Meridian is the acknowledged leader in high-performance Compact Disc playback, and has held that pre-eminent position since the release of the world’s first audiophile CD player, the MCD, in 1984. Since then, Meridian has introduced over two dozen CD player models, each one redefining the state of the Compact Disc art.

This steady process of improving CD performance has been recognized by more than 50 awards and has made Meridian absolutely synonymous with the very best in Compact Disc.

The 808 was introduced in 2004 to immediate acclaim. Meridian hailed it as the best CD player they had ever made. But, since then, developments in technology and innovations conceived in Meridian’s own R&D laboratories have made it possible to better even the best.

Now, Meridian introduces the next-generation 808v5, a proud member of the 800 Reference Series, specifically developed to render the very best sound from Compact Disc and network audio.

As part of the Reference 800 Series, the 808 is the highest performance CD Player manufactured by Meridian. The latest edition of this ground-breaking product, 808v5, offers several significant improvements including enhanced analogue outputs and network playback from a Meridian Digital Media System, an advanced linear power supply and the latest SpeakerLink features.

At the heart of Meridian’s ultimate music system, 808v5 offers CD playback from an internal ROM based drive which allows for data recovery and error correction many times better than that employed in standard CD systems.

CD is still a leader, with an amazing depth of catalogue. If you are looking for a piece of music, chances are that it’s on Compact Disc, and that you have a choice of recordings. You may find a download, but the quality or value will likely be lower — and no matter how fine a new niche format may sound, if the music you want isn’t available, then it has only passing interest. And of course, you can losslessly import your CD library into a Meridian Digital Media System.

All the more reason, then, to continue our quest to make Compact Disc sound the very best it can.
808v5 inherits Meridian’s tradition of over a quarter-century of award-winning players, yet sets a whole new benchmark.

**Meridian: CD Innovator**

Of all manufacturers, Meridian has the longest history of high-performance CD players. Meridian’s first CD player, MCD, was introduced almost 30 years ago. MCD sounded radically better than anything else available, and still stands comparison with many so-called audiophile designs of today.

In the intervening years, Meridian has relentlessly pursued the path of making better and better CD players, introducing over two dozen models – each one better than the one before. Every model has received critical acclaim, and we have gathered more than 50 awards for our CD players.

Over the years we have researched, pioneered and ultimately mastered the art of refinement of every aspect of CD playback. We showed how jitter was a major challenge to audio quality – indeed, Meridian was the first company to isolate jitter, as far back as 1984.

Our technologies include advanced servo implementations, unique power supply designs, significant innovations in the digital arena and, of course, peerless analogue sections. Meridian also pioneered the idea that special disc navigation could improve the playback quality on difficult discs (such as those with fingerprints, scratches or manufacturing defects). Our players also benefited from digital output capabilities.

Meridian was also the first company to offer a 2-box solution (utilising an outboard DAC), and has developed special phase-locked loops and FIFO buffers to produce the very best result in such systems – including of course our preferred system, a CD player directly connected to a pair of Meridian DSP loudspeakers.

Meridian has also offered its technologies for the mastering of Compact Discs. Top recording studios tend to use a Meridian player for checking, and over the years a Meridian CD player has become synonymous with the best sound, and ‘a reference’. This is a reputation we cherish, and one which we aim to defend by making each player better than the one before.
The press on Meridian's CD players...

Meridian CD Player
“...a breakthrough for CD players. ...[Soundstage] is where the Meridian renders the competition irrelevant and worthless.”
—The Absolute Sound, Winter 1985

Meridian Pro-MCD
“I suspect that [the Meridian Pro-MCD] will be the first CD player to be regarded as a ‘classic’!”
—Hi-Fi News & Record Review, Feb 1986

Meridian 207
“The original Pro-MCD set the benchmark in its day, but the 207-Pro was the radical step, placing Meridian for all time in the CD player hall of fame.”
—Sydney Morning Herald, Aug 1988

Meridian 602/606
“In Meridian we might be looking at a company that has a real contribution to make towards raising CD performance.”
—Audiofile, June 1991

Meridian 808v5
“The 808v5 is an exquisite CD and network player/pre-amplifier, embodying the very best of our art and technology. And the 808 is a ‘signature’ model – each one hand-signed by Meridian’s founders, Robert Stuart and Allen Boothroyd. 808v5 also proudly displays a special plate inside the front flap, commemorating 30 years of the Compact Disc medium.

Why the 808?
Interest in our CD players continues to increase. This tells us that there is a strong element of listeners who do not want pictures or complications attached to their music enjoyment, and wish to take advantage of the extensive selection that is available on no medium, to date, other than Compact Disc.

At the same time, 808v5 provides a bridge to a server-based future, with the inclusion of the ID41 card. This new card allows the 808 to replay music stored losslessly on a Meridian Digital Media System – for example, your existing CD library – at the highest possible quality, with control of the Play Queue from the MSR+ remote. The 808 also offers additional inputs to make it truly the hub of the ultimate music system.

Thus the 808v5 is an exquisite CD and network player/pre-amplifier, embodying the very best of our art and technology. And the 808 is a ‘signature’ model – each one hand-signed by Meridian’s founders, Robert Stuart and Allen Boothroyd. 808v5 also proudly displays a special plate inside the front flap, commemorating 30 years of the Compact Disc medium.

