

TEST

Magnetar
UDP900 MKII



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CINEMA EXCELLENCE IN PICTURE AND SOUND

Digital
Diversity



Heavyweight in
Premium Attire



The UDP900 MKII is designed to deliver picture and sound at reference level in stereo or cinema setups.

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Cinema Excellence in Picture and Sound

The Magnetar UDP900 MKII is the professional tool for all home cinema fans. Its drive offers compatibility with practically every type of disc, from CD to 4K Blu-ray. But the player also goes all out when it comes to sound, offering finest audio processing for stereo or surround.

How many streaming subscriptions do you have by now? With the quite common number of three to four, you quickly end up paying more than 60 euros a month, while ad-free playback or streaming in 4K usually costs significantly more. If it is even available at all. And although you are confronted with the considerable costs every four weeks, it constantly seems to happen that the very film you want to watch is unavailable on any of the services you subscribe to. Many users are disappointed by the decline of the streaming era and are returning to discs. And home cinema owners in particular, who have built up a substantial collection of physical media over the years anyway, need a suitable player. Those with particularly high standards should take a closer look at the Magne-

tar UDP900 MKII. The UHD Blu-ray player is designed to offer playback at an absolute reference level in terms of both picture and sound.

Heavyweight in Premium Attire

The fact that the UDP900 MKII is no run-of-the-mill player is obvious at first glance. There are no thin sheet-metal panels here that give way at the slightest pressure. Instead, Magnetar uses aluminium plates with generous material thicknesses. The front panel alone measures 1.5 centimetres, while the side panels and top are also several millimetres thick. Together with its internal shielding and bracing, as well as power supplies and electronics, the player weighs an impressive 15.4 kilograms. This means it even leaves many full-fledged AV receivers far behind. In addition to its sheer mass, however, the high-quality workmanship of the elegant, particularly low-vibration metal housing is also impressive. All parts of the housing sit wonderfully firmly, have minimal gaps and convey a wonderful sense of solidity. The fit and pressure points of the



The UDP900 MKII is a true heavyweight among Blu-ray players - in every respect.



Thick aluminium alloy plates form the player's sturdy housing.

buttons on the front are equally convincing, and the disc tray, which glides gently in and out, also appears comparatively sturdy.

Attractive

The design of home cinema components is often rather understated. After all, most of them are either out of sight or located in a darkened room. Nevertheless, Magnetar places value on an attractive appearance for its reference player. Similar to the smaller UDP800, there is also a two-tone front panel here. While the brushed aluminium segments at the top left and bottom right, as well as the tray cover, are finished in anthracite, the panels at the bottom left and top right are black. While brushed aluminium is also used on the left, the segment on the right is made of acrylic. This is where the player's monochrome display is located, providing information about the most important things during playback. The design of the front certainly has its own charm, gives the player a high degree of recognisability and is pleasantly restrained at the same time. The UDP900 therefore does not necessarily have to be housed in the equipment cabinet of a home cinema. It also looks good in the living room.

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Editor's Choice

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Model:	Magnetar UDP900 MKII
Product category:	UHD Blu-ray Player
Price:	3,890 euros (Code & Region Free: 3,990 euros)
Warranty:	2 years
Versions:	Black
Distributor:	Audio Reference, Hamburg 040 53320359 www.audio-reference.de
Dimensions (HxWxD):	135 x 445 x 321 mm
Weight:	15.4 kg
Inputs:	1 x Disc 1 x Ethernet 1 x USB-B 1 x USB-A
Outputs:	2 x HDMI (1 of which audio only) 1 x XLR Stereo 1 x RCA Stereo 6 x RCA Mono 1 x S/PDIF coaxial 1 x Toslink optical 1 x 6.3 mm headphone output (front)
Supported disc formats:	4K/UHD Blu-ray, Blu-ray, 3D Blu-Ray, DVD, DVD-Audio, SACD, DVD (±R/RW), CD (-R/RW), BD (-R/RE), AVCHD, Kodak Picture CD
Supported image resolutions:	up to 4K/60 Hz
Image technologies:	HDR, HDR10, HDR10+, Dolby Vision, 3D
Audio formats:	Dolby Digital, Dolby Atmos, DTS-HD Master Audio, DSD, common PCM formats
Sampling rates:	PCM: up to 7.1, 192 kHz/24 bit DSD: up to 5.1, 5.6 MHz/1 bit
Streaming:	UPnP, roon ready

