

PRE/POWER
AMPLIFIER
NAD C165BEE/
C275BEE



£ 650/820

↑ FOR

Sonic muscle, authority and scale; feature list; well-judged presentation

→ VERDICT

A likeable brute of an amplifier. For those who want plenty of sonic muscle without having to sacrifice subtlety too much

The force is strong with this one

IF SONIC MUSCULARITY and outright scale are important to you, buy this NAD pairing. We can't think of another amplifier at this price level that delivers so much authority with such ease.

It doesn't matter what kind of torture track you try – we used *Like a Dog Chasing Cars* from *The Dark Knight OST* – this pre/power takes it all in its stride. With such music this NAD combo sounds big and brawny, and plays at high volume levels with little sign of stress. A power rating of 150 Watts per channel is good at this price level, but it sounds like the C275BEE power amplifier is capable of far more.

Pleasing dynamics and bass

You can add strong dynamics and seismic bass to the list of positives, and other qualities such as tonal balance and stereo imaging are good enough to avoid serious criticism. The very best of the opposition deliver more agility and transparency, but thankfully this combo avoids the

heavy-handed, muscle-bound nature of some rivals.

Look past the sound and you'll find the feature list is good. The C165BEE is a fully-specced preamp. It has a reasonably capable moving magnet/moving coil phono stage, a good headphone output and plenty of line level connections.

The power amplifier is about as complex as these things get. There are two pairs of speaker

outputs, NAD's traditional 'soft clipping' control to smooth the sound close to the limit and a switch to turn the stereo unit into a bridged monobloc, raising output to a whopping 330 Watts.

This combo is decently made but best described as functional when it comes to feel and finish.

Overall this pre/power is a fine performer. Those who value force, but still want more than a hint of finesse, should listen in.

