

Alesis, 12555 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite 285, Los Angeles, CA 90066; www.alesis.com (see web site for dealer network map), E-mail info@alesis.com, (310) 821-5000, Fax (310) 306-2650, price \$1000, dimensions (W×H×D): 19"×3.5"×11" (483mm×88mm×279mm), weight: 16.55 lb (6.2kg), warranty: 1 year, parts and labor.

The Alesis MasterLink ML-9600 is a high-resolution two-track hard disk mixing and mastering recorder. It can record from analog, or AES/EBU (XLR) and S/PDIF (coax) digital inputs, or from its internal optical drive, all to its internal hard drive. Data sample rates available are 44.1kHz, 48kHz, 88.2kHz, and 96kHz, with word lengths of 16, 20, or 24 bits.

From the audio files stored on the hard drive, you can burn CDs using standard "Red Book" (16-bit/44.1kHz), or high-resolution CD24 formats up to 24-bit, 96kHz. You can choose any combination of digital resolutions (16-, 20-, and 24-bit) and sample rates (44.1, 48, 88.2, and 96kHz) with full Audio Interchange File Format (AIFF) compatibility.

You can assign audio files to any of 16 playlists, which can each store up to 99 tracks. You can store any mix of sample rate and word length files in a playlist. Once on the hard drive, you can edit your recording and apply finishing tools—such as high-resolution parametric EQ compression, limiting, and normalizing using the onboard digital signal processing (DSP). You have total control of fade-ins, fade-outs, track gain, start points, track cropping, and track split and join.

Then you can burn the finished recording to standard data CD-R in either industry-standard Red Book or the high-resolution CD24 format. CD24 is accepted by many DVD-Audio mastering facilities. You can also load either Red Book CDs or CD24 files onto the

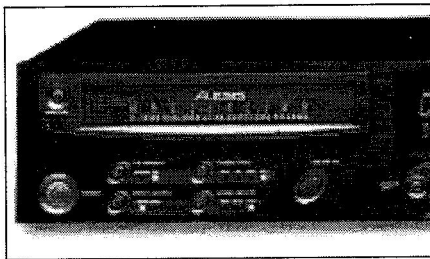


PHOTO 1: ML-9600 front view.

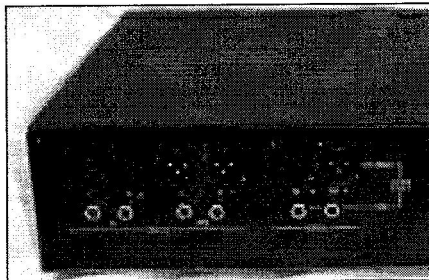


PHOTO 2: ML-9600 rear view.

hard drive from the CD-RW drive.

The operating software is stored in flash RAM. You can download software upgrades via Internet, burn them to a CD-R on your computer, and load the new software via the ML-9600 CD-RW drive. However, a new software installation will reformat your hard drive, so you should back up all your playlists and audio files. This particular unit had software version 1.24. The latest version is 1.25, which adds support for another Sony CD-RW drive and support for hard drives larger than 30GB, even though the ML-9600 will not recognize more than 30GB at this time.

The 49-page reference manual is thorough and well written, with individual chapters covering playlists, DSP, the recording process, and CD player mode.

INSIDE THE ML-9600

The ML-9600 is constructed of heavy gauge steel, with provisions for rack mounting. The rack "ears" are fur-