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# POWER AMPLIFIER OF THE YEAR
## conrad-johnson ART27A

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The Virginia-based conrad-johnson is well known for its valve amplifiers, but in the main, they have been high-power traditional Class AB push-pull designs. The ART27A is therefore a bold departure for the brand; a pure Class A 36W per channel design using four of the classic KT88 power output tubes in triode mode. This is an unheard-of configuration from the brand.

The company has not abandoned its high-end roots, but instead provides the ART27A as an alternative to its high power ART150 stereo and ART300 flagship amplifiers. As a consequence, it divides opinion, but those who like its effortless expressiveness and dynamic contrast seem to be an entirely different subset of conrad-johnson owners to those who seek that unique combination of musical warmth and power. In fact, this is conrad-johnson for the 'high-efficency' generation.

In our test, Alan Sircom found that "the overall sonic signature of the ART27A can be defined as 'realistic musical precision'. That means an even tonal balance with a very broad midrange covering beautifully what is contained within most music." Most of all, however, he felt the ART27A "shows there is a lot of merit in thinking just a little bit out of the box." +

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