we've tested – and it's also the best

### ALSO CONSIDER

#### Isotek Minisub GII Vision

£549 ★★★★★ September 2004

If your budget doesn't stretch to the Titan this is a great alternative

#### Merlin Tarantula

£50 ★★★★★ December 2004

Formerly the Black Widow, this mains cable is fantastic value



**BEST ALL-ROUNDER**  
**ISOTEK GII MINISUB VISION**

★★★★★

There's a £500 model as well, but the extra £50 buys an extra layer of filtering for AV kit. Hook the Isotek up to a TV and the difference is immediate and clear. Picture noise is reduced significantly. With DVD players, picture and sound are better – and on a sub-£3000 hi-fi system, the sound becomes smoother, gaining an extra level of resolution. Bass authority in particular grows without any trade-off in terms of articulation.

**→ VERDICT**

It's not cheap, but this Isotek is one of the most cost-effective home cinema and hi-fi upgrades there is



**BEST COST-NO-OBJECT**  
**ISOTEK TITAN**

★★★★★

Clearly, at the best part of £1500, this is a product for high-end systems. Essentially, it filters the mains without restraining its output. It's a mere two-socket arrangement, but you can add an extension to that. With a poor mains supply, the Titan is a revelation: with most mains filters, timing and dynamics can suffer. The Titan excels in these areas and our reference Krell system got even crisper and more subtle powered through the Titan.

**→ VERDICT**

In the right set-up, the Titan works remarkably well. It's not an extravagance in the very best systems