

## HEADPHONES OF THE YEAR



### Oppo PM-3 \$399

Oppo's first headphones were the PM-1s (\$1199), soon followed by the PM-2s (\$699). Now Oppo has come out with the PM-3 headphones, priced at a modest \$399. Using technology trickled-down from its more expensive models, the PM-3 promises to deliver the Oppo sound in a smaller, more portable, closed-enclosure unit. The Oppo PM-3 achieves a 102dB sensitivity, so even a smartphone will easily be able to drive a pair to satisfying volumes. If you need a headphone for situations where you have to hear some outside sounds, yet also require one that prevents passersby from hearing your music, the PM-3 would be a savvy option. It's comfortable, extremely well made, and cleverly designed. Couple it with one of the new generation of portable players such as the Astell&Kern AKjr, and for under \$900 (\$500 for the AKjr and \$399 for the PM-3) you have a portable rig that will keep you enthralled for as long as the batteries last. SS, 255



### HiFiMan HE400S \$399

If you're into planar-magnetic cans but thought power requirements and budget limitations would put the brakes on a purchase, think again. The smart hi-fi men at HiFiMan of Hong Kong have figured out how to deliver the sonic benefits of planar technology in a high-sensitivity (98dB), low-impedance (22 ohms) headphone. The HE400S can even be driven by your smartphone—a rarity among planar headgear. No amp required. The HE400S delivers a degree of detail and spaciousness that blew reviewer Julie Mullins away when she listened to vinyl through them via the petite but powerful PS Audio Sprout integrated (found elsewhere on this list). The HE400S' performance was quite literally startling in imaging and staging: JM actually jumped when she heard a voice (on a recording) that sounded as if it were coming from behind her. How's that for lifelike presence and realism? What's more, these lightweight, comfy cans are also realistically priced at \$399—among the least expensive planar 'phones on the market. Great sounding, and a great value, too. Julie Mullins, review forthcoming