

EDITOR'S CHOICE

InnerFidelity Product Of The Year 2019: Audeze LCD-1

Grover Neville, Rafe Arnott | Dec 21, 2019



In choosing the Audeze LCD-1 as InnerFidelity's Product of The Year, both Grover and I had to distill a lot of information based on what each of us had heard and experienced in 2019. In the end, after I took the time to listen to the LCD-1 myself, our choices aligned. As Mr. Neville highlights in his discourse below, and this is a point which I wholeheartedly agree with, especially when it comes to a PoTY, is that " ... [a PoTY] represents ... a tremendous degree of value for the money." In the LCD-1 we see this in no uncertain terms. *–Rafe Arnott*

When I began talking with Rafe about the docket of pieces we have planned for December, the subject of a 'product of the year' was one of the first ones

that came up. For me awards or praise beyond a review are uncommon – I usually say my piece about gear in the review and let the context and nuance speak for themselves, as there's some drama that can be associated with official awards.

There will always be people asking why their favorite piece of gear didn't win, or asking which gear was considered, and so on. The reality is that even attending numerous shows and listening to dozens of headphones a month, no single person can lay ears on every piece of gear out there, nor will they agree on what is 'best.'

So, rather than think of this as best award, think of this instead as a product that I believe is a real standout for a few very specific and important reasons. The first and most important is that it represents, in my mind, a tremendous degree of value for the money. It exists in a category that is attainable for head-fiers of modest means willing to save up. Second, it not only channels technology from much more expensive products, but actually improves on them in certain ways, namely in frequency response and tuning. Third, it strikes an eminent balance of function and sound quality.



The Audeze LCD-1 is InnerFidelity's Product of The Year.

Innerfidelity's Product of the Year is the Audeze LCD-1, a headphone I currently have in for review. I'll discuss it's qualities at greater length in my review, but this headphone is one that really stuck out to me, because it represents to my ears, a kind of culminating feat in terms of tuning. The frequency response is the variation on the Olive-Welti curve that has been much discussed, and it plays all the music I've thrown at it with ease, never favoring one genre over another. The benefits of a tuning without major frequency response aberrations is really something almost every enthusiast benefits from, but until now, there hasn't been many great options.

The LCD-1 doesn't represent a lot of options – just one – but it is a statement from a company that traditionally plays in the high-end, that more attainably priced audio gear can and should be done with just as much attention to detail and engineering excellence as high-end gear. I believe this is tremendously important, as it makes the hobby a lot more accessible, and frankly, more fun. The LCD-1 may not wow you with the tremendous bass or dynamics of the higher-end Audeze LCD-series headphones, but to my ears, this headphone does more than any other I've heard this year to bring a really high-quality listening experience to a price point under \$500 USD.

I'll speak more about my thoughts on the LCD-1 in the full review, and I usually leave my official recommendations for those pieces, but I'm going to make an exception here. This headphone is a great contender for anyone looking for a well-tuned, do-it-all open back under \$500. If you're an audio professional of any kind, this could be one of the only set of headphones you'll ever need.

– *Grover Neville*