Rating

Picture quality (40%):	100/100
Sound (20%):	100/100
Practical use (20%):	99/100
Features (20%):	99/100
Overall rating:	Editor's Choice
Class:	Reference class
Price/performance	very good



The two-tone design of the UDP900 is pleasantly understated and nevertheless gives the rather large player a touch of visual finesse.



The Magnetar's drive practically does not care what format the inserted disc uses. For a small surcharge, it can even be used without a code or region lock.

Digital Diversity

The UDP900 MKII is a device for people who take disc playback seriously. Accordingly, the player's drive is also extremely generous when it comes to compatibility with a wide variety of formats. In addition to conventional Blu-rays, 4K/UHD Blu-rays and 3D variants, self-created BD-R and BD-RE discs can also be played. Optionally, it can also be ordered without a code/region lock in order to play imported discs. The situation is similar with DVDs, and for CDs the classic Red Book format is supplemented by support for CD-R and CD-RW. Hi-Res Audio enthusiasts will also appreciate the ability to play SACDs, and even Kodak Picture Discs can be used. Via USB-A, videos, pictures and music can also be played directly from connected hard drives. USB-B also allows laptops and streamers to be connected in order to use the high-quality internal D/A converter section. Finally, an Ethernet port even enables streaming via UPnP or Roon.

Elaborate Audio

Most disc players limit their internal audio section to a minimum. After all, many people simply use the HDMI connection as the audio output. This is of course also possible with the UDP900 MKII. When using the second HDMI output, which transmits audio exclusively, additional internal TMDs retiming of the signals is even employed. However, the player's internal converter section is actually superior to those of many AV receivers, soundbars or hi-fi amplifiers. Two high-quality ES9038PRO DAC chips from ESS are used here. These are components used in numerous excellent reference-class stereo and multichannel audio components. Temperature-stabilised oscillators ensure precise timing during D/A conversion. A four-layer circuit board design guarantees optimum channel separation, and Magnetar also chose components from the top shelf when selecting the capacitors. Added to this is the split power supply, with a switching power supply for the digital sections and a linear power supply with a toroidal transformer for the analogue sections.



Magnetar's Blu-ray player places great emphasis on its audio capabilities. Two reference DACs handle the processing of film sound or music. Thanks to the USB-B input and XLR output, the UDP900 is also wonderfully suited to high-quality hi-fi systems.

Magnetar UDP900 MKII - Audio Expertise in Stereo and Surround

For the MKII version of its ultimate player, the manufacturer now also uses internal wiring with high-quality copper conductors and fixed connectors. Amplifiers or AV receivers can then finally be connected to the UDP900 via RCA or XLR in order to transmit stereo signals. This is of course wonderful for use as a CD or SACD player. But cinema films ultimately live from their surround sound. Normally, the only option here would be to pass the sound in the digital domain to a suitable AV system. In addition to HDMI, this also works here via Toslink or coaxial S/PDIF output. Magnetar, however, took the subject of sound output one step further and offers internal analogue processing of up to eight audio channels. Six volume-controlled mono RCA outputs, combined with the stereo outputs, which are responsible for the two front channels, therefore also enable configurations in 5.1 or 7.1.



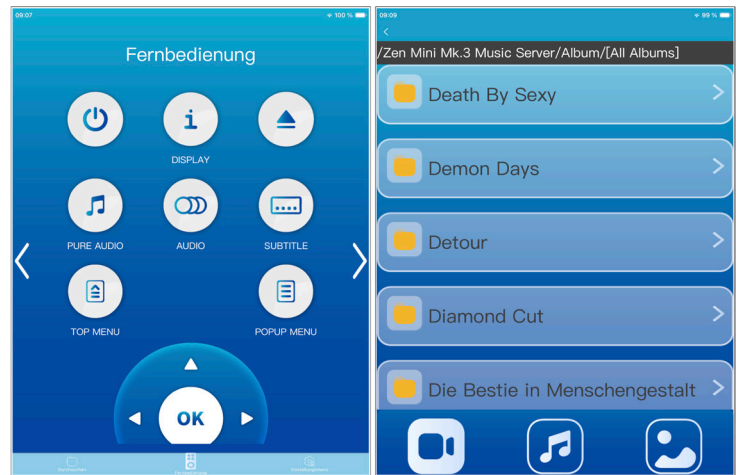
With its six RCA sockets supplementing the stereo output, the UDP900 can reproduce up to eight channels in analogue form.

Functionality with Clarity

To tailor the player precisely to the setup being used, the single-line display on the front would be rather inconvenient. All settings are therefore best made using the UDP900's on-screen display (OSD). The home screen lets you choose between disc playback, photo display, music playback, the video player, streaming via the network and the settings menu. The latter then offers extensive options for adjusting a wide range of parameters. To ensure a good overview, the options menu is divided into three columns. The general menu item is selected on the left and the specific function in the centre. On the right, you can then see the currently selected value, which is marked with a dot, and alternatively set the desired value. This format is only departed from for very specific functions, such as the detailed speaker configuration. Despite the extensive setting options for numerous aspects, it is generally easy to find your way around here, even though the German version sometimes uses unusual translations.



The player's OSD is clearly structured and easy to understand.



The app can replace the infrared remote control or make UPnP streaming a little easier. However, it is not essential.

Master Musician

The UDP900 MKII can also be controlled via an app. The interface basically follows that of the OSM or simulates the supplied remote control. It offers hardly any advantages for adjusting settings. However, it allows the UPnP streaming functions to be used without a screen having to be connected. Via the RS232 interface or IP control, the Magnetar can also be integrated into home control systems such as Control4 or Crestron. We stick with classic control via remote control, however, while the UDP900 sends its picture via HDMI to a television and the sound via RCA to an amplifier. First, "Dark Side of the Moon" goes into the drive, which is read and started at lightning speed. The UDP900 immediately impresses during CD playback with its impeccably clean, pitch-black background, against which all elements move with outstanding spatiality. In this way, it makes wonderful use of the already expansive stage it creates, especially in terms of depth.

Powerful Voice

Defined and with excellent detail retrieval, the player conjures the numerous chimes and bells in "Time" into the listening room, before the atmospherically light xylophone initially steps prominently forward. Finally, the UDP900 then delivers captivating sound with rounded, smooth bass, fresh cymbals, clear voices and rich guitars. It also demonstrates similar virtues when streaming Hi-Res content via the network, resolving fine details, playing with differentiation and delivering gripping dynamics. During film playback, the Magnetar's strong musical abilities once again take centre stage. In the cult classic "Heavy Metal", it drives forward powerfully with the hard, propulsive riffs and wonderfully muffled drums of Riggs' "Radar Rider". The animated film's other classic songs also receive the necessary thrust and dynamics here, so that Dio's penetrating voice in "The Mob Rules" hits its target precisely. The dialogue voices of John Candy, Eugene Levy and Rodger Bumpass also sound consistently charismatic.



The display provides only basic information and is therefore easy to read even from a distance.

Deep Color Brilliance

The audio mixing and recording quality of the 1981 film are unfortunately somewhat inconsistent, but the UDP900 MKII also provides tight dynamics and excellent dimensionality when it comes to effects. The player cannot be blamed for the occasional slight image noise of the Blu-ray version, which arose during the digitisation of the original recordings. In all other respects, however, the film clearly benefits from its excellent picture reproduction. The lines and contours of the hand-drawn animations are wonderfully clear. The player also reproduces the vivid colours excellently with its 12-bit processing. The high contrast and fine gradations of the individual nuances and shades are convincing, especially in the backgrounds. In the "B-17" segment, the differently dark areas are also clearly graduated, while the glaringly green Loc Nar illuminates the room with almost dazzling brightness. With the 4K Blu-ray of "F1: The Movie", the Magnetar can finally demonstrate its Dolby Vision capabilities.

