

On Sunday, June 13, the monthly meeting of the Audio-Video Club of Atlanta was held in the training room of the Virtual Properties Realty offices in Duluth, Georgia. There were about 30 members and guests attending to hear a presentation by Lawson Hale and Richard Jenkins of Sound-Image, a local dealer. Their presentation featured the Linn Akurate DS digital stream music player. Both standard 16-bit CD and high resolution music formats were demonstrated with Linn's latest digital music playback technology.

John Morrison (president) opened the meeting at 2 PM and announced some upcoming meetings in July, including a possible field trip to an Augusta dealer and a visit to Denny Meeker in Alabama (a long time member), which would include an overnight stay at a lake cottage. The picnic is on August 15, and in September the meeting will be held in Marietta at an Epson Projector (for home theater) dealer.

Our presenters were up next. They told us that Linn is not making stand-alone CD players any more, and is making digital stream players that take almost any music bit stream (from MP3 to high resolution) from a storage device and outputs an analog signal to be sent to a pre-amplifier. The Linn DS line includes players that range in cost from \$2500 to \$20000. The Akurate DS we were listening to retails for \$6850. The DS requires the use of a storage device to hold the music files (it has no internal storage). At this meeting, that device was a "RipNAS" unit. The DS player, since it is a networked device, can be controlled from the internet including iPhone, computer, etc. During this presentation, an iPad was the control device.

In their presentation, they told us that a "regular" CD player has to perform error correction very quickly, and hence may not be "perfect". The Akurate DS uses a proprietary conversion process and since the source is a hard drive (network storage), there are no transport issues introduced. Associated equipment used in the demonstration included the Naim 282 preamp and Naim 280 power amplifier, with Naim N-Stat (satellite) Speakers, and a Rel subwoofer for the very low end. Audioquest cables were used between the DS and the preamp

The DS and an "equivalent" (in price) Linn CD player (it is no longer made) were connected to the Naim preamp and the club listened to cuts from "red book" CD's played on the CD player, then the same CD's ripped to the network storage device connected to the DS player. The DS player was deemed more "musical" overall, although some commented that the bass seemed tighter with the CD player on one of the cuts. On another cut (Leo Kottke guitar piece), more "squeaks" were heard using the CD player than were heard on the DS player. However, which was "right" (more accurate)? Only the master tape knows for sure.

The Sound-Image web site had this on it after our meeting. "Sunday was a great visit with the Audio Video Club of Atlanta. We had a chance to proselytize about digital streaming and our ideas for a satisfactory experience with it. While demonstrating how great the Linn Akurate DS sounds, along with some other things, everyone heard some good music – both the members' and ours. As promised, here are some links to websites you will find interesting:"

<http://www.soundimageatl.com/events.htm>

There was a raffle of CD's and books donated by Phil Muse and Bill McCulloch, and everyone was a winner!

The club thanks Lawson and Richard for their presentation and all the work they did to set this all up, along with other club members, and to John Morrison for supplying the meeting space.

Thomas Horner
Secretary, A-V Club of Atlanta