

**Test** network player/streaming client Primare Prisma NP5 MKII



# chip tuning

When the news broke a while ago that a microchip company had burned down in Asia, very few people could have imagined what the consequences would be. And probably very few have gotten out of the huge supply bottleneck as elegantly as Primare.

"Make a virtue of necessity" fits perfectly to the MKII version of the small network player Primare Prisma NP5, whose original re-clocking chip was manufactured in the destroyed AKM factory. Re-clocking is primarily responsible for "translating" sample rates and making them available to the subsequent DA converter in the correct format. The new chip from a different production facility could be integrated into the device with a manageable amount of effort and even offers additional features and upgrade options, but more on that later. First, let's look at the features of the device itself.

**Equipment** With the NP5 Prisma from Primare, users should be given a particularly uncomplicated possibility of expanding existing systems with streaming functionalities.

A clear argument in favor of the NP5 is its extremely small form factor, which is somewhat in line with the many external phono preamps available on the market today.

Another feature for easy installation is the lack of controls on the device.

Apart from three small status LEDs on the top, the Prisma doesn't offer any features, so you can safely place it behind other components or somewhere else out of sight. A metal base plate ensures a secure footing, while the plastic housing enables wireless use without having to attach external antennas to the device - in addition to Bluetooth, the NP5 also has a WLAN interface. Thanks to setup via Google Home or AirPlay, with a separate WiFi hotspot for a short time

is created, you never have to use a network cable to put the player into operation. When it comes to the outputs, Primare is limited to the two S/PDIF variants with a coaxial or optical connection. There is also a USB-A interface on the narrow back of the device, but it is not used as an output for digital signals.

Instead, the socket is intended for connecting hard drives or memory sticks, which can be read directly by the network player, so that in principle you can get by without a NAS. The NP5 plays music in various formats via network or external disk

It's hardly bigger than a CD. Primare Prisma NP5 – almost sensational in view of the range of functions





All cable connections are on the rear panel - including an RS232 socket for networking with other Primare devices



The antennas for the wireless functions are under the Plastic lid – a metal base plate ensures stability



Only three status LEDs indicate the current operating status

file formats. MP3, FLAC and WAV are no problem and the compact player can even play DSD-over-PCM with Roon Ready, one of the upgrades in the MKII version. A forthcoming update will then allow the playback of TIDAL Master Quality via streaming.

With the PCM sampling rates, all connections are identical and allow the use of a maximum of 192 kHz at 24 bits. However, if the connected device is overwhelmed because it is a bit older, the output signal can also be limited to 48 or 96 kHz. For other Primare devices, you can use the RS232 connection, for example to control the volume of the amplifier with the streamer's app. The Primare Prisma app is thankfully kept quite simple: the screen is divided into three segments. At the bottom of the screen you will find the currently playing song and all playback functions. On the left there is access to all connected sources and on the right much remains

Space for navigating through the selected music storage, whereby even the size of the covers or folders can be adjusted in four steps. A word and letter search also make it easier to find the desired album. The general menu navigation is also well done. There are a few submenus here and there, but they're usually only one level deep - one keypress takes you back to the previous window. Even those who have had practically no experience with streamers and their operating programs will find their way around their own library after just a few minutes. Numerous streaming services are also supported by the NP5, but these are not directly integrated into the app. Instead, the services are displayed by the app, but the selected service is also opened. If you play music from here, you have to select the Primare streamer as the output device via Chromecast or AirPlay, then there is also music from the Internet on the system. This means that practically any app can be used for audio playback on the system. If you prefer to have everything from one source, you can use Roon to use the Prisma together with other supported devices in an appropriate environment.

In terms of sound, the NP5 MKII is still more on the neutral side - that should be the case, because it remains completely on the digital level. Very linear and without overemphasizing certain frequency ranges, it provides good conditions for the digital-to-analog converter used. The NP5 Prisma is just right for getting started at the highest level. Convenient to set up and integrate into an existing system, the Primare is up and running quickly and offers HiRes streaming from hard drive, NAS or Internet. as desired.

**Conclusion** The second version of the small Prisma NP5 from Primare is the Swiss army knife for quickly integrating a complete streaming solution into your home system.

Thomas Schmidt



Of course, the size requires SMD technology. A replacement for the no longer available chip was quickly found



According to the nomenclature, the Prisma is the smallest of the network players Primare – when it comes to equipment, it is a giant

With the small housing and the complete remote controllability you can make the NP5 disappear completely - but why? He does look quite dignified

**network player/  
streaming client  
Primare prism NP5 MKII**

**Furnishing**

Dimensions (W x H x D in mm) 143x36x120

- Inputs WLAN, 1 x Ethernet, 1 x USB-A, Bluetooth
- Supported formats MP3, OGG, WMA, ALAC, FLAC, AIFF, WAV, DSD
- Supported sample rates PCM up to 192 kHz, 24 bit; DSD to DSD128, 5.6 MHz, 1 bit 1
- Exits x S/PDIF coaxial 1 x Toslink optical

**valuation**

sound	70%	1.0
laboratory	15%	1+
Practice	15%	1+

+ variety of formats  
+ cheap price  
+ easy handling

• Price around 600 euros •  
 Distribution In-akustik,  
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