Night Owl

The player conjures the racing action at the Daytona 24h onto the screen with excellent contrast. The light from the headlights cuts precisely through the deep blackness of the night. Everything caught by the beams of light then shines in vivid colours for a few moments before the vehicles race on. In the cockpit shots, light and shadow from the track lighting move quickly and cleanly across the dark surfaces. Fine details such as the rough Alcantara surface of the dashboard or the illuminated lettering on the displays can nevertheless be wonderfully recognised. The fireworks are also finely resolved and reveal countless small sparks, which are then beautifully reflected in the paintwork of the vehicles. In the scenes, some of which were filmed during real F1 races, the film's yellow filter dampens the otherwise excellent colour palette somewhat. Nevertheless, the player impresses here with a clear, high-contrast and three-dimensional presentation.



The illuminated metal remote control sits comfortably in the hand, offers practical function buttons and a clear layout.



As with an AV receiver, the UDP900's surround processing can also be precisely adjusted to the positioning of the speakers.

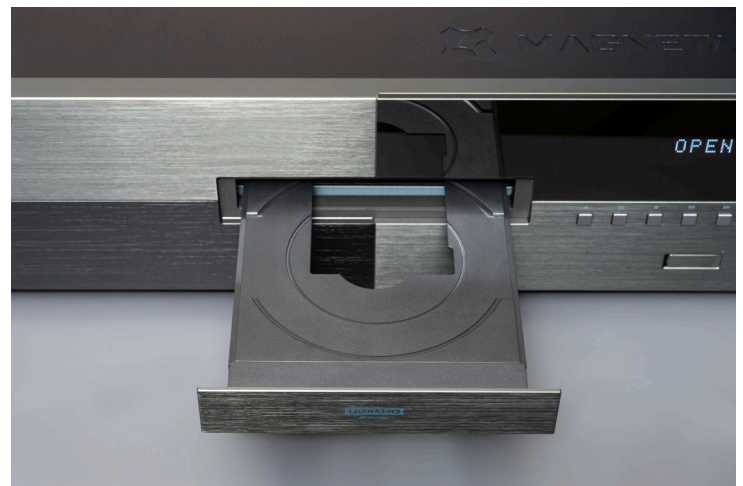
Rush of Speed

The UDP900 handles the impressive shots, captured with swivelling cameras mounted directly on the cars, with ease. The view rotates cleanly and at lightning speed from the front wing towards the driver as the vehicles race past barriers and kerbs. At the same time, the textures of the carbon fibre, racing suits and belts can still be clearly recognised. The player also renders the raindrops on visors and the cockpit in wonderfully three-dimensional fashion. Once again, the truly excellent sound is equally impressive. The iconic sounds of the impact wrenches and the typical, slightly hoarse roar of the V6 hybrid engines sound exactly as you know them. Voices are consistently excellently intelligible here as well, the various accents come through wonderfully even over the pit radio, and the cheers of the crowd spread widely throughout the room. Hans Zimmer's soundtrack is also given the scale and power that his compositions demand. Powerful bass, punchy drums and sustaining brass instruments underscore the on-screen action in truly phenomenal fashion.



Conclusion

The Magnetar UDP900 MKII is a clear reference among disc players. Its high-contrast, detailed and three-dimensional picture gets everything out of 4K, HDR10+ and Deep Color. At the same time, its excellent audio processing delivers wonderfully three-dimensional, defined and spacious sound. Thanks to analogue output up to 7.1, it also enables unusual system concepts, while its drive and its compatibility with practically every type of disc provide enormous flexibility in playback. Its OSD also offers numerous setting options while remaining very easy to use. And ultimately, its high build quality also reflects its reference-level aspirations. Whether as a CD player in a stereo setup, in a sophisticated living-room cinema or in a professionally equipped movie palace, the UDP900 MKII delivers top performance and magnificent entertainment in every area.



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