Above and beyond
The signal path includes proprietary error correction and concealment, and Meridian’s acclaimed ‘Resolution Enhancement’ DSP, in which the original 44.1kHz, 16-bit audio is upsampled to 176.4kHz, 24-bit in a 150MIPS processor operating with 48-bit internal precision. This upampling allows conversion-related filtering to take place far above the limits of human hearing, so there are no artefacts added to the sound – you hear simply the pure music.

However, the 808v5 goes further still. High-resolution audio prefers sample rates and bit depths higher than the 44.1kHz 16-bit CD format, which is why we use resolution enhancement that includes upampling.

Yet upsampling alone cannot improve on one aspect of CD: the original sampling rate of the recording. A digital system can only capture sounds up to half the sample rate: anything above that must be filtered out. In the case of CD, half the sample rate is just above the limit of human hearing, so the filters must be very steep. In the past, these filters have audibly degraded the sound. The earliest analogue filters caused enormous phase shifts at high frequencies, and with digital linear-phase filters a big issue was the introduction of pre-echoes.

Meridian’s goal was to invent a technology that stripped away this fundamental limitation in the making of the CD, taking the listener right back to the original higher-resolution sound – no mean ambition, nor a trivial task. But Meridian’s co-founder, Bob Stuart, was sure that high-definition sound could be achieved without excessive sample rates – if the filtering was right.

Bob authored an Audio Engineering Society paper on high definition audio in which he recommended the development of ‘apodising’ filters – filters that were minimum phase, with no ripple, causing no pre-echo: and thus offering perfect timing.

Each 808v5 is individually hand-signed by the founders of Meridian, Bob Stuart and Allen Boothroyd, and displays a special “30 Years of Compact Disc” plate.
808v5 also features a new USB input card, allowing the product to be used as an exceptionally high quality computer audio replay system, with a level of quality limited only by the quality of the source material. The latest SpeakerLink firmware is included, which supports new features available on selected loudspeakers such as Enhanced Bass Alignment, Enhanced Boundary Control and subwoofer level.

The result is, quite simply, the most impeccable-sounding CD and network player available today, with full preamplifier capabilities enabling it to form the heart of the ultimate music system.

808v5 is available in Graphite, Silver, Black Piano Lacquer and the full range of Meridian Select colours.

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**Outline Specifications**

**THD & Noise**  
- Better than –96dBFS

**Mechanism**  
- Triple-beam laser, multi-speed CD-ROM transport

**Conversion**  
- 192kHz-capable, 24-bit, Delta Sigma converters operating at 4 x CD sample rate (176.4kHz).
- Apodising-style upsampling filter system

**Stereo Outputs**  
- Analogue: 1 unbalanced on phono, 1 balanced on XLR-3M: 2.3V rms fixed/variable, Class A, 470Ω impedance
- Digital: coax unbalanced (S/PDIF); twin RJ45 balanced (AES/EBU) SpeakerLink digital interface for single-cable connection of other Meridian equipment. Operating at up to 2 x CD sample rate (182kHz), 24-bit with MHR option.

**Stereo Inputs & Sources**  
- Analogue: 6 unbalanced on phono.
- Digital: 3 coax, 5 toslink optical, 3 speakerlink RJ45, 1 USB
- Meridian Digital Media System connectivity via RJ45 Ethernet connection

**Formats**  
- CD Audio (CD-DA), CD-R, CD-R/W

**Comms**  
- Two 5-pin 240° DIN sockets for Meridian Comms, and RS232 full remote/configuration interface. Three programmable 12V trigger outputs. RJ45 SpeakerLink.

**Construction**  
- Black lacquer, graphite or silver finish in metal & glass. Meridian Select colours also available.

**Displays**  
- 20-character dot matrix display with adjustable brightness and contrast. Indicators for Phase, Repeat and EQ (emphasis).

**Dimensions**  
- 480mm (18.9in) x 175mm (6.9in) x 411mm (16.2in) (whd)

**Power**  
- Advanced linear power supply

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He predicted they would even be able to fix problems in the origination process itself. Meridian’s research team designed an exquisite, proprietary upsampling filter based on this research – a filter with ‘apodising-style’ qualities. It needs significant DSP to deliver, using much of the power of the 808’s 150MIPS main processor. But this filter system is so effective that it can even correct errors made in the recording or mastering stage – CDs played back on the 808v5 can sound even better than they did in the studio!

Finally, at the end of the audio chain, the 808v5 employs the latest multi-bit oversampled delta-sigma D/A converters, combined with a matching proprietary analogue output stage of the highest quality.

**Innovation is the keynote**  

The new model includes many other new features, including twin RJ45-based SpeakerLink interfacing, allowing a direct “home run” single-cable link from the 808 to each of a pair of Meridian DSP speakers via convenient, easily-installed unobtrusive cabling.

The 808v5 also includes extensive preamplifier functionality. 808v5 includes a comprehensive set of analogue and digital inputs – including SpeakerLink for convenient interfacing with other Meridian components. A new analogue input stage features enhanced high-performance analogue to digital conversion.

Both analogue inputs and outputs are included, the latter with redesigned DSP for an even sweeter sound than before.