

The Bryston BDP-1 Revisited and a Q&A with James Tanner

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I have reviewed several Bryston components, including the [Bryston BDP-1 Digital File Player](#), which to this day, is the best single digital source I have heard in my home system and at various audio trade shows. I have seen the \$2,200 BDP-1 used in \$200,000 systems. Scan the internet and you will find a good number of rave reviews, especially when the unit is paired with Bryston's own [BDA-1 DAC](#).

Recently, a number of audiophile grade file players and streamers have been brought to market following Bryston's lead. They are banking, as is Bryston, that many music lovers do not want to interface with a consumer grade computer while listening to music. Obviously, a computer is needed to rip and organize a music collection, but need not be in the listening room. The BDP-1 is in fact a computer, but one optimized for audio functions, and not tied to a commercial operating system. It should be noted that things are changing very fast in the world of computer audio.

That being said, the Canadian firm has not sat still. Since my review was published, there has been a significant BDP-1 firmware upgrade, which allows the unit to stream files from a NAS via Ethernet. The BDP-1 could previously play back files in just about any format from directly attached USB thumb drives and hard drives. Of course, there are iOS and Android apps to use as interfaces as well as the chunky, impressive optional remote. But the apps are the way to go. A wireless router is all that is needed to use your iPad, iPhone, or Android device as a controller. Using a web browser is another option.

Bryston has also been developing new products outside of the digital domain. The recently made waves with their BHA series headphone amplifiers, and even home theater processors and speakers. Around the corner is a new high end speaker system. Since they serve both the consumer and pro markets, they are constantly trying to develop cutting edge products that offer real world performance advancements and value.

James Tanner, the long time VP of Marketing at Bryston, was gracious enough to answer some questions about the BDP-1 and a few other topics. Special thanks to Micah Sheveloff, Bryston's PR man extraordinaire for setting up the interview. For further information, I strongly suggest checking out [Bryston's web page](#) for review links, manuals, and product information.



AVRev: In my review of the BDP-1 digital file player, I noted it was the best sounding digital source component I had heard and It has still not been surpassed by anything I have heard since. With the current firmware update from May of this year, (Ver. 1.4), you have added streaming capability via Ethernet. Can you tell us about that in some detail?

James Tanner: Yes the current software allows you to connect to an NAS via Ethernet. Most of the current NAS units we have tested work fine – any SAMBA enabled NAS should work. You implement the feature through the BDP Settings Page. In the future we are looking at UPnP/DNLA capability as well.

AVRev: The BDP-1 allows for hard drives to be connected and indexed via USB. Did Bryston ever consider FireWire connections? Do you have a feeling about the new Apple Thunderbolt standard?

JT: We have not really looked at Firewire as we feel it is really disappearing from the landscape and it would not offer any performance improvements relative to the BDP. Thunderbolt is a new IO and is something we may look at going forward. Again it may or may not be applicable to the BDP playing high resolution digital music files.

AVRev: Can you give us your thoughts about the current state of high end digital playback here in late 2012? What do you see happening in the next few years?

JT: We feel traditional optical drives are probably going to be replaced with Digital playback devices like the BDP. Working towards other more powerful and more capable products like the BDP where quality digital music playback is the goal is where we are headed.

AVRev: To what extent do you think developments in the pro audio world (recording, mastering etc) influence high end consumer audio and vice versa?

JT: This is the first time in history where the consumer can in fact get a direct copy of the Master through downloads and digital storage medium – so my hope is that more and more people will discover how much better their digital systems can sound with the much higher quality recordings becoming available. Also the ease of acquiring these higher quality recordings is going to make it accessible to many more consumers from many different and more convenient sources (home computer, downloads, cloud, etc.)

AVRev: Lastly, can you tell us about what is new at Bryston across all your product lines and any hints of what you may be working on?

JT: We have just released a new Integrated Amplifier called the B135 SST2.

We are looking at 192/24 capable asynchronous USB products so you can attach a normal PC or MAC laptop etc. USB out and attain excellent sound by bypassing the computers internal sound card. More powerful versions of products like the BDP-1. New DAC's with 32 bit capability. Also we are currently investigating the ability of the BDP to 'play' your CD's through the BDP circuitry by storing the digital data in memory then listening to it accordingly. The Bryston CD Drive would connect to the BDP through the IO and have a visual interface on the iPad or iTouch etc. The other option, using the same Bryston Drive would be to 'Rip' your CD's to one of the BDP attached drives and listen to it later.

Also we are introducing a Bryston Loudspeaker the month!

Thanks again!

www.bryston.com

Specifications:

Bryston BDP-1 Digital File Player: \$2195

Available in silver or black, and in 19 inch or 17 inch faceplate:

- **24-bit, 192 kHz dedicated digital music player**
- **No noise-producing mechanical parts – just a USB input**
- **Out-of-the-box playability when connected to an external USB drive (no network required) plus an external DAC**
- **Supports 16 and 24 bit files with sample rates of: 44.1 kHz, 48 kHz, 88.2 kHz, 96 kHz, 176.4 kHz, and 192 kHz**
- **Linux operating system optimized to provide the highest quality audio performance**
- **Industrial quality motherboard uses only a small fraction of its computing power to optimize sonic performance**
- **Utilizes Bryston-modified top quality soundcard**
- **AES-EBU Balanced and BNC S/PDIF output section for the highest possible performance**
- **Electronic isolation of audio components from computer components**
- **Galvanic isolation employed to prevent charge-carrying particles from migrating section to